Executive Summary

This international conference was hosted by the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation in conjunction with the announcement of its third annual Humanitarian Prize. The 1998 Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Prize was presented to Médecins San Frontières/Doctors Without Borders by Barron Hilton, chairman of Hilton Hotels Corporation, and former U.S. President George Bush.

Humanitarian Aid Challenges in the New Millennium: Where Are We Headed? brought together approximately 150 participants from around the world -- all of them opinion leaders and policy makers in the field of humanitarian issues. Participants represented government, business, the military, the media and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

The one-day conference was designed to look toward the challenges facing humanitarian aid and the difficulties and dangers posed to those who would respond to humanitarian crises in the post-Cold War era. There has been a marked increase in the number of politically and militarily caused crises brought about in the instability following the end of the Cold War. This has been accompanied by a shift in the nature and conduct of war, with civilians often now in more peril than combatants. The deliberate peril to civilians and the fact that neutral humanitarian relief workers are now seen as partisans and likewise targeted is bringing the field of humanitarian aid to a crisis stage.

Against this backdrop, the conference participants and panelists stepped back from daily pressures and engaged in a dialogue centered around four panels that assessed the current situation and identified policies and priorities needed to successfully continue the work of humanitarianism in the next century.

The panels were:

- **Staying Ahead of the Next Crisis** (Lessons Learned: Post-Cold War/Foreign Policy Considerations/Emerging Threats)
- **Geopolitical Considerations** (Role of Governments vs. Private Sector/Geopolitical Impact of Population Shifts/Development Aid: Opportunities for Social Change)
- **Collaboration: Survival Strategy for the Future?** (Evolving Roles: Military, Media and Multinationals/Cooperation in the Field…What Works?)
- **Is Neutrality Still Possible?** (Politicization of Humanitarian Aid/Priority Setting in Ethical Dilemmas)

Despite the profusion of detail and of subject areas, several overarching areas of concern and consensus emerged during the conference:

**Humanitarianism** All agreed that humanitarianism is about saving lives and the alleviation of human suffering. It is the cause to which all participants are dedicated. When confronting areas of disagreement, or degrees of disagreement, such as the issue of neutrality, people still readily agreed that neutrality or advocacy are means to an end and not ends in themselves: i.e., how does neutrality or advocacy in this particular context help to save lives or endanger them?

**Transition.** At the end of the Cold War and the beginning of a new millennium, we are living in a time of transition, instability and ambiguity. We do not know what is coming. We do not know all the
answers. For that matter, we do not even know all the questions. This condition is unavoidable. Yet, we must act…and react while a new world order sorts itself out.

**Turning Point.** Humanitarian action itself is at a critical turning point. The fundamental tenets of humanitarianism are being undermined – humanity, neutrality and impartiality. There is a breakdown of respect for these norms as the nature of war and combat have changed from the battlefield to guerrilla actions. Non-combatants and humanitarian aid workers are not simply unintentional casualties but intentional targets. Some participants saw this as an indication that by giving aid one is judged to have taken sides; others attributed this targeting as a means of eliminating the only on-the-ground witnesses to atrocities.

**Necessary Action.** There is an immediate need to develop new and innovative ways of promoting respect for human norms and principles. Violators must be held accountable. Governments must recognize that humanitarian efforts must take place alongside political efforts; that they are no substitute for political solutions; and that humanitarian intervention is a short-term effort to enable people to move from crisis to solution.

**Political and Natural Disasters.** Much of the concern and attention of governments, international institutions, and agencies dedicated to humanitarian work is focused on crises and the human suffering brought about by political and military causes. At the same time, less attention is paid to natural disasters. Even though natural disasters wreak havoc on populations. And it is in natural disasters -- even in natural disasters exacerbated by political situations -- where much progress has been made in prevention, planning and treatment. Typhoons and hurricanes cannot be prevented, but they can be predicted and their devastation mitigated. Refugee health care must be based on accurate information and focused on disease prevention and health promotion. Disease can be prevented, its spread stopped by preventive public health planning. Advanced technology is being put to good use and can have very positive results.

**Politics vs. Humanitarianism.** Political crises require political responses. They will never be solved by humanitarian actions alone. They need political solutions; not necessarily military intervention, but massive diplomatic efforts and attention. However, most humanitarian disasters in the world today that are the result of political causes, such as those in Africa, are happening in countries and regions that the international powers do not consider to be of strategic importance. Response in such cases is reluctant and slow, determined to some extent by the amount of media attention, but also by the strength of advocacy groups and by internal political fallout.

Crises are not just brought about by ethnic tensions. These tensions or differences tend not to result in conflict when there is economic prosperity. Economic distress, exacerbated by the widening global gap between rich and poor often results in regional conflicts.

**Commitment.** There needs to be a greater global commitment to help those in need. Participants saw the Hilton conference as one effort to increase awareness and, thus, greater commitment of all participants.
**Investment.** Humanitarian aid must be followed by investment in building civil society. We need to promote civil society, democracy and the rule of law, and multi-ethnic societies by furthering reconciliation.

**Future Actions.** What should the humanitarian aid community do? The limitations of humanitarian responses to politically caused crises is the issue that evoked the most intense discussion at the conference. The challenges, and even dangers, posed by political crises are causing the most soul searching and speculation.

Political crises require intervention by states, possibly military, but preferably diplomatic and economic intervention. That is the bottom line. But if states are reluctant to respond because they do not regard the crisis to be of strategic importance, what can be done? How can the humanitarian aid community and other concerned entities and individuals get states to respond? How do you convince states that a humanitarian crisis is, in and of itself, of strategic importance? Knowing that media attention and public advocacy can force a state to respond, how can the humanitarian aid community create the proper climate?

Participants agreed there are two major and related tasks ahead:

1) to persuade governments to respond in a responsible, humanitarian and moral manner; and
2) to move the public so that they and the media demand, and ultimately secure, an adequate response from governments.

**Coordination.** There was discussion, not only of coordination in the field in the delivery of relief and services, but of a need to coordinate decision-making, lobbying and advocacy for government response to a political crisis or disaster.

**Public Advocacy.** What would it take to turn a country around? It seemed to those at the conference that it would take a more concentrated and sophisticated effort than is currently being pursued.

By the end of the day, consensus was building that the humanitarian aid community could best meet these tasks through coordinating highly sophisticated advertising and/or public relations campaigns to increase public awareness and advocacy.
Summary Remarks

Conference Moderator: Ralph Begleiter, CNN World Affairs Correspondent

Bringing more than 30 years of broadcast journalism experience to his international news reports, Ralph Begleiter is CNN’s most widely traveled correspondent. At CNN since 1981, he has covered the U.S. Department of State, hosted a global public affairs show, and co-anchored CNN’s prestigious “International Hour,” aired daily on CNN International. Begleiter has covered most of the world’s recent historic events, including virtually every high-level Soviet-American meeting, the Persian Gulf Crisis, the Dayton Bosnia Accords, the Middle East Peace efforts, and the aftermath of the assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Rabin. He has received numerous press awards and, in 1994, Georgetown University’s Graduate School of Foreign Service awarded Begleiter its Weintel Prize, one of diplomatic reporting’s highest honors.

Ralph J. Begleiter: Summary Remarks

Under the auspices of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, representatives of humanitarian groups gathered for a day of intense and interesting discussion on the challenges facing providers (and recipients) of humanitarian aid around the world.

The conference began with the hope not only that participants should hear from several impressive panels of experts and analysts, but also that they should challenge them for the answers to questions they have on their minds.

The first discussion, which was called “Staying Ahead of the Next Crisis,” directly implicated me and the news media I represent, which prompted me to ask the group: “Who decides what the ‘next crisis’ will be?”

Will it be rival ethnic groups in central Africa? Or in Cambodia? Or in the Balkans? Or in Russia? Or will it be CNN, or another global media outlet?

And, perhaps even more importantly, like the proverbial tree in a forgotten forest, will there be a ‘next crisis’ if CNN isn’t there to bring it to world attention?

When we shine CNN’s bright spotlight on a problem, non-governmental organizations can take advantage of it to bolster their humanitarian aid programs. But when CNN’s light is dark, or when it shines for a very long time on places other than on humanitarian basket cases, what happens to the efforts of these groups? Who’s responsible for this phenomenon? What, if anything, can be done about it?

When panelist Julia Taft, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration, recently spoke in Washington, she lamented the attention being lavished by the media on the then-raging White House intern scandal and wondered aloud what a difference it might make to needy people if only some of that media time were devoted to covering humanitarian issues in, for example, Sierra Leone and Kosovo.
In a media age in which the developed nations of the world increasingly focus their attentions inward and on one another, is it possible that humanitarian organizations like the ones represented at the conference will increasingly face the ‘next crisis’ without the attention and support of publics and their leaders in the nations of the world most capable of helping? (Think of all the attention being paid today to keeping the economies of the G-7 nations going in the face of global uncertainty. Less developed nations are having a hard time attracting attention to their problems.)

It is widely acknowledged now that the United States has fallen to the bottom of the list of humanitarian donors when they’re ranked by their ability to help.

In the 17 years that I’ve been covering international affairs for CNN, the level of U.S. aid to other countries has fallen from about two cents of every dollar...to less than a penny. And most of you probably know that recent surveys of Americans indicate that Americans wrongly believe that figure to be around fifteen cents!

Another problem related to the media is that when news organizations like mine do shine our spotlight, we tend to do it in places where a humanitarian crisis has already erupted into war or disaster. We rarely shine the light on “The Next Crisis.” That’s a point echoed by Ambassador Morton Abramowitz in our first session, when he noted that government officials are rarely ahead of the curve in dealing with humanitarian crises.

In one way or another, these themes that revolve around the need to garner greater attention to the world’s humanitarian problems, preferably before they erupt into deadly and violent crises, permeated the full day’s discussion. At one point in the discussion, I suggested that humanitarian organizations might want to consider taking a cue from commercial advertisers who use broadcast programming to draw attention to their products. Only partly facetiously, I suggested that buying a single television advertisement during the annual Super Bowl game would draw more attention to humanitarian problems than all the press releases and free coverage available in a year on news programs such as CNN’s.

Participants struggled with this challenge and often seemed frustrated with the lack of attention that their organizations and their problems will receive.

Conclusion: It is hard for anyone concerned with the human condition to listen to a day of intense debate about “Humanitarian Challenges in the New Millennium” without being inspired by the depth of passion of each of the organizations represented in this conference.

Even without discovering a dramatic new cure for the “attention deficit” mentioned by many speakers, it was apparent that the phenomenon could not continue unchallenged without severe consequences for the people most in need of help. Perhaps a conference of a different sort is needed -- one which features dialogue not just among humanitarian groups, but between those groups and the senior media managers whose decisions daily affect how many of the world’s problems go unnoticed when the spotlight shines elsewhere.
Opening Comments

Steven M. Hilton, President, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation

As the newly appointed President of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, Steven M. Hilton is responsible for the development and implementation of the organization’s international humanitarian efforts. Hilton, the grandson of hotel entrepreneur and Foundation founder Conrad N. Hilton, joined the Foundation in 1983 and was named vice president in charge of programs in 1989. In his capacity as vice president of programs, Hilton directed the Foundation’s grantmaking activities, with primary oversight of programs for the multi-handicapped blind, mentally ill homeless and international water development.

Prior to joining the Foundation, Hilton worked in hotel management in Alabama, Georgia and California with the Hilton Hotels Corporation and both invested in, and owned, aquacultural (fish farming) businesses. A graduate of the University of California at Santa Barbara, Hilton earned his Masters of Business Administration (MBA) degree from the University of California at Los Angeles.

Steven M. Hilton: Welcome

It is my pleasure and privilege to welcome everyone here today for this very special conference entitled “Humanitarian Aid Challenges in the New Millennium.” You represent a very select group of people. You are the policy makers and the opinion leaders who work in a very wide breadth of areas. Your organizations are helping to heal the sick, to clothe those who are naked, to help in the war-torn areas of this world, and to try to bring peace and reconciliation where there are regional and national conflicts.

My grandfather, Conrad Hilton, started the Hilton Foundation many, many years ago. Its primary mission was the alleviation of human suffering, wherever it occurs in the world. And looking at the work that you do, it is clear that our missions are closely aligned. Our hope today is that through this dialogue we will move our missions further forward. When the Foundation created the Hilton Humanitarian Prize three years ago, one of the objectives we had in mind was to call for greater commitment to help those in need.

Keynote Speaker: Robert A. Seiple, Senior Advisor for International Religious Freedom, U.S. Department of State

Robert Seiple stepped down from his position as president of World Vision United States in April 1998 and was named to this newly-created position at the State Department in June. Seiple ran World Vision for 11 years and expanded the organization’s involvement in the struggle against poverty and hunger by focusing on public advocacy and education. Previously, he served as president of Eastern College and Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Seiple was named “Churchman of the Year” by Religious Heritage America in 1994 and in 1995 received Brown University’s “Independent Award” and the U.S. Secretary of State’s Distinguished Public Service Award.
Robert Seiple: Opening Comments

Let me add my welcome to this marvelously eclectic group of humanitarians.

The seventh of August was not a good day. On the seventh of August we had two U.S. embassies bombed in East Africa. There was a new fear for those of us who are globally engaged. It was a new day. The stakes had gotten higher. The bar for violence and hatred had been raised. Adjustments had to be made. But what? How? Where do we leverage our best thinking? Where do we anchor our best instincts? Our values? It was a new day, but we had this feeling that we had yet to define the new rules. We’ve entered a post-Cold War era, an age of transition. Some have called it an age of amateurs. One strategic era is over. Another one yet to begin. And we live with the vulnerability and the ambiguity of transition. But hopefully, we are moving away from that prolonged period of waging war to a new period of waging peace.

We come together today seeking answers, even as we attempt to make sure that we have all the questions on the table. There are a lot of questions:

?? Why have we had this exponential growth in complex humanitarian emergencies over the last 15 years? In 1980 there were five; in 1997 there were 25.
?? Why have refugees gone from (being) the unintended consequences of war to (becoming) the targeted goals of some of the most virulent conflicts in our world today?
?? How do we begin to understand this negative phenomenon of the child soldier? Kids 10, 11, 12 years old taken out and trained against a backdrop of fear. They become the most ruthless, the most unpredictable soldiers of war.
?? Why are 85 percent of all casualties in wars today women and children?
?? Why are there more NGOs (representatives of non-governmental organizations) lost today?
?? Why do we have to redefine on a daily basis the kinds of issues that will determine whether we go into some place or not?
?? Why, in a century where we promised ourselves “never again,” has there been so much genocidal conflict as this last decade, as what will become the bloodiest century in the history of humanity comes to a close?
?? Why the seeming lack of will?
?? The failure of faith?
?? The tentative nature of our global engagements?
?? Why can’t we live with our deepest differences?
?? Why is the world no longer safe for diversity?

The questions are many. They are deep; they are disturbing; they are tough. Let me ask you a much more positive question. In the Cold War we shared a common tie – a somewhat perverse common tie that helped not to eliminate but to restrain violence. It was called “mutually assured destruction.”

The question is this: Is there not a metaphorical equivalent, a positive tie, a common denominator that emerges today out of human rights that are indeed inherent and inalienable? Out of humanitarian interventions that spring from motivation of our best instincts and highest values? Out of moral
imperatives that transcend the spectrum of intractability? Moral imperatives that transcend the apathy of assumed political reality? Moral imperatives that transcend the national and global attention deficit syndrome that we find so often where human dignity and sanctity of life is involved?

You can help decide this...you are credible...you are relevant. You are the practitioners on the world scene. You are the ones going through the reflection, the discernment, making the commitments. The commitment to change. To change in a positive way that which can be sustained – sustainable transformational change in our world in this transitional age. You are potentially the leaders. You have as much right as anyone to write the new rules for a new era.

As we come together to write new rules in difficult times, we are always grateful for the positive role models that we have. The Hilton Foundation has certainly been that. The Foundation has been characterized by persevering people, folks who will stay with you, who are not afraid of failure, not afraid to make a mistake.... This is a Foundation that understands how to deal with those who are most vulnerable, those who are neediest in our world today. And Conrad Hilton anticipated the world which we inherit today. He understood the unique responsibilities of a man of immense personal wealth, and he allowed that wealth to create a Foundation that for more than twenty years has labored as a co-partner with us in some of the most difficult places of the world.

I personally watched and worked with the Hilton folks to eliminate guinea worm and water-borne diseases in Ghana. By the end of this decade we’re going to eliminate guinea worm in Ghana. There was a day when I stood alongside a young man out in some dusty part of Ghana. The young man, married, had lost a child already to guinea worm, he had two children sick at home, and we were standing alongside a rig that was pounding into this dirty ground trying to find water. And as we stood there, the gusher erupted, clear water...pure water...drinkable water...safe water, 75 feet into the air. This man was beside himself. He began to twitch. He couldn’t get the words out. He was all over the place with excitement. And finally, he said to me, “We give you an elephant of thanks.”

We should say to the Hilton Foundation that we give you an elephant of thanks...profound thanks...for your leadership in the endeavors that we’re talking about today. It is the Hilton vision that brings us together this day. We have yet another opportunity to do good work, to work the holy ground of human dignity, human sanctity, together. And in that spirit, I welcome you to this most important day. Thank you.
Panel One

STAYING AHEAD OF THE NEXT CRISIS:
Lessons Learned: Post Cold War/Foreign Policy Considerations/Emerging Threats

Morton Abramowitz, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

Prior to joining the Council, Ambassador Abramowitz served as president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (1991-1997) and acting president of the International Crisis Group, a multinational NGO focused on crisis prevention. Abramowitz has also served as: U.S. ambassador to both Turkey and Thailand; assistant secretary of state for intelligence and research; U.S. ambassador to the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction negotiations in Vienna; deputy assistant secretary of defense for inter-American, east Asian and Pacific affairs and special assistant to the secretary of defense. His articles and essays on U.S. foreign policy and political issues have appeared in publications around the world.

Sergio Vieira de Mello, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, United Nations

Under-Secretary-General Vieira de Mello was named to this post in January 1998. As head of the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), he directs humanitarian emergency response and plays a major role in policy development and advocacy on humanitarian issues. Previously, Vieira de Mello served as U.N. assistant high commissioner for refugees. His extensive headquarters and field experience in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations includes work in Bangladesh, Sudan, Cyprus, Mozambique, Peru and Lebanon. He has also served as special envoy for the U.N. high commissioner for refugees in Cambodia; director of repatriation for the U.N. Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC); head of civil affairs of the U.N. Protection Force (UNPROFOR); and U.N. regional humanitarian coordinator for the Great Lakes.

Dr. Michael Toole, Head, International Health Unit, Macfarlane Burnet Center for Medical Research, Melbourne, Australia

Dr. Toole is a medical epidemiologist currently overseeing a wide range of community health projects in the Asia-Pacific region and Africa (with special emphasis on child survival and HIV/AIDS), as well as communicable disease control and emergency preparedness and response. Between 1986 and 1995, he worked at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) where he coordinated technical assistance to refugee and displaced populations in ten countries, conducted child survival projects in 13 African countries, and designed and implemented operational research studies throughout the world. Toole has direct field work experience in 31 countries.
SUMMARY

In the discussion of staying ahead of the next crisis, a critical distinction was made between political or man-made crises and those crises caused by natural disasters.

**Political crises.** Political crises dominated the discussion and included an underlying point made several times – that humanitarian aid or intervention cannot solve political crises. They require a political response, and nothing less. That is the responsibility of states, not of international agencies or NGOs. Humanitarian aid can only mitigate the consequences of political action or inaction on a short-term basis.

It was accepted that in the political and economic instability following the end of the Cold War, there has been, and will continue to be, an increase in man-made crises that cause tremendous human suffering and loss of life. However, since most of these crises occur in parts of the world that prosperous democracies do not perceive as strategically important, early warnings about a pending crisis cannot overcome the reluctance on the part of those democracies to respond politically and, especially, militarily. Therefore, while our ability to gather and analyze political information has improved, it has little effect as a factor in preventing or responding to a crisis.

Only when the crisis erupts and expands to grotesque proportions do countries respond, and then too often only with humanitarian aid. This response is forced by the dimensions of the crisis itself, the level of media attention, the power of advocacy groups and internal political pressures on the intervening states.

Adding to the predictable increase in political crises, whether they take the form of war, civil war or unrest and economic collapse, is the threat brought by the changing nature of combat. Civilians are now targets of war, and so are those who would relieve their suffering, the humanitarian aid workers, who are often perceived as partisan.

**Natural disasters.** Here, much has been learned and much progress made. While floods, droughts and other natural phenomena cannot be prevented, they can be predicted and steps taken to mitigate their consequences.

**Overall progress.** Refugee public health has emerged as a field of medicine, and much has been learned and achieved in disease prevention. Likewise, humanitarian agencies have developed more effective delivery systems for food and supplies. They have learned the benefits of coordination among all players – international agencies, NGOs and local residents and officials.

During the discussion following the panelists’ presentations, there was much positive response and discussion about one participant’s observation that coordination is not only desirable in delivery of on-the-ground services, but that it should be applied to advocacy, lobbying and decision-making, as well.
Morton Abramowitz:

I have about 10 minutes to cover a huge subject, so I’m going to be very crude and selective. My focus is on external humanitarian action and foreign policy and domestic and international politics, on man-made crises within states and on the breakdown of states, and not on global war, which I think is a thing of the past, probably.

First let me say that the title of this panel, “Staying Ahead of the Next Crisis,” is, I think, a misnomer. We have rarely been ahead of the curve in preventing humanitarian disasters. Invariably, the world (response) has been too little and too late, and the resulting costs, human and material, have been enormous. Take the period since (the Dayton Bosnia Accords). The world is approaching spending $20 billion, and by the time the international community departs -- they’re going to have to be there a long time – I wouldn’t be surprised if that figure approaches $50 billion.

Take the lovely term “early warning,” so dear to the hearts of foundation program officers and their beneficiaries and think tanks and academia. We have, of course, endless amounts of early warning on potential crises. But domestic and international politics invariably prevent governments from taking serious long-term measures of prevention. Short-term domestic political costs almost always drive out highly uncertain long-term measures except under extraordinary political leadership.

Look at Kosovo. We had at least 10 years of early warning. The world did nothing except to tell Mr. Rugava, “Your policy of non-violence is wonderful. You’re not a Gandhi. Maybe we’ll give you a Nobel Prize, but please shut up and be patient.” That, in essence, led to the rise of Albanian insurgency. Indeed, two relatively recent external acts have helped lead to that violence. Kosovo was not considered at Dayton and the European Community recognized Yugoslavia after insisting that they would not do so unless there was movement on Kosovo. Six months ago, we had a warning of a great humanitarian disaster -- that was in February [1998], late February, when Mr. Milosovic drove 20,000 ethnic Albanians out of their villages. When the disaster broke in June and July, the politicians had failed and so had the humanitarians.

The good news is that the information and the analyses on potential crises are improving. The bad news is it doesn’t matter much, since to act preventably requires domestic political capabilities that democracies don’t have when their security interests and sense of well-being are not at stake.

I have been asked to discuss what we have learned from this highly chaotic post-Cold War decade and its foreign policy implications. The only way I can do this is to be very rough and to give you some general judgments in the time allotted.

First: Clearly humanitarian action, humanitarian aid, is a growth industry. There is a vast and continuing requirement, particularly in Africa. We are not smart enough to know when the post-Cold War chaos and instability will end. We will need to help keep millions alive. We’ll need to provide external asylum and to support millions of internally displaced [people]. Fortunately, much experience has improved the delivery of humanitarian services.
Second: Humanitarian disasters have similar features, but they are all different, and so are the external responses. There are no agreed methods, except that diplomatic “to-ings” and “fro-ings” are always deemed good or constructive. I would say parenthetically that I call them often pseudo diplomacy -- to give the appearance of action for their publics while avoiding more domestically politically contentious measures. The degrees of external involvement, ranging from exhortation diplomacy and economic aid to military involvement in preventing and containing humanitarian disasters, is relatively low, since few humanitarian disasters are perceived to have much strategic content. The crisis itself is only one of many factors affecting this external response. Others are the media, the strength of advocacy groups and the internal political fallout. Much depends on the leadership of the United States. Clearly, in terms of crisis, Africa is on the low end of the totem pole. The international community, not surprisingly, has great difficulty sorting itself out when basic human principles, international principles, collide. For example, the claims of sovereignty against massive human rights violations. Or nationalism and self-determination of specific groups. That balance will continue to have to be resolved on an ad-hoc basis.

Despite the many disasters and the fear of so-called compassion fatigue, there remains a great generosity in democratic countries for humanitarian assistance. This, however, pertains mostly to funds and to the support of the dedicated work of a large number of humanitarian agencies. Parts of the humanitarian system have been badly frayed. The principle of first asylum is in deep trouble and democratic politics often generate forcible returns of refugees. The United States can probably no longer do the extraordinary thing it did during the Carter Administration, which was for two years in a row to take in 164,000 Indo-Chinese refugees. Mr. Begleiter has mentioned the media, which, as he rightly says, and particularly television, is essential in generating popular and governmental responses to actual disasters. However, the media, as he also points out, is virtually no help in preventing disasters in pre-crisis situations where there are few pictures to be taken. The media is a business. And as the media is a business, there is little to be gained in examining pre-crisis situations.

States -- the handful of wealthy democracies -- not the U.N., not NGOs and not international organizations, remain the principal players in coping with crises. The others are essentially supporting players, vital for implementing programs -- a responsibility which governments are pleased to give them. The United Nations, NGOs, and agencies like UNHCR [U.N. High Commission on Refugees] are often loaded down with impossible burdens -- dangerous situations -- ones where countries refuse to provide protection or use their own military.

NGOs have some influence in generating more relief funds and occasionally more active government involvement, but they are imperfect advocates because of their financial dependence on governments. The U.N. itself has often been used as an excuse for the failure of governments, as the United States did in Somalia.

Lastly, let me note that humanitarian action has run into some serious internal conflicts. The notion that there is such a thing as humanitarian space in crisis situations is increasingly questioned -- particularly on grounds of moral equivalence and the times that it helps to perpetuate conflicts. Secondly, the use of humanitarian action by governments as a vehicle for avoiding more dangerous and politically difficult but necessary forms of intervention is increasingly disturbing to many NGOs, but not sufficiently so for them in combination, or separately, to stop working for governments.
I have also been asked to say a word about future threats. There are two types: those areas where humanitarian crises are likely to occur or break out, and those threats to the international community’s capacity and willingness to deal with such threats. The center of the problems is likely to remain in Africa. In certain cases like the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in neighboring countries, our intellectual capability to grasp the problem and to try to deal with it on a regional basis is simply missing. The second center remains the breakdown in states emerging from the Soviet Union in the former Yugoslavia. Bosnia, Serbia and Macedonia are very dangerous places. Other candidates are Iraq, Cuba, Burma and possibly Pakistan.

Finally, the world economic crisis is creating new disaster candidates. Indonesia is already in deep decline and it’s not clear where the country is headed. I expect it’s not headed for a breakup, but that can’t be precluded. The second huge concern arising out of the world economic crisis is China, and the potential for domestic breakdown. The world economic debacle could also reach the West in ways that would reduce interest in responding to humanitarian crises, affect both public and private financial resources and make refugee resettlement and asylum even more difficult. The other threat is one I’ve alluded to -- the growing reluctance of the United States and other Western countries to take preventive action or to robustly respond to humanitarian disasters employing military means. Humanitarian intervention -- military intervention in sovereign countries for humanitarian purposes -- has little political support in the United States. Somalia seriously undermined that. So we have humanitarianism with the traditional rules being eroded, perhaps broken, and the domestic political wherewithal consistently in jeopardy. This means that nations will pass more and more onto the United Nations and regional organizations. At this point in time, that is not a comforting prospect.

Sergio Vieira de Mello:

Let me take this opportunity to share with you some of our main concerns and the most difficult questions that have arisen as a result of our efforts in recent years, and indeed, our mistakes in recent years.

Humanitarian tragedies, as we know only too well, occur every day of the year …. in all corners of the world, particularly to those you never hear about because …we pay too much attention to side issues, to minor issues, to futile issues -- not to the fundamental ones. The primary obligation of humanitarian agencies and personnel is, as is self-evident, to save lives and reduce suffering. Every day, dedicated individuals from government agencies, the U.N., the NGO community, spare no effort …. to follow the long established principles to which the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), in particular, and ourselves, remain committed. Those are humanity, neutrality, and impartiality. They provide food; they provide shelter and medical care to the most needy. They assist in repatriating refugees or resettling internally displaced persons in their new communities, or uniting lost children with their families.

Increasingly, however, the fundamental tenets of humanitarians are being undermined. Over 90 percent of the casualties of today’s generation of warfare are innocent civilians …. The nature of war has changed; combatants avoid open classical conventional confrontation and choose instead to sow terror. In recent years, we have seen too many examples of horrendous atrocities targeted at civilian populations, including amputations, rape, torture, and terrorism. In the internal conflicts that prevail today, the targeting of civilians is by no means an accident any longer. It is not an accidental outcome of
fighting. It is the very objective of the warring parties. This constitutes a complete and deliberate disregard for the principles of international humanitarian law and must be clearly condemned. But condemnations won’t take us very far.

Recent history, in fact, may suggest that evil is prevailing. I often ask myself that question. The body of international norms is under severe challenge, particularly in the humanitarian sphere. It is being, in fact, systematically flouted and disregarded ... deliberately violated. Does this mean a breakdown of those norms? I don’t think so. What it means is a breakdown of respect for those norms -- a behavioral breakdown that we must attempt to address. One of the most complex challenges facing the humanitarian community today is safeguarding the welfare of civilian victims in an environment where they have become, as we said, deliberate targets. Confronted with such a challenge, I believe that there is an immediate need to develop new and innovative ways of promoting respect for humanitarian norms and principles.

First of all, those who violate these norms should be held accountable. And in this respect, progress, however modest and belated, toward the establishment of the International Criminal Court, can only be applauded. I personally believe that the Court will, whenever it actually comes into existence -- which, unfortunately, as you know, may still take a few years -- embody the ethical conscience of humankind. And there is no justification -- absolutely no justification -- for opposing it.

These deliberate attacks on civilian populations are not targeted only at civilians, however. They are also targeted at those who attempt to assist the civilians -- that is, humanitarian personnel. As the withholding of food is used as a weapon of war, the providers of food are automatically perceived as taking sides. Anyone helping the victims on one side is bound to be accused by the other side, [i.e.] of supporting the enemy. Under these circumstances, humanitarian workers inevitably become targets in places like Tajikistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola, Afghanistan, the former Yugoslavia, and many more. Humanitarian personnel have become the victims of deliberate attacks, including robbery, kidnapping, and even murder.

This year 17 U.N. civilian humanitarian staff have lost their lives to similar attacks. For the first time in our history it is more dangerous to be an unarmed humanitarian worker than an armed soldier on peacekeeping duties. These attacks against humanitarian workers not only constitute an abominable violation of international humanitarian law, but also seriously compromise the ability of international humanitarian agencies to assist those in need. While there are international legal instruments to safeguard the welfare of humanitarian workers, parties to conflicts pay less and less respect to them. In fact, they deliberately ignore them, and may often even target those emblems that previously provided protection to humanitarian staff. This situation has got to change.

It is often said that there are no such things as humanitarian crises. There are, in fact, political crises caused by political failures and what we see and what we treat with relief assistance are only the visible symptoms of a disease. Relief aid is glaringly insufficient to ensure the welfare of a population, and humanitarian action is no substitute for the protection that only political and often military means can provide to civilians in danger. Rather, humanitarian action, like peacekeeping action, must take place alongside political efforts in order to achieve lasting solutions to conflicts. Ideally, humanitarian action ought to be redundant, if we were able to stay ahead of the crisis. Yet even when crises loom large and
threaten to repeat past horrors, as we’re now seeing in Kosovo, it is often difficult to get political activists to agree on decisive remedial action, although perhaps we might be getting there as I speak.

In too many situations, crises are allowed to fester into armed conflict where civilians bear the brunt of the fighting. And in too many situations, humanitarian agencies are the only actors in town. We have witnessed that in Bosnia, where the humanitarian agencies put on the front lines and backed up from 1992 onwards by a peacekeeping force, provided relief to civilians, many of whom were later killed. At the height of the war, I remember George Soros visiting Sarajevo, and in a meeting with General Michael Rose, who was then commander for Bosnia/Herzegovina, and myself, telling us with that calm and frank anger, that we were like wardens of a huge concentration camp -- and on top of that, a camp that was under constant shelling and sniper fire. Well, in those days those comments, of course, shocked us. But what he meant was that we were complacent. Not us – UNPROFOR [U.N. Protection Forces], UNHCR and NGOs working there -- but we, the so-called international community, for our failure to address the causes of that conflict and simply putting humanitarian agents, with a U.N. peacekeeping force to back them, on the front line and leaving them there in solitude for three-and-a-half years.

The truth is, most of the countries in which conflicts are taking place nowadays have little or no strategic importance to the major powers which are unwilling to get involved politically or militarily in what they see as a no-win situation. Be that as it may, political crises do require political responses and nothing short of this will do.

Let each of us take his or her responsibilities. For our part, we must stress time and again that humanitarian action alone cannot address the violations of international law, in particular, human rights law and international humanitarian law, that lie at the root of most humanitarian crises. The role of humanitarian actors, however important, is simply to mitigate the consequence of those violations and call for action by those who can actually prevent or stop conflicts. Humanitarian actions, incidentally, should only be there, like peacekeeping actions, for the short-term, when it is needed, to move from the crisis to the solution. But don’t assign to humanitarian actors ... don’t assign to public opinion ... don’t assign to our conscience responsibility and guilt for crimes we all do not commit.

On the verge of this new millennium, humanitarian action has reached a critical turning point. It is high time for the international community to take past lessons to heart and start addressing what are increasingly complex humanitarian emergencies in a bold and hopefully comprehensive fashion.

To stay ahead of new crises, states -- not humanitarian agencies or humanitarian staff -- must assume their responsibility in preserving international peace and security, to which internal conflicts are clearly a threat, and to ensure the respect for international humanitarian law and human rights. It is a coincidence (and I consider that a fortunate coincidence) that the Security Council is meeting today in formal session for the entire day to discuss the very issue that is at the heart of this debate here today, which is protection of international humanitarian assistance to refugees and internally displaced persons, protection of civilian populations, and protection of humanitarian personnel. It is a development we welcome. It is an expression of interest on the part of the supreme body in terms of preserving peace and security. But interest, however important it may be, is not enough. And as someone said earlier on,
you certainly can help us narrow that glaring gap that exists between interest, when it is there, and action.

Dr. Michael Toole (with accompanying slides):

Rather than summarize lessons learned from the millennium, I’ll start in 1976. These two decades since 1976 span a quite extraordinary change in the global political context, evolution in the quality of humanitarian assistance, heightened expectations of international crises resolution, and increased verbal commitment to human rights and humanitarian responsibilities beyond our own borders. However, the same period was marked by an alarming epidemic of localized conflicts and displaced populations -- and even more alarming -- scant progress toward reducing their root causes. Thus, the global number of refugees increased from approximately 2.5 million in 1976 to a peak of 24 million in 1994 and has come down to around 14 to 15 million today. In addition, there are up to 30 million internally displaced persons due to war.

My own experience began in 1976 in a camp in northern Thailand for refugees from Laos. In a way, during that Cold War era, things seemed simpler. Refugees were granted temporary asylum by the host country, located at a safe distance from their fears. They were protected by UNHCR under fairly unambiguous international conventions. As health workers, our time was consumed by busy outpatient clinics and hospital wards. We were isolated. We had no textbooks, no manuals to guide us in this unfamiliar environment, and few sources of expert advice. Our public health priorities were largely determined by the queue of patients at the clinic door.

Three years later, a very large influx of Cambodian refugees into Eastern Thailand led to a massive international response. Hundreds of well-intentioned medical volunteers basically created bamboo versions of the services that they had been trained to develop in Milwaukee, Melbourne, or Milan. However, the level of public health surveillance and studies in these camps conducted by ICRC and the CDC was unprecedented, and perhaps began the process of developing a specialized field of refugee public health.

So, lesson one is that effective refugee health care must be based on accurate information and focus on disease prevention and health promotion.

In Somalia in 1980 and 1981, up to a million ethnic Somali refugees fled from Ethiopia into Somalia. Although this crisis was of minimal interest to Western nations, there certainly was no questioning that something should be done. Initially, death rates were extremely high and the international response was quite inadequate. Eventually, the world responded and dozens of NGOs -- large and small -- converged on the country.

One of the great successes in well-coordinated effective refugee assistance has scarcely ever been acknowledged. The Somali ministry of health developed a Refugee Health Unit (RHU), staffed by Somali professionals and invited expatriate advisors, that coordinated the planning and implementation of this countrywide program. Perhaps for the first time, the essential principles of primary health care formed the basis of an emergency assistance program. Priorities were determined through camp
surveys and good information gathering. Policies, procedures and protocols were standardized through participatory workshops, and most importantly, two thousand refugee community health workers were trained to provide basic health services. NGOs had to sign an agreement between the RHU and UNHCR to adhere to these basic principles. Thus, relief agencies were held accountable to locally developed standards.

However, it was also in Somalia that a severe, life-threatening condition was identified that actually resulted from the refugee experience. In a four-year period, 30,000 refugees were afflicted by the ancient disease of scurvy, almost unknown in Africa, because the international aid community had not included vitamin C in their rations.

Lesson two: Highly effective outcomes may be achieved through active involvement of host government staff, utilization of local refugee skills, and the insistence on accountability by relief agencies.

In the mid-1980s, the great famine that occurred in northern Ethiopia was largely politically generated, with food aid intended for the northern provinces of Tigray and Eritrea deliberately obstructed by the extreme nationalist, communist government. Hundreds of thousands of refugees fled the famine in northern Ethiopia into arid east Sudan where they experienced unusually high death rates. Politically, the response to this emergency was relatively straightforward. However, the assistance program was initially ineffective. There was poor coordination, technical assistance was weak, and essential public health programs very slow to develop. For example, during the first three months, almost one-third of all deaths were due to one condition -- measles -- easily prevented at that time by low cost, effective vaccine. It seemed that, despite the gains made in refugee public health during the Somali crisis, these lessons were inadequately incorporated into the policies and procedures of relief agencies, be they multilateral, bilateral or NGOs.

Lesson three: The major causes of death in refugee populations in developing countries may be prevented through the prompt use of well-proven, low-cost interventions.

During the late 1980s, at least two million Mozambicans were either displaced within the country or were refugees in neighboring countries. They fled persecution, violence, and forced labor, largely conducted by the opponents of the then socialist government. During the first years of the conflict, however, all efforts focused on those outside the country, and ignored the plight of the desperate people trapped inside Mozambique.

Lesson four: The international community had not -- and maybe still has not -- developed adequate mechanisms to ensure that internally displaced persons receive sufficient humanitarian assistance and protection.

The camps and settlements of Malawi provided extensive and important lessons about the specific nature of assistance required to maintain the health of refugees. Specific protocols were developed for the prevention of measles in densely populated camps; the control of malaria in an endemic setting; the prevention of contamination of household water; the prevention and control of epidemic cholera and meningitis; and the monitoring of the adequacy of household food rations.
Just as refugees from northern Ethiopia in Somalia developed scurvy due to a lack of Vitamin C in their diet, so did the refugees from Mozambique in Malawi suffer from an unprecedented epidemic of a fatal disease, pellagra, when the sole source of niacin in the ration was eliminated. Once again, there was another blind spot.

Lesson five: Refugees and internally displaced persons require the same quantity and range of nutrients as do other human beings. Supply-driven aid is ineffective and unethical.

In addition to Malawi, during these times [there was] a rapid development of the technical field of refugee health. Increasingly, certain NGOs routinely conducted rapid needs assessments and routine public health surveillance. This data informed their public health program planning. During this period, manuals, guidelines, treatment protocols and minimal standards were developed and published by among others, Oxfam, MSF (Médecins Sans Frontières), UNHCR, CDC, ICRC, and UNICEF. Georgetown University hosted the first international conference on refugee health.

Lesson six: Public health for refugees and other conflict-affected populations has evolved as a specialist field with its own indicators, policies, procedures and reference materials.

In the aftermath of the Gulf War, hundreds of thousands of Northern Iraqis, mostly Kurdish refugees, fled to the borders of Turkey and Iran. When Turkey, a key ally of the Gulf War, denied asylum to many of these would-be refugees, international conventions were no longer useful. The bold action by the major powers to enforce a safe zone within Iraq was largely effective; however, it would prove to be a unique situation that set no precedent for future effective interventions.

Despite the logistical advantages of the various military forces engaged in the relief program, there were many problems. An effective mechanism for coordination of military, multilateral and NGO inputs remained elusive during the early months. The decision-making process was not always transparent, and not always based on sound evidence. The early emphasis on providing food ignored the fact that diarrheal disease was the most important public health problem and caused many deaths.

The issue of the role of the military in humanitarian aid is complex and will be addressed by a panel later today. However, I should say that for the purpose of planning for improved responses to humanitarian crises, the fact remains that third party national military forces are largely irrelevant. The deployment of these forces, no matter how well trained and prepared they may be, remains unpredictable, highly inconsistent, and dependent on decisions made by their commanders-in-chief.

Lesson seven: Bold political measures and military support will only be effective if their application is predictable and consistent, if interventions are based on real public health needs, and if field personnel are adequately trained.

Somalia -- 1992 to 1993. I think since the early 1990's, the major emerging threat to the health and well being of war-affected civilians has been the difficulty of access. The disintegration of the fragile post-colonial power system in Somalia, the resulting collapse in governance, the withdrawal of international development agencies, and the disinterest of the international community led to a steady decline in living standards in Somalia, culminating in outright civil war and famine. The outcomes, both
positive and otherwise, of the belated intervention by armed United Nations forces has been well documented -- the failure to sustain neutrality a critical issue.

The health impact of the Somali conflict was catastrophic. Public health lessons acquired in earlier crises could not be applied, because access to affected communities was subject to armed threats, blackmail, and violence. Competent and experienced relief workers and agencies were forced into ethically untenable choices: abandon the needy or submit to bribery and escorts by heavily armed guards. In making a decision, some of the world’s most respected relief organizations were forced to betray their basic principles and inadvertently provided credibility and power to war lords and petty criminals. As has been already mentioned, the shaken confidence that resulted from this experience set the stage for international inertia during the emergencies that were soon to follow.

Lesson eight: The role of armed United Nations personnel and humanitarian aid efforts will only be effective if the various objectives of aid delivery, peacekeeping and peace making are clarified and adhered to.

In the early '90s there was a rapid increase in armed intrastate conflicts. Many conflicts arose as the two superpowers withdrew economic support and macro-economic policies widened the gap between rich and poor. No area of the world was spared. Civil strife flared in Eastern Europe; Papua, New Guinea; Sri Lanka; Liberia; Sierra Leone; Burma and Bhutan. Longstanding conflicts continued in countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Burundi, Palestine, and the United Kingdom. Conveniently labeled by some as ethnic conflicts, this was an over-simplification and in many cases a blatant misnomer.

Lesson nine: The proliferation, geographic spread, and variety of armed conflicts globally underscores the continued lack of consensus on what triggers a consistent, predictable, and adequate humanitarian response. Meanwhile, NGOs continue to be at the front line of rapid response.

The outbreak of internal conflicts in the former Yugoslavia took the world by surprise ... extraordinary measures were taken to allow the delivery of humanitarian assistance, including the deployment of armed U.N. forces, to accompany aid convoys. My experience concerns the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, in Serb-controlled eastern Bosnia. Most lessons we learned in the '70s and '80s were derived from developing countries in warm climates. We had no comparable knowledge since World War II to apply to an industrialized country with a well-educated population and a cold climate.

Despite this, experienced and professional NGOs did achieve most effective health outcomes, supported by UNHCR and the World Health Organization (WHO), a relatively new player. As in Somalia, representative health surveys were near impossible. But, practically all assessments concluded that there was only one critical public health problem in Bosnia -- injuries and death caused by violence. There was only one significant public health goal in that splintered republic: stop the violence. The international community took more than three years to achieve that goal.

Perhaps the most profoundly depressing day of my adult life occurred at a snow-bound checkpoint in the eastern Bosnian town of Rogatica. I watched a Serb militia use slave labor, Muslim prisoners, to unload food and medicines intended for the enclave of Zepa in front of heavily armed but powerless
representatives of the international community. On that bleak day, international conventions and legal instruments seemed meaningless.

Lesson 10: In public health, primary prevention aims to remove the risk of individuals being exposed to potentially harmful agents. Secondary and tertiary prevention measures reduce the harm caused by the agent and the risk of mortality or disability, respectively. When war-related injuries have been the major public health problem, the international community has failed to achieve the goals of primary prevention.

The terrible events that occurred in Rwanda and its neighboring states have been extensively documented, analyzed and digested. My involvement began in Goma in Zaire, where a massive influx of refugees provided an epilogue to the unimpeded genocide inside Rwanda. The epilogue was one of the most lethal refugee emergencies since the Second World War. Beyond the human tragedy lay important lessons. Epidemics of cholera and dysentery that killed tens of thousands could have been mitigated or at least delayed with the immediate application of low technology, well-tested techniques of water purification. Studies demonstrated that the high technology approach eventually taken most likely failed to prevent more than a handful of cases of cholera. The Goma crisis was a clear demonstration that the response to humanitarian disasters requires technical personnel with highly specific skills, efficient management systems, a high degree of cooperation, and a lot of common sense. Advanced logistical systems mean little when used to support ineffective interventions.

Lesson 11: The quality of NGOs varies widely. Those NGOs that have developed institutional expertise in the key technical areas of humanitarian aid and have invested in staff training, have proven their effectiveness and should be supported consistently.

In summary, significant progress has been made during the past two decades toward the provision of effective, focused, needs-based humanitarian assistance. Greater emphasis is now placed on the quality, the appropriateness, coverage, equitable distribution, and impact, including health outcomes, rather than the volume of international aid. A number of relief agencies, especially NGOs, have developed manuals, guidelines, and targeted training courses. The ICRC course, *Health Emergencies in Large Populations*; the MSF course, *Populations en Situations Precaires*; and the course for U.S.-based NGOs developed by InterAction are excellent examples. Those NGOs have developed systems of both technical and management accountability and will, for some time, remain the most rapid and effective responders. This is not to say that all relief NGOs have that capacity. The ability to meet the standard performance indicators developed recently by the SPHERE project and adherence to the international NGO code of ethics may help donor agencies assess the quality of specific NGOs.

Many technical areas require further development to meet emerging threats. We need to support applied health research in emergency settings if more effective interventions are to be developed against old problems, such as cholera, and emerging problems, such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, mental health problems, injury prevention, and reproductive health. Improving the technical and management capacity of operational agencies will not be good enough. Those in need will not benefit unless mechanisms to permit secure access are ensured. The means by which this access is provided is critical.

There remains the issue of primary prevention. The perceived differences between communities are generally tolerated in prosperous societies. Conflict and all its consequences generally arise from
economic distress. While programs promoting good governance proliferate today, the reality is that governments everywhere -- in the North, South, East and West -- are perceived by their peoples to have failed to provide for their basic needs. Unless we seriously address these root causes of conflict, all we will do today is to perpetuate a millennial relief industry that inevitably will experience only patchy success.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: Tony Kozlowski, American Refugee Committee. With regard to strategy in a post-Cold War world -- macro-strategy -- it seems to me that since, as Sergio mentioned, most conflicts in the post-Cold War period appear in countries where the Western powers don’t have any strategic interests, that the strategy has been to try to promote regional organizations -- economic, political, military -- to respond to those crises. Yet Mr. Abramowitz mentions that that is perhaps not a very helpful way of approaching the situation. I’d be very interested to know from the panelists starting with Mr. Vieira de Mello what the U.N. thinks in terms of focusing the response -- humanitarian response -- from regional organizations as we’re seeing in West Africa, and as was just announced recently, for the Balkans, etc.

A: Vieira de Mello. First of all, I think the U.N. Charter is clear about the role of regional organizations. Not only is there nothing wrong with their involvement in conflict prevention or resolution, but I think it is even necessary to involve them more than has been the case in the past. I think we’ve had good examples of what regional organizations can do, and what the U.N., perhaps, is not in a position to do, or what both can do together. We’re right now working, as you know, rather closely with Kenya, who is in charge of the IGAD [Intergovernmental Authority on Development] committee on the Sudan. They’re doing discrete, diplomatic work and we wish to be able to support them more than has been the case in the past, but Kenya and IGAD must remain in the lead on the Sudan. You also refer to West Africa -- the role ECOLAS [Economic Commission of West African States] and ECOMOG [ECOWAS Cease Fire Monitoring Group] have played in Sierra Leone is much more commendable perhaps than its previous role in Liberia, and is certainly extremely useful, together with the community of Portuguese-speaking countries, in finding a solution to the conflict in Guinea Bissau. My answer to your question is: I am a firm believer in the role of regional and sub-regional organizations which the United Nations can, and should, support in preventing and resolving conflict.

A: Abramowitz. When I talked about the role of the advanced democracies, and particularly the wealthy democracies, and particularly the role of the United States, I was not simply referring to military. I believe there are a variety of problems for which the United States simply cannot use military force, for many reasons. I’m referring basically to what extent the United States applies the vigor of its diplomacy, the strength of its resources and others, in resolving crises -- and that’s a variable quantity. I guess the supply of good diplomatic talent is limited. In any event, that, to me, is one of the principal pillars of trying to get adequate response. And it’s not just a military response.

I’m not opposed to regional institutions. I certainly would like to see them developed, and I believe they do have a very important legitimate role. I simply have not been impressed by their performance to date by and large. The only regional institution that really works effectively is the European Union (E.U.), and they work effectively when it comes to economic matters. When it comes to foreign policy, they are at sea in getting a common foreign policy. The OAU [Organization for African Unity] of
course has a role and I would love to see it developed. I just think it’s got a long, long way to go, and to look at them as a savior at this point in time, is I think, misleading. It doesn’t mean we shouldn’t improve them, encourage them, but they are not, to me, at this point in time, a very effective instrument - important, useful, but of course, [it’s a matter of] simple effectiveness.

Q: Pierre Laurant, Médecins du Monde International. ... I think a part of the humanitarian aid challenge in the new millennium is coordination. Not only on operational aspects, but also in advocacy, lobbying, and decision making. Sergio, I think it is approximately one year that you are in your function. What is the change today? Is there a chance of success this time?

A: Vieira de Mello. The question remains very legitimate. I won’t talk about coordination in its classical meaning, because it’s one of the most boring topics on Earth, but I like the way you put it, which is, coordination in terms of lobbying and advocacy. And there, I must admit, it is our weakest point. The U.N., in particular, doesn’t know what advocacy is all about, doesn’t know what mass communication is all about. Our new Secretary General requested last year that a few prominent personalities who know more about these topics than we do make recommendations to him as to how the organization could speak a language that would convey its cause in a more persuasive, more powerful manner to the public at large, what we now call civil society. Well, we need to do the same in my office, and my plan is to have a very small but very strong and capable, experienced mass communications unit that would serve the humanitarian community as a whole, either in the promotion of generic causes such as those we’re discussing here today, or country-specific causes benefiting from the NGO community. NGOs can be far more outspoken than U.N. agencies. But there are also other powerful means of communications for lobbying and advocacy, like all of you here. We’re not in a position right now to do that, so I admit so far my failure, but we have a very, very clear plan in our minds and I hope to implement it soon, incidentally, with the very generous support from the European Commission in Brussels.

Q: Peter Walker, International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. This session is about looking at the future of humanitarianism. Humanitarianism is about the alleviation of suffering -- the impartial alleviation of suffering. If we actually add up the figures today and look at where most lives are being lost or where, potentially, most suffering can be alleviated, it’s the floods and recurring diseases and the changing disease patterns that actually come out with, if you like, the biggest potential market for our work. Yet, most of the focus of our international debate is around the military, the war-driven crises. I wonder if you see that changing and how you see the future, Sergio and Mike, of major disasters in the next decade.

Mort, you talked about us living in a growth industry in humanitarianism. A growth market maybe, but I wonder if we’re a growth industry. If we look at the funding figures for humanitarianism and long-term development, they’re not going up -- they’re going down. With that, funding remains reactive and short-term. It has shifted from being bilateral to being international, to being directed to NGOs working on the ground. How do you see that trend going in terms of where the cash comes from that drives our business?

A: Toole. I’m afraid I’m not very good at foreseeing the future. We’ve all made some big mistakes in predictions in the last decade. Peter, you’ve already pointed out that the total amount of money
available for humanitarian purposes, including long-term development assistance, has been shrinking and continues to shrink. Regrettably, you find competition between people who are focusing on the kind of humanitarian emergency that we’ve been discussing today, with the emerging communicable disease threats, with the emerging non-communicable disease threats, injuries, and occupational environmental problems which are growing far more rapidly than the communicable diseases. I can’t predict which way the apportioning of funds will go. We all know that the response to humanitarian crises, once they have reached our screens via CNN, are very popular among the publics of wealthy countries. I wouldn’t think that that will change. Now that I’ve actually left the field of humanitarian response ...

I’m working in the midst of one of the greatest disasters the world has seen since the second World War, the AIDS epidemic. Like many other problems, we seem to have become very blasé about this, despite the fact that the infant mortality rate in Zimbabwe has increased by 10 per thousand, which is more than 10 percent in the last three years. I’m confronted by a battery of conflicting problems. I have no idea how the political decision-makers will respond.

A: Vieira de Mello. Peter’s question was perhaps more general and more critical in the sense that we tend to pay far more attention to conflict-related disasters than we do to natural, environmental and technological disasters. And he’s right -- developing countries keep drawing our attention to those disasters that affect them most -- in their infrastructure, in their agricultural production capacity. We have a mechanism that is there and that I think can be improved in terms of disaster prevention, disaster mitigation, and disaster response. Progress has been made in the past. Look at the relative success in our response to the second earthquake in northern Afghanistan in perhaps one of the most remote and hostile areas of the planet last June. We improved our performance as compared to the previous earthquake in February. Look at the floods in Bangladesh that have affected 30 million people. Obviously, there is very little you can do to prevent that from happening, but what we managed to do, using high tech, but also very primitive means of early warning, was to reduce the number of fatal occurrences to the minimum. Only a few hundred, if I may put it that way, only a few hundred actually died. This would not have been so 20 years ago -- thousands would have died. Why? Because we managed to move them to areas that were not flooded in time -- before the hurricane hit. There is a lot being done out there. We need to work much more with UNDP [United Nations Development Programme] in particular, in improving response, but also, obviously, prevention and mitigation.

A: Abramowitz. When I said that humanitarianism was a growth industry, I was referring to all the spots around the world which are generating humanitarian problems. It’s hard to predict when the chaos in the world will cease, or will decline, so there’s going to be a lot of opportunity for NGOs and others to stay involved. Now, whether the resources will be available to deal adequately with the vast number of these disasters, is a very difficult question to answer. One of the threats to that may be the world economic debacle and its spread to the West, and its potential impact on both public and private donors. I’m relatively impressed by the willingness of people to put out a lot of money to help. Much of that is influenced by the work of Mr. Begleiter and his friends. They certainly play a role in fashioning a response. Whether the resources will be there or not, I don’t know, but by and large I am impressed by the willingness of nations to continue to spend large amounts of money. In fact, in the U.S. State Department budget, I believe the humanitarian effort is the biggest one and one of the most popular ones on Capitol Hill. There’s not much popular in the State Department budget on the Hill.
Q: **Begleiter.** Let me take advantage of the chair’s prerogative for just a moment to ask both Dr. Toole and Secretary Vieira de Mello ... Dr. Toole, in your paper, and Mr. Secretary just now in your comment, made reference to the idea that there have been problems you have identified in past responses to humanitarian crises that strongly suggest to me the need for something like war games, which is what the Pentagon does to try to figure out how to handle the next crisis. Mr. Secretary, you indicated that some of that is being done by the United Nations. Dr. Toole, are humanitarian organizations engaging in the equivalent, the humanitarian equivalent, of war games to figure out in advance what to do in a cold climate in an industrialized country for a yet undetermined crisis?

A: **Toole.** I believe that although not quite analogous to the war games you refer to, these sorts of exercises are often a very integral part of the training courses that have been put on by at least three organizations. In the United States there have been the equivalent of war games in creating potential scenarios, and while they’ve been initiated largely by the military, they have involved non-military participants. I’m not familiar with the details of those, but there are people here who are familiar with them.

A: **Vieira de Mello.** I don’t think I would be breaking any big secret here if I said that in February, when the likelihood of military action against Iraq was high, we were very discreetly getting ready for it. I mean, operational agencies, both here and in Geneva, were prepared to respond to different types of scenarios. We are doing that right now, I’m sorry to say, for a possible recurrence of the conflict between Ethiopia and Eritrea. And we tell both parties. They tell us, “We might go to war,” and we tell them, “Okay, let’s try and get ready to a certain degree with your help.” But this is the absurdity. This is the scandal that I was calling your attention to. Help us prevent that particular war from taking place. Why should we be there getting ready, getting prepared, to respond to a human disaster on both sides of the border, when that war simply should not be allowed to take place.

Q: **Eric Hilton, Conrad N. Hilton Foundation.** This is directed to Mr. Abramowitz. In your future hot spots, you did not mention North Korea, and I’m wondering whether or not we have our arms around that and whether there’s going to be future problems there.

A: **Abramowitz.** Well, it’s a very, very good question. North Korea is a serious problem. We have some very, very deep problems, particularly on how to handle the North Korean nuclear, or what appears to be the possible resumption of North Korean nuclear efforts to attain nuclear capability. It is one of the most explosive places in the world. I did not list it because I sort of precluded large-scale war from the consideration of humanitarian action. That is, that may make no sense. I was looking principally at the breakdown of states and ethnic conflict rather than the conflict of borders. And there is a border between North and South, and it’s the most heavily armed border in the world. But you’re absolutely right, it is a very dangerous situation. I frankly think we have lost a good appreciation -- we never had a good one -- but we lost whatever we had about the leadership of North Korea. There is a new leadership. We really know very little about it. They are engaging in activities, which at the minimum are questionable and which we don’t have access to. The nuclear agreement is in deep danger, particularly on the Hill, and we could find ourselves in six months in a very major crisis.

Q: **Hilton.** The other question I have concerns your idea of preventive medicine in order to stop these conflicts.... I’m wondering if any consideration -- or what consideration -- has been given to eliminating
the providing of funds for conflicts, both from the standpoint of funds that are needed to have combat
and who is providing the weapons. Can anything be done to provide sanctions to have weapons
stopped being provided to these conflicts? It would seem to me that would be a simple way of slowing
down the conflict.

A: Abramowitz. It’s a very difficult issue -- an important issue -- particularly the feeding of small arms
into crises. I have to tell you I’ve been concerned about the breakdown of the effort to prevent arms
from reaching potential combatants. When you look at Bosnia, one of the real crimes in the world, in
my view, was that we put an embargo on arms. And whom did the embargo impact on? It impacted
on the weaker party. It did not impact on the Serbs and Yugoslav National Army. They had all the
weapons and the weak party had none. That was a very pernicious act, what was done, to put on that
embargo. But nevertheless, there is no question that there are certain situations where if you can control
the flow of arms, say like in Sierra Leone and a variety of other countries, you may very well be able to
sort of limit conflict or at least stop its scope. There are rights and wrongs that have to be considered.

Q: Dr. Inge Genefke, International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims. Talking about
prevention and the future, I think that we are missing some fundamental issues ... when we talk about
prevention. One is torture; the other is democracy. These two issues are linked very much together.
Working in health professional organizations for many years, we have shown that the main aim of torture
-- when governments torture -- is to break down leadership and strong personalities in countries ...
When we know that this leadership in more than one hundred countries has been broken down, either
now or in a few years .... those [who have been tortured] are not there for building up, for making a
better democracy ... They are traumatized. They have to be helped if you want to have a more
democratic rule.

Begleiter. Let’s pose it to the panel. Are governments adequately handling the question of torture? Is
there a missing link there? Are governments and organizations and NGOs, for that matter, responding
adequately to the problem of torture in use, not only in underdeveloped countries or undeveloped
countries, but also in developed countries?

Q: Genefke. Is torture a most efficient weapon .... tool, instrument against democracy?

A: Abramowitz. It’s sort of hard to say. Nobody propounds torture except the torturers, who
believe it works. There is no question that torture is one of the most fundamental things that I think our
human rights policies address. It still exists in a number of countries, some of whom are allies of the
United States. It’s something we continually have to work against. I don’t know what more to say --
whether we can do more in certain countries is a fair question. I suspect we might be able to, but that it
has to be a cardinal element of human rights policies, it seems to me, is very clear.

A: Toole. I think torture is one of the many mechanisms by which governments and non-governments,
not NGOs, but other military forces and groups with their strong ideology use to coerce their people.
There are very unambiguous international conventions that prohibit that particular mechanism. Like
many other forms of violence, the instruments are there and they’re very good, but enforcing them has
been a problem. As you know, the word genocide is a word that most governments are allergic to.
They won’t use it because they know they have to respond, likewise to torture. So I think the mechanisms are there to prevent it, but they’re not, perhaps, being applied effectively.

A: Abramowitz. Let me address the question of democracy, and just point out the dilemmas of promoting democracy in resolving conflict. We’ve had this for six years in Serbia, where you have a ruler who has dominated that scene, basically taken enormous measures to repress and prevent democratic forces from arising, and we are faced with the business of doing business with him -- in effect, in many ways -- supporting his position. That’s a critically difficult issue to resolve for many because there are competing purposes. But there’s no question that in this case, we have not chosen the democrats.

Q: Albina du Boisrouvay, Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Association. [Sergio Vieira de Mello] was talking about the states having to be the ones to preserve the civilian safety. We talked about prevention of war, and also of course, prevention of health tragedies. We are in the 50th anniversary of the Declaration of Human Rights, and next year will be the 10th anniversary of the Convention on Children’s Rights. We have a growing number of countries and cultures that do not agree even on the articles that have been signed. How can we do any prevention, how can we ask any states to provide any safety, if there’s not consensus on what human rights are?

A: Abramowitz. I think there is a large consensus on human rights – on what human rights are. For many of us it’s in the Helsinki Declaration, and that makes human rights in other countries a fit subject for discussion. I do not believe we are precluded from deterring conflict or acting robustly in containing conflict because there is disagreement among people on certain issues. These are decisions that governments and international organizations must make. And while it would be desirable to have worldwide consensus on what human rights are, I certainly would not recommend that we sit back and do nothing in a variety of circumstances because we don’t have a consensus.

Q: du Boisrouvey. How do you get that consensus? Burma, China, a number of countries don’t have consensus on what it means. They’ve signed but they don’t implement.

A: Abramowitz. It’s difficult to make progress on human rights in China. Various ways have been tried. There are various people who want to use economic means as a means to pressure the Chinese. I believe you simply have to work away at it. It’s going to take time. It’s going to take the evolution of Chinese society, hopefully in the next twenty years. That doesn’t mean you simply sit back and look at the world and say, “Gee, there’s no consensus.” We have to act. How we act is variable, dependent on many factors.

Q: Susan Davis, U.S. Committee for the UNDP and the Grameen Foundation. Given the Clinton Star Wars and the dramatic lesson for the first time of an unprecedented use of the Internet, what opportunities do you see for strategic investment in the use of the Internet for advocacy, education and lobbying, and the mobilization of resources. I just saw the Bangladesh Flood ’98 website, and I think there are some very interesting things going on, and I wondered if you see that as a new trend.

A: Abramowitz. What I’ve been impressed with is how democracy and human rights activity have enormously spread by the Internet. China, Indonesia -- the Internet has been an extraordinary feature in
generating positive activity in those fields. That’s only a brief foray into the issue. But I have been particularly impressed by the way the world has reacted to the Internet and its political impact.

A: Toole. I was going to say the same thing. It’s already happened. I think the only comment I can say about its future use is that we all only have twenty-four hours in our day, and if you’re interested in more than one issue in the world, there will be information overload, and so the people will increasingly focus on very narrow issues, and that’s my only concern.
Panel Two

GEOPOLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS:
Role of Governments vs. Private Sector/Geopolitical Impact of Population Shifts/
Development Aid: Opportunities for Social Change

Timothy Wirth, President, United Nations Foundation

Appointed president of the newly-formed United Nations Foundation in early 1998, Timothy Wirth is responsible for leading the foundation’s central missions of: supporting U.N. causes, strengthening U.N. institutions, educating the public about the importance and capabilities of the U.N, and raising new and additional resources for U.N. causes. Wirth served as U.S. undersecretary of state for global affairs from 1993 - 1997 and was responsible for coordinating U.S. foreign policy in the areas of refugees, population, environment, science, narcotics and crime. Wirth represented Colorado in the U.S. Senate from 1987 - 1993 and served in the House of Representative for 12 years.

Julia Taft, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration, U.S. Department of State

Confirmed by the U.S. Senate in November 1997, Julia Vadala Taft oversees U.S. Government policies regarding population, refugee and international migration issues and manages $700 million dollars in annual allocations for refugee protection and humanitarian assistance programs. Previously, Taft was president and CEO of InterAction, a coalition of over 150 U.S.-based NGOs that provide international relief and development aid. Taft has served as the director of the office of foreign disaster assistance with USAID (U.S. Agency for International Development); the director of refugee programs and acting U.S. refugee coordinator at the U.S. State Department; and deputy assistant secretary of health, education and welfare.

Linda Tsao Yang, U.S. Executive Director, Asian Development Bank

Ambassador Yang has served as U.S. executive director of the Asian Development Bank in Manila since November 1993 and is the first woman executive director appointed by the U.S. Government to the board of a multilateral development bank. Yang was also the first woman to serve as California’s savings and loan commissioner where she was responsible for the regulation and supervision of the $80 billion state-chartered savings and loan industry (1980-92). As a director of The 1990 Institute, a California-based think tank, she chaired the committee which co-sponsored major policy-oriented studies on China’s economic reform with the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco.
SUMMARY

Panelists focused on the role of the private sector in influencing and aiding governmental and international institutions, on the causes and implications of population shifts and on using development aid to effect social change.

The newly formed United Nations Foundation is supporting U.N. causes over the next ten years. Through a series of successful U.N. conferences on social and economic issues during the 1990s, almost the entire world community of nations reached agreement on issues of public policy concerning population, environment, development, the status of women, and human rights. However, as significant as this accomplishment was in essentially giving legitimacy to these issues and policy objectives, thus far the leadership and resources to implement these public policies has been lacking. This is where the private sector can be instrumental in coming to the aid of the international agencies in terms of financial and personnel resources, in raising public awareness and support of the issues and institutions, and in promoting government support and involvement.

There are two kinds of population shifts that directly bear on future challenges to humanitarian aid – the composition of the world’s population and migration. The world demographics are increasingly heading toward a concentration of 80 percent of the world’s population in the developing world and 20 percent in the developed world, with the majority of that 80 percent increasingly composed of children. The great question is: will there be equity? Will the 80 percent be consumers of relief or contributors to economic well-being?

Lately, the migration is overwhelmingly from rural to urban places of habitation. While the perception is that the populations of the south, or developing nations, always move north, there is probably more migration from within the south. Both kinds of population shifts not only have political and economic implications but also are driven by politics and economics. An imbalance of power and an imbalance of resources -- not only a lack of money for some, but an over-consumption of finite resources by others -- are continually destabilizing and debilitating influences that have to be addressed.

Development institutions such as international development banks have been accused of impersonal development projects that do not improve the lives of the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. However, the banks have benefited from decades of experience and are emphasizing sustainable economic development, which accepts as fundamental that promoting and enabling social change is as important as building bridges. In an effort to ensure that the most vulnerable members of society -- including women and children -- are helped by development, especially in times of financial crisis such as Asia is experiencing, the banks are trying innovative measures to quickly supply aid that will cushion the pain and reach the most isolated and disadvantaged. They are supporting programs that are designed and distributed at the local level and that empower the powerless. By consulting women in more traditional development projects, such as irrigation, they are elevating their status, empowering them, and effecting social change.
Timothy Wirth:

First of all, a quick word on the U.N. Foundation, a little information about what we are and what we aren’t. When Ted Turner made the commitment of a billion dollars last year, it was to U.N. causes, not funding to go to the U.N., but to U.N. causes. He has asked us to define what that means, and we have identified four central missions for this billion dollars, which will be used over the next 10 years.

The initial mission is to help the Secretary General strengthen the institution, help him continue the reform efforts, to really respond to his remarkable leadership. To focus on U.N. causes, we have limited ourselves predominantly to three. First, population -- focusing in particular on adolescent girls. Second, the environment -- focusing particularly on economic instruments and climate change and on the death of species. Third, children’s health -- focusing particularly on infectious diseases and the spread of smoking around the world among children. We’re attempting to respond to particular needs at the U.N. with major initiatives, working with Mary Robinson [U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights] in grass-roots human rights activities and working with the U.N. in terms of land mine removal -- trying to use our funding as a way perhaps, of bringing other resources to the U.N.

Another issue for us is attempting to tell the story about the United Nations, particularly in the United States. I don’t have to tell all of you the enormous importance of the U.S. becoming a full partner at the U.N. and the tremendous problems that we have being the biggest scofflaw in the world, the biggest debtor in the world. How do we turn this around so that we can take advantage of a very strong constituency across the United States? People in the United States overwhelmingly believe in the United Nations, but have not had the opportunity or the mechanism for registering their support for the U.N.

And on the issue of attempting to bring new and additional resources into the U.N. system or into the focus on U.N. causes and problems -- what does that mean? At the end of 10 years, if we were able to find another 20 Ted Turners around the world, if we were able to establish another 10 institutions like our own in other countries around the world, we would suggest that that was a success.

That’s the overall mission. To talk about this, particularly the humanitarian challenge in the public and the private sector, it’s interesting to look at a few areas where agreement was established around the world on what we ought to do, but problems in getting from here to there have occurred. Let me touch on environment and a little bit on population.

In both these issues -- at the Rio conference in 1992 [U.N. Conference on Environment and Development], at the Cairo conference in 1994 [International Conference on Population and Development] these are issues of extraordinary difficulty -- dealing with population, dealing with the environment -- that are extremely difficult to get governments to focus on and come to grips with. At a time where political systems are already stressed, to load on to them two broad new areas was extremely difficult. It is a remarkable tribute to the United Nations that consensus was reached in Rio on environment, with special reference to climate change and bio-diversity. In Cairo we had 185 or 187 nations agree upon a fundamental program of action--which program of action is not a namby-pamby lowest common denominator, but really a very, very aggressive document. The world came
together in the best political sense, and came to a political agreement on these two issues. We could
cite other conferences -- the Human Rights Conference [in Vienna in 1993], the Woman’s Conference
in Beijing [in 1995] as other examples of this kind of political will. The problem is, once that political
will was established, the question becomes how are we doing in terms of carrying that out? The jury is
more than out. There are some very significant issues that we must ask ourselves going into the next
century.

For example, suddenly the environment was part of the lexicon of everybody around the world. It was
a legitimate issue to talk about. Some 155 heads of state came together in Rio. It was a remarkable
display of political will and political willingness to take on these difficult issues. But since then, the
institutions for governing the environment internationally have become weaker rather than stronger. An
anomalous situation -- you have this successful conference, but, five years later, six years later, the
institutions that we have for implementing it are, in fact, weaker than they were before. Fortunately,
there is some very significant good new leadership. The Secretary General Kofi Annan has brought in
Klaus Tupfer, a remarkably skilled politician and a very good environmentalist. The former German
Environment Minister, has agreed to come in and take over UNEP, United Nations Environment
Program, an extremely difficult assignment. Then the question is what do we do with that? One of the
great promises here is to engage the private sector in a different kind of a fashion than has happened
before. We are trying in working with Klaus Tupfer -- as we are doing with Gro Brutland as she comes
in as the new head of the World Health Organization -- to see if we can bring private resources to
supplement what they are doing, to aid them in providing some of the best staff capability to give them
the ability to do the job that has to be done. This is not a kind of layering. It is a bringing in new talent.
One of the problems of the international financial institutions, or the international government institutions,
is that they have not been able to recruit young people, they have not been able to bring people in for a
long period of time. One of the things that we’re attempting to do with Gro Brutland and Klaus Tupfer
is to help them, provide the resources to them, so that these remarkably talented leaders have the
capability to get some traction there and make the kind of changes that have to be made.

The second item that we’re doing related to private resources with Klaus Tupfer at UNEP and similar
kinds of things going on in other agencies is to look for opportunities where we can move in with our
resources. For example, in dealing with climate change, one of the most important issues and one of the
greatest challenges that we face is, how do we create some kind of a global climate trading system. A
global carbon trading system in which, in fact, the value of carbon from one country to another becomes
a known value and can be traded across countries. Instead of being constantly bad, it’s a positive thing
to use carbon or the lack of production of carbon as a positive step. This, in turn, is such a
controversial and such a revolutionary idea, that in fact we may end up with something that the World
Bank is working on, the OECD [Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development] has been
working on, that UNEP wants to be working on, Gus Speth at UNDP. Such an enormously important
idea could change the whole flow of resources across countries. It could really change dramatically, as
the World Resources Institute has pointed out, the flow of funds and the flow of aid overall around the
world coming through and using an environmental issue as a way of really changing the way in which
governments relate to the private sector and changing the way in which funding flows. Here is an
example of using the private sector and using potential private sector partnerships to really change the
way in which we are dealing with probably the most important long-term environmental issue that the
world faces.
In doing so, of course, we’re challenged in two different ways. One, challenged by a traditional maybe twenty-year old way of looking at what governments ought to do, that the private sector ought to stay out. There’s a lot of resistance to it within various parts of the U.N. system, a lot of resistance to this kind of cooperative effort, a lot of resistance to this way of thinking about climate change which we understand, but we are trying … to help to provide the U.N. agencies with the wherewithal and the capability to take on these issues. There is a lot of resistance, as well, within our own country, within the United States, to the idea of climate change overall – a tremendous amount of denial still going on. And that goes to the mission of helping the United Nations tell the story about the importance of this issue.

We are deeply engaged in attempting to bring private resources to bear to help the institution of the United Nations -- in this case, the priorities of the Secretary General and the needs of the new leadership in the U.N. to do a better job at facing very, very significant challenges of the environment in the 21st century. I could go on and talk about the population side and what we’re doing there, talk about children’s health and what we’re doing there. We’re trying to follow a similar kind of a model, but let me stop at that as just a few examples of what I think we have to learn how to do. It’s difficult to do, but we hope that we are providing a kind of model that might be useful to others as well, and might encourage others to show them not only is this extremely interesting, extraordinarily important, but that we, in fact, can make it happen. And in doing so, that we might encourage other resources to come in and help us to save the world.

**Julia Taft:**

I’ve been asked to talk about the geopolitical impact of population shifts, and I want to start by going back about 168 years to remind everybody that in 1830 the population of the world was one billion people. It took 100 years for that figure to double. In 1930, there were two billion people. By 1960, there were three billion, and next year in June -- June 16th I believe we’ve designated as the date -- the population of the world will be six billion people.

I’d like to speak a few minutes about who these people are, and where they will be going and what kinds of implications it has for our humanitarian environment. The two kinds of population shifts which will have both tremendous impacts socially and geo-politically first begins with the number of population and the distribution by age of that population. Secondly, I’d like to talk about the shift represented by the physical movement of people, the migration of people both forced and voluntary.

With regard to the first, if you were going to have a reception and you wanted to invite 100 people who were representative of the 5.9-plus billion people on the earth, who would they be? First of all, 57 of the 100 guests would be from Asia, 21 of those from China. Five would be Americans and, interestingly, all of them would be millionaires. Eight more would come from Central and South America, three from the Near East, 13 from Africa, seven from the former Soviet Union and seven from Western Europe. If you add all those up, you find that 20 percent of the population would be from what we call the developed world and 80 percent would be from the developing world. We do not expect those proportions to change anytime in the future. Fifty percent of your guests, of course, would
be female, but a very large number would be children. Thirty-one children would be accompanying you to your party. Most of those children would be from the developing world.

I think as we look at what that means in terms of the world population, we have a real challenge before us as to whether or not there will be equity for the 80 percent and the 20 percent, and whether or not those 80 percent of the population of the world will be consumers of relief or contributors to economic well being. With regard to the 80 percent in the developing world and this massive large number of children that will be coming into adulthood or teenage-hood, we find that in the year 2010 they will all be in reproductive age brackets and, therefore, we will have a large increase in population. But also, one billion new jobs will need to be created throughout the world just to absorb children who have already been born and are coming into the workforce. This is an incredible fact of life and one of the things we have to really think about is where are those people going to live? Where are they going to work? And how are they going to be able to make decisions about their own lives? What kind of hope will they have?

That leads me to the second part of my informal remarks, which is migration. They will be on the move. As a matter of fact, people have always been on the move.

I remember once when I was first getting involved in refugee issues, I was trying to figure out who the first refugees were, and I decided it had to be Adam and Eve when they were thrown out of the Garden of Eden. Well, in fact, ever since then, people have been on the move, and it is a phenomenon that, while there have been changes in magnitude, has many similar characteristics through the ages.

What we’re seeing now is a massive movement from the rural areas to the urban areas. Part of this is from the environmental issues where land and water and inheritance rights impede people from being able to stay on land, and they go to cities looking for jobs. Desertification is a huge issue, which again, prompts people to leave. The industrialization of cities offers great hope for people and they go. Unfortunately, if they don’t find jobs, they become the new marginalized elements of the society, living on poor land, having poor access to resources, and this is a potential tinder box.

One hears a lot about the south to north migration. I think you hear mostly about this from the Europeans …. Because we document the amount of south/north migration, we know one hundred million people are floating around the world at any one time and the perception is that they are all going to the north. Well, they’re not all going to the north, but there are a lot of people who are. In fact, most of the people are going south to south, to various countries.

I think one illustration of the magnitude of the south/south migration became apparent with the economic crisis in Southeast Asia, where we were beginning to see a backlash against foreigners that were living in places like Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines and Malaysia. The population movements have always been quite great in Southeast Asia and what we saw is an increasing concern about whether or not migrant workers -- who were, for example, the Burmese migrant workers that are in Thailand, or the million Indonesians that were in Malaysia -- were going to be expelled. This is a very big problem and one that we think has to be thought of very much in terms of how we not only manage the safe migration of people, but find ways to have economic opportunities for these people in the countries in which they live.
The issue that we talked about earlier and that will be a theme throughout the day, is one of forced migration. Of course, this consumes most of the resources that I program for the U.S. State Department and also has been a passion in my life for 23 years. It’s refugees and internally displaced persons … We all know the causes of war -- persecution, economic strife, intolerance, hatred, imbalance of power. I think that there’s a lesson for us to learn in terms of the latter -- the imbalance of power.

When you have some people in a society who perceive that others are getting the benefit of education, of land, of jobs, one has to look at why that is so, and the extent to which external factors promote that. For instance, when you think of Rwanda having been for years the top recipient of foreign aid by donors before the 1994 genocide, you look and ask where did that aid go? Where did it go? It went to reinforce certain socioeconomic privileges by some classes over another class. I don’t think the donors ever knew that. But the agony of the genocide has made us all realize we have to look at the equity and the environment in which any external assistance goes.

The persecution that results in population shifts can be both internal and external. When we think of Colombia right now, there’s been an increased urbanization in Colombia because over a million people have been driven away [from their homes] because of the civil conflict. They are in urban areas and are hardly distinguishable from other urban poor, but they have no assets whatsoever. This is a grave cause for concern. Kosovo, which was the most densely populated area of all of Europe, is now almost empty of perceivable people. They have hidden in the mountains. When I was there about two weeks ago, I kept on looking for all these internally displaced persons. My intelligence staffer said, “When you go, take a chart, take a map. Show us how many people are in every location you go.” Well I couldn’t find them, because in fact, they had hidden and they were terrified. We have now seen on television a few pictures of Kosovo, and this gets to Ralph’s earlier question, “Why don’t we see it?” How we can sit back and have the FRY [Federal Republic of Yugoslavia] authorities say that there are only 700 internally displaced persons in Kosovo is an absolute outrage. We have to record this. We have to recognize it. And we have to hold people accountable for it. The internal displacement in Kosovo is great and is starting, as you know, to be externally generated as well.

The 13 million refugees who are around the world -- 13 or 14 million refugees -- are probably the lucky ones because there is an incredible support system through the UNHCR and through the NGOs and through the protection of the U.N. We need to find ways to extend that similar kind of protection for the internally displaced.

Another population shift, which we find also extremely troublesome, that fortunately is getting more attention now, is the trafficking in women and children. There have been a number of new initiatives between the U.S. and the E.U. trying to deal with the question of how do women get enticed to go into prostitution, particularly in Israel and in Western Europe, mostly from the former Soviet Union. What we’re finding is that these girls think they’re going to a new and glamorous life. They think they’re going to be movie stars and models. Everything is going to be great. When they get there, it is not great. Their passports are taken from them. They are thrown into bondage, and their hopes are incredibly bleak and their lives are often threatened. We are trying to do campaigns to try to explain to the women that the West isn’t all it’s cracked up to be, but in fact, we are finding throughout the world, trafficking in
women and in children, mostly for illicit purposes, is to be a theme that we think will continue for many years.

What are we going to do about all this? Obviously there are international laws as were pointed out today, but few are followed. We need stronger advocacy. When I looked at the list of who was coming here today, I think we have the answer in this room through the networks you all represent, through the credibility you have. You have to make your voices heard for policy makers, for the media, to show that there is moral outrage and that there is a requirement that we, in the international community, must respond. All of you must continue to do that. We also need to promote civil society in all aspects throughout the ... north and in the developing world. Programs promoting democracy and rule of law are starting to take hold, and we hope they will continue in the future.

We also need to promote multi-ethnic states, and this is probably the most difficult thing that we have seen as a challenge. Bosnia is only one example of it. But we simply cannot draw lines around every ethnic group in the world. We have to promote reconciliation. We have to promote the ability of having minority rights with majority rights and do whatever we can to overturn the ultra-nationalism which seems to be a feature now and may continue. Also, we have to get very tough on regimes that refuse to respect human rights and the rights of their own citizens. I have a long list of people we can attack on that one if you would like to get to that later.

Basically it comes right down to whether people have the ability to make decisions about the kinds of lives they have -- whether they have decisions on the number and spacing of their children; whether they have opportunities to family planning. Whether or not they move is a question of whether there is any other alternative in trying to have a livelihood for their family. I’ve always believed people don’t move unless they have to move, or really want to move for something that they think is better. But as we look at issues of remittances and development and business investments, my sense is that the 80 percent of the people in the world who live in the developing world would probably like to live there if they felt they could educate their children, have a proper life, and be in their own culture.

I think it’s very sobering when we look at the imbalance of resources. I talked earlier about the five people in your party who would be Americans. In fact, that’s true. Americans are the richest. We are not only rich, we consume an awful lot. As we look at the disparity of resources and the different consumption patterns between the north and the south, it’s all very sobering, because there are finite resources around. There’s just so much water and there’s just so much land. We need to make sure, in every respect we can, that it is more equitably distributed.

Finally, I urge you to continue the work you do, to give voice to the voiceless, to express your outrage when you feel it. Express it to me. A lot of you call me all the time and say, “Why aren’t you doing this?” It’s good. It’s important. We need to hear it. All of us need to hear it. But promote the dignity of people who are so less fortunate than we, because we are all very blessed to be here and very privileged, I might say, to know that in our country, we have not only a lot of non-governmental organizations and media that work on this, but we also have private citizens and foundations such as the Hilton Foundation, and so many others who understand that there is a moral imperative that we all have to bring peace and equity to the populations now and the six billion that are going to be around next June.
Linda Tsao Yang:

First, I would like to give a brief introduction as to what the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is. It is a development institution …. Second, how does a development institution such as the Asian Development Bank respond to the Asian economic crisis? And third, I would like to touch upon how does a development institution such as the Asian Development Bank effect social change?

…The Asian Development Bank is a regional version of the World Bank…. It was established in 1966 and headquartered in Manila, where I reside…. In that institution, the United States and Japan are two of the 31 founding members. Now the membership has expanded to 57. This is the only development institution where the United States is a co-equal shareholder …. That means, in order for us to move the policy agenda at that institution, we’ve got to work closely and seek close consultation and collaboration with our equal partners. And I must say, in the last few years we’ve been fairly successful at that.

The job of the executive director at ADB is two-fold. One, this being a bank, the executive director has the responsibility of exercising her fiduciary responsibilities to see that institution is run prudently, efficiently and is financially sound. A very important…. responsibility is to help shape the policy agenda of that institution toward the direction of sustainable economic development -- that is, development that can be sustained over time. We know from 30 years of development assistance, that yes, roads, bridges, power plants and dams are important. They are necessary, but not sufficient to sustain economic development over time. Social change, building foundations for social change, is just as important, if not more important, to sustain economic development over time. The purpose of sustaining economic development over time is to lift and improve the lives of the people at the grassroots level. That’s the reason for the existence of the development institutions.

How does the ADB …. respond to the recent Asian economic crisis? In my view, this is the most serious depression that Asia has faced since the Second World War, and the worst is yet to come. At the time when the economic crisis broke, the board, under the leadership of the United States and working very collaboratively with our equal partner, Japan, and other members on the board, moved quickly to see what needed to be done. We had never faced a situation like that in the existence of the bank. So we immediately sent out reconnaissance teams -- first to Indonesia and Thailand -- to see where we can effectively move to alleviate, to cushion against the pain that’s going to be inflicted upon the most vulnerable group of the people in those economies before the governments come to ask for assistance.

Based on this very fast action of the reconnaissance team, later on when the governments did …. ask for assistance, the assistance was designed …. the programs were designed, so the result was fast action. Within six months the bank gave $500 million social sector assistance to Thailand, and a $300 million assistance program to Indonesia. Mind you, those programs usually…. would take 18 months to formulate. In this case, it took us six months. It’s quick, quick, quick. Likely, there will be mistakes, but the fact is, we’ve got a program -- at least we got things going and we’ll learn from our mistakes as we go along.
Now, what do we do? What does it consist of? One, we realized that the most vulnerable groups of people are women and children. We must not allow the economic crisis to deprive a generation, particularly of children, from their basic health and education needs. Because looking at long-term economic development, you would be losing a whole generation of productive workers if you allow the children of today to be deprived of basic health and education needs.

So, very quickly for Indonesia, we devised a program that would help six-and-a-half million children in 16 of the poorest provinces in Indonesia, and we did the same thing in Thailand. In one of the major components of that program, not only do we provide them with scholarships (of course, schools are free), but for books and clothes and so on, and for one hot meal, because that is a great incentive for the families to send their children to school. And, as an opportunity to effect social change, we stipulate at least half of their assistance must go to girls. In Asia, given the traditional preferences, if you can only keep one child in school, that child is going to be a boy.

Number two: We all know that, in many regions, often assistance does not go efficiently down to the grassroots level in lots of opportunities, in what we economists call “collecting rent” as you pass through every layer. So for the first time, we designed a program that goes through the block grant to the district level. The monies will be posted at the local postal services in the name of the school districts, and the recipients of the scholarships will be determined by the village level associations, including women in the villages. This is very bold. Very few people know how to go about it. We had to do training on how you go about it. But we feel it is necessary. That is empowering. While we are giving assistance, we are effecting social change by empowering the people who are the beneficiaries to have greater control over that decision-making process.

Let me come to another type of assistance that is traditionally done by the Asian Development Bank, the traditional development systems -- roads, bridges, irrigation projects, and so on. Let me tell you about what we do in the telecom area -- how we effect social change. In Bangladesh, the Asian Development Bank assisted, invested, in the Grameen Telephone Company. And we all know about the Grameen Bank and the work of Professor Yunus. Through his organization, we are setting up a one-person telephone company throughout the rural regions of Bangladesh. One villager will be given, or be allowed to lease, a cell phone. People within five to 10 kilometers would know how to send or receive messages. Through that medium, you get information flow from the major cities to the villages. They can know what is the price of jute, for instance. And what is the price of rice.

So that is tremendous. You really create much more of a mobile information flow and that is empowering to the people living on the land. This is a grand experiment.

Let me tell you about the irrigation rural development area. In Pakistan we put in one of the irrigation ditches, and, for the first time, the Bank’s team consulted the women in the villages. Women in the villages! Asking them their views on that irrigation ditch that will go through their village -- never had women been given such an exalted status as to be consulted.... What they said was very different from what the engineers or the menfolk said. They were very concerned about the height of the ditches, so that the children would not fall in the ditches and drown. They are also very concerned about distance between the points that they can access the water, because they certainly are the water carriers. They don’t want to walk five kilometers in order to get water. Not only does it make the project that much
more efficient and effective, but in the eyes of the community, it raises the status of women that they are consulted about decisions.

Let me tell you something in the financial area, in micro-credit. I personally went to visit a micro-credit project in the Philippines, where I live. This woman told me that as a result of the micro-credit project, she was able to rent a motorized bicycle. And I said, “Don’t tell me you’re running around with a motor bicycle all by yourself.” She said, “No. I have two nephews and two boys from the neighborhood. They rent the bike from me and I collect rent from them and then from that I, in turn, pay for the lease for that motorbike. And as a result, my nephew has enough income to pay for his books. The boy next door has enough income to have another bowl of rice for his family.” I said, “What do you want to see three years from now on your wonderful project?” She said, “Well, three years from now I think I would save enough from this operation to own this motorbike.” “What do you do after you own this motorbike?” She said, “Now I will have collateral. Then I can go to a normal bank to borrow money to lease another motorbike.” So I said, “In 10 years you’ll be the proud owner of a fleet of motorbikes, generating employment for all the kids in your neighborhood.” That is to say, you give assistance to one person, in turn you turn that recipient into a giver to help lift up the lives of the people in her neighborhood. This is development assistance.

My final comment is that the challenge for development assistance in the next millennium is how we can effect social change so that we can enable those who are mentioned in the last will and testament of the founder [of the Hilton Foundation] -- that those who are suffering, in distress and destitute can turn from being recipients to being givers to their fellow men and women -- so their fellow men and women would not be abandoned to wander alone in poverty and darkness.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: Michael Toole, Macfarlane Burnet Center for Medical Research. Indonesia is our [Australia] closest neighbor. I visit there a lot, and despite the various bank’s interventions, my sense is that the situation is evolving very, very rapidly in a negative direction. You described some very good examples of community-based development that will cushion the impact. The fact remains that the proportion of the people under the poverty line has increased from 13 percent to 50 percent in five years. What should the world be doing to cushion and to prevent what appears to be an inevitable, grave emergency in Indonesia?

A: Yang. Needs far outstrip what resources we have. We’ve got to start somewhere and to make it as effective as possible. It’s very important for development institutions to engage the private sector. We can work hand-in-hand so that the resources .... the total resources to be developed and to be devoted to such emergency relief, as well as building for the future, can be that much enlarged.

Q: John Gentri, Global Medical Relief. I was interested in Julia Taft’s comments regarding the geopolitical impact of population shifts and it seemed that the primary motivation came across as being political, but I think my personal experience and the experience of many people in the room would be that it’s really economic. We see huge populations moving toward urban areas because primarily the distribution of aid seems to stop at the borders of the cities where it comes. I wonder if you see any future tendency to try to open up or [mandate] that aid would be made more available to the rural areas.
A: Taft. I think that this is something that is an absolutely essential quality of future aid distribution. There have to be incentives to keep people in the rural areas who are still there. On the other hand, my sense is that most of the aid, as you described, is probably toward urban areas. The delivery mechanisms are much easier that way, and this is why the NGO outreach out to rural areas is absolutely vital. My sense is that you’re right that most of the movement is economic. But there also is politics in economics, and I think it is not fair for us to just dismiss the urban movements as being solely economic, because the incentives for people are in the cities and they’re not in the rural areas.

Q: Wendy Luers, Foundation for A Civil Society. I’d like to address this particularly to Julia or to Tim, about the conundrum that most of us find who work in building civil society, which seems to be now the catch-all to solutions that everything’s going to … preventing and resolving conflict as civil society’s role. The reality for most of you who are deliverers of humanitarian aid to returning refugees is that your crises are ultimately funded because the world turns around and has to finally recognize what’s on CNN’s screens and finally comes forward. It is a different beast. It is a different human being that delivers long-term NGO building and building of civil society in these societies in the post-conflict or post-disaster area…. The reality is that the private sector that everybody is citing is not going to come in and fund civil society building in those countries unless there are viable 501(c)(3) or their equivalents in Europe as intermediary organizations because they do not want to put their staffs in there. If they’re international businesses or multinationals, they do not have trained staff to evaluate, monitor, and to be able to respond to the task requirements. So therefore, Julia, in the new look at providing assistance, is there a way of looking at taking some of the humanitarian aid that is put forward every year and putting some of it into escrow so that there can be a building component after the peacekeepers and the refugee returners and the humanitarian aid deliverers start to leave for the next crisis?

A: Taft. First of all, we don’t have enough money even now to pay for the humanitarian crisis as it’s unfolding, so I don’t think you can take money away from an already diminished fund. I think what we need to do is find ways to expand the confidence by donor countries and the private sector to want to invest not only in the humanitarian side, but the transition to peace. One of the ways I think of doing this, and I’m very pleased that the NGOs seem to be moving in this direction, is that to the extent possible, working with and through indigenous organizations even during the emergency stage will help build and identify local talent and give them the skills that they need to carry forward after the conflict is over. There’s a lot of effort, particularly by the European NGOs to do this partnering during the emergency phase. I think we need to do it much more in the U.S. NGO movement. So I think you start with where you are, which is basically you have a lot of resources going into the emergency -- to the extent you use those for indigenous populations and help them as stakeholders, get involved and trained, then they will be a good way to transition.

Q: Narayan Hegde, BAIF Development Research Foundation. I feel that the human suffering, chronic suffering due to over-population and diminution of natural resources and poverty, are as important as the sufferings due to calamities and disaster. How are the political systems in those countries able to welcome this temporary relief for the disasters, whereas it’s very difficult to make a dent in the policies for developing the poverty reduction and over populated countries? Probably the challenge is how do developed countries and NGOs make a dent in influencing those countries and the communities to improve the human sufferings due to chronic poverty and population.
Q: Begleiter. Let me just restate the question briefly. I think the gist of the question is -- disaster assistance is a great thing, it's a short-term thing. How do you go after endemic poverty and endemic need situations that are created by governments that are unable over the long-term to change the policies to alleviate poverty?

A: Yang. As a development institution and a world bank, an Asian development bank, we put a great deal of emphasis on law and development. In other words, building the necessary, basic institutional infrastructure that will support social change, and, furthermore, in the long conditionalities of the assistance of grants, in corporate elements that will move the government forward toward greater social change. I would also like to take this opportunity to answer the question of the previous question on the NGOs. As the banks move more and more to development assistance involving the social sector, we need more and more the delivery systems mostly provided by NGOs and indigenous NGOs. So as a result, again, under the leadership of the United States, the Asian Development Bank would approve a policy whereby the bank would be empowered to grant assistance to help, nurture, and build indigenous NGOs as providers, as mechanisms, to implement social sector programs.

Q: Tom Callahan, World Vision. In the previous panel, we heard from Dr. Toole about lessons we’ve learned and are continuing to learn, particularly in refugee elements, and Ambassador Abramowitz also talked about the need to understand the complexity now and a complex humanitarian environment is growing and our need to understand it and professionalize our operations is more and more an imperative. The conundrum is: Professionalization takes training, takes resources, it takes infrastructure and commitment, and we in the private NGO community run up against the overhead issue. Donors like to give to organizations with low overhead for good reason. Do you see in the next century -- in the question “where are we headed?” -- where do you see the issue of greater professionalization through training and so forth going, versus the desire to keep our operations very lean and very mean and open the way for smaller NGOs, grassroots organizations and so forth?

A: Taft. Most of the overhead is related to office expenses, and in terms of personnel. My sense is that if we don’t dramatically change the composition of the relief worker providers and have more regional and locally based individuals hired with those NGOs, then we’re going to see a lot of higher overheads because we’ll have a lot of Americans and a lot of Brits going and living in very difficult places overseas. I see us retrenching considerably .... not we, you, the NGOs .... that, because it’s too expensive you are going to have to find more creative ways to basically use local...and train and work with local partners and have local employees. I think that’s really important to do. I would love to see more Islamic organizations coming into the field from the Middle East. We need help in places like Afghanistan and Iran and other places where we don’t have an ability as Western relief donors to have you all go .... I also think that of the courses that were mentioned earlier, all of them are offered in the developing world. They’re not just done in the North. And I think that’s really good. We’ve got to train and have new partners. The final point is that there probably will not be as many agencies engaged in emergency response as there have been in places in the past, like in Goma and elsewhere. We just don’t have the money or the organizational breadth to have 120 - 200 NGOs that are not from within that country descend on them and try to be relevant.
Q: Bruce Harris, Casa Alianza (Latin American program of Covenant House, Inc.). We work with street children in Latin America. UNICEF estimates that there are tens of millions of street children in the continent, many of whom are victims of both abuse and exploitation. If they were all in one place at one time they would have their own country and probably a seat in the United Nations and loans from the InterAmerican Development Bank. But because they’re dispersed over many different urban centers, unorganized in a regional sense and unprotected, they really don’t have programs that are specifically focused on them, under programs of refugees and migration, of which they are both victims. My question to Julia Taft is what programs are being implemented specifically for the millions of urban street children in Latin America, many of whom will not make it to next year’s party in June?

A: Taft. I believe there are some resource people here from UNICEF. UNICEF has a number of programs. I think what you’ve identified though, is not only a problem in Latin America, it’s a problem in many different places, and whether these children end up abused or whether they end up as trafficked children, is something that I think is perhaps the most incredible challenge for us, because they’re only 50 percent of the world today, but they’re 100 percent of the world in the next 30 years, and we’ve got to do something for them …. Unfortunately, in Latin America, because the economy -- at least today -- has been doing much better in many of the countries, there’s not much of a development assistance outreach for many Latin American countries, and it’s usually in those programs where child survival is a high priority. But I don’t think AID [USAID] has much money that’s going into Latin America and I don’t think the Europeans do much either. It’s a real problem of countries that are kind of prosperous but not prosperous enough, and then not having the dollars to be able to invest.

Q: Randolph Kent, Independent Policy Advisor. In about two weeks time, there’s going to be a major meeting in Geneva between the corporate, the private sector and the humanitarian community, and I just wondered if each of the panel members were to attend this meeting, what would be their two or three hard topics? The basic things that they would want to achieve in a meeting like this to utilize the corporate sector for humanitarian concerns and interests.

A: Wirth. I’d certainly start by convincing the corporate community that the funding that they might put into an institution is going to be efficiently spent. Let’s go to the question of overhead. As we’re beginning to foray out in trying to find other resources, there is an enormous amount of skepticism that exists that a huge amount of funding that goes into a particular area is going into overhead and not going where funding actually is needed. You all deal with this as well. I hear this over and over again. What we have attempted to do on this front is a number of things. One, to keep our own institution very, very small. We have 14 people working for us. We do not want to create another foundation in the sense of a foundation that historically had done some very, very good things and created a lot of institutions. We’d like to use existing NGOs, existing institutions as much as we possibly can. We’ve negotiated with the United Nations an overhead rate, which is a 6 percent overhead rate, for all the programs that we fund within the U.N. system, which is dramatically low….  

Finally, we’re attempting to develop a very clear pattern of program evaluation built into all of the programs that we fund within the U.N. system, so that within all of those, there is a feedback -- a very clear mechanism that can demonstrate what, in fact, we have achieved…. So I would ask two things ... or I would expect two things. One, to make sure that the overhead question is very, very clearly understood. And second, that the evaluation issue -- what are you getting and can you demonstrate...
what, in fact, is happening to the dollars that are put into the system -- that you can answer that question clearly.

Both of those are awkward. A great number of humanitarian governmental institutions don’t like those questions. I’ve been involved in this for 25 years sort of in the other direction. I’m only now reflecting what I hear over and over and over again, and what we’re attempting to develop -- an institution that can start to answer that question, that can say, “Look, Ted Turner made this commitment. This is what we’re doing as an institution. We respect those questions. We can show you that it can be done with very low overhead and very real outcomes.” Having done that, we can say to them, “Now come on in.”

A: Taft. I’d like to answer your question a little bit differently. If I had a chance to sit with the Fortune 500 people, I would tell them that they’re in business to do business, and that they only want to do business where there is a peaceful environment, where there’s a rule of law, where there’s equity in the society and not a great maldistribution of the benefits of the society, because that will create political instability. My sense is that businesses could be very helpful to us as advocates in terms of condemnation of dictators, of trying to establish a standard of fairness and morality around the world, and that businesses consistently -- some of them -- consistently go and they have dealings with the most repressive, abhorrent governments in the world. If you look at why we don’t have political will, it’s sometimes because we don’t want to take the economic risk; our businesses don’t want to lose business. But it’s bad business to do business with bad regimes. I’d like a dialogue with businesses about how do we work together to try to bring about a certain degree of rule of law and responsibility in the regimes around the world.

Q: Kate Grant, Women’s Lens on Global Issues. …. My questions really deal with development aid and the lack of political and public support for development aid, both as we see it reflected in bilateral and multilateral programs, at least in the U.S. I was hoping that former Secretary Wirth and Secretary Taft could comment on that topic and perhaps offer some ideas for how to change that situation. Former Secretary Wirth, I would appreciate it if you would expand a bit on what the U.N. Foundation is going to be doing to try to change the U.N.’s situation.... sort of tell the story of the U.N. Are there ways that other folks that are interested in other organizations other than the U.N. could dovetail on that to create a political climate and a public climate that would support the institutions and the programs we all care about?

A: Wirth. First, we are very worried about the fact that the base of support for the United Nations and for international engagement in the United States, as I said in my opening comments very briefly, is strong. If you ask people if they believe in the United Nations, if they believe in the role that we have as leadership, if they believe in attempting to close the gap between rich and poor, if they believe in trying to help girls around the world, if they believe in environmental issues, you know, you’re right up there. It’s a very strong support. But the gap -- there’s an enormous gap between that level of support and people acting upon that level of support. There is so far, very little mechanism that gets people over the one-two line to close the gap and doing something about it. I’d draw a parallel to gun control. When I was in the Congress, I was from a western state, always supported gun control measures of every kind because I knew that -- and we looked at this very carefully in polling as well - I was for it instinctively. But we looked at it, and 75 percent of the people in my state of Colorado were for gun control measures that were for hand gun control. Seventy-five percent. But in 20 years of elective politics I
was never, one time, in a gathering -- never one time did a person say, “Thank you for your support of...” whatever it might be on the gun control side.

But on the other side, which was a small minority, there was a small group of incredibly active people who were engaged in sort of the so-called “amendment two” issues, the anti-gun control group who would come to a town meeting of people this size, sit around in areas, and attempt to terrorize the whole meeting and act as if gun control was ... the anti-gun control, or gun control...was the only issue around. The squeaky wheel gets the grease and that, it seems to me, is true across the United States on gun control and is similar on this issue.

So what do we do to catalyze people? Well we’ve started with a very aggressive focus grouping and then set up polling to try to get the language right, to try to understand what are the issues that are going to catalyze not only the people that you would traditionally believe would be supporters of our international engagement, but what do you do to get them (as our Republican friends call it, and we have a great number of Republicans engaged in this issue) ... engaged in this effort -- the Grass Tops Movement? How do you get the International Harvester dealer, how do you get the head of the Chamber of Commerce, how do you get the local bank? What’s the language of the local bank president? What’s the language and what’s the approach that is going to engage a broader coalition of people? While we’re working on that, we’re trying to identify a grassroots community in 12 to 20 states where we can attempt to develop a coalition of people that have similar kinds of interests.
Panel Three

COLLABORATION; SURVIVAL STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE?
Evolving Roles: Military, Media, and Multinationals/Cooperation in the Field....
What Works?

Arthur E. (Gene) Dewey, Professor in Residence, U.S. Army Peacekeeping Institute

Gene Dewey’s background in four central disciplines germane to peace support operations in post-Cold War humanitarian emergencies includes: senior field experience in the military, diplomatic service, U.N. operational agency leadership, and non-governmental organizational leadership; positions as founding director of the Congressional Hunger Center, United Nations assistant secretary general and deputy high commissioner for refugees, deputy assistant secretary, bureau of refugee programs, U.S. State Department; and 25 years with the U.S. Army and Office of the Secretary of Defense.

Reynold Levy, President, International Rescue Committee

Appointed president of the IRC in July 1997, Reynold Levy recently produced two major works on corporate social responsibility and American philanthropy. The first, Give and Take: A Candid Account of Corporate Philanthropy, will be published by the Harvard Business Press in the spring of 1999. Levy was a senior officer at AT&T, with his last position being managing director of international public affairs. He joined AT&T in 1984 as founder and executive officer of the AT&T Foundation. He has taught law, political science, and the management of non-profit institutions at Columbia and New York Universities, Baruch College and Adelphi University.

Philip Johnston, Ph.D. Former President, CARE USA; President and CEO, Alternative Fuels International (AFI)

Prior to founding AFI, Dr. Johnston worked for 33 years with CARE USA, 15 as its president and CEO. Johnston’s career with CARE began in 1963 in Greece where he developed a nationwide school nutrition program. After a similar post in India, he was promoted to country director in Sierra Leone. Johnston established CARE’s first European fundraising office, which contributed to the establishment of CARE International, and he became its first executive director. In 1980, Johnston was elected executive director of CARE USA and ascended to president in 1989. Upon retiring in 1996, he was elected president emeritus of CARE. He also served as U.N. coordinator for humanitarian assistance during Somalia’s civil war and famine and directed the integration of humanitarian relief organizations with the military.
SUMMARY

Panelists discussed the necessity for collaboration among the various players who respond to humanitarian crises. In the post-Cold War era, as nations and institutions look toward the future and see the nature of humanitarian crises in the wake of political instability, it is necessary to apply criteria to evaluating the crisis before deciding on whether and how to respond and how to collaborate. There needs to be a situational awareness of who the enemies are, where we are headed, how to get there, what are the tasks or roles of the various players and who is in charge, who has the leadership role.

To this end it may be useful to require humanitarian impact statements to proposed policies and actions in response to a crisis. And an effort should be made to shorten the time it takes to respond, to move humanitarian concerns to the top of the agenda.

Response to the growing number of humanitarian crises would improve if there were more pluralism – more sources of energy and initiatives, more advocacy and broader support. There are currently too few funding sources and not enough funding. To change this, it will be necessary to increase media attention and broaden public awareness and support. In addition to pluralism, increased competition among NGOs would be a healthy development as would new forms of partnerships and collaboration. Increased public awareness and support is possible. While public financial support is declining in the U.S., there remains a high level of financial support given by the public to private, voluntary organizations.

One favorable development in the delivery of humanitarian aid is the increasing number of effective and responsible local organizations. They are potential and necessary partners for international organizations coming in to deliver aid, and they are strengthening their own status by the improved communications the Internet has made possible. In some areas, local players, whether governmental, private or military have begun forming ongoing disaster preparedness committees. While these actions do not mitigate the underlying problems, they are helpful in improving the delivery of assistance.

In attempting to find better ways to increase public awareness and support for humanitarian aid and response to crises, organizations might consider more sophisticated and expensive collaborative efforts, such as well produced and targeted public advertising campaigns, including prime-time television appeals that are generic and not specific to one organization.

Begleiter:

With whom do you collaborate? With governments? With other organizations? With business? With on-the-ground organizations? With third parties in other countries? And if you collaborate, to what end? What do you gain by it? What do you lose by it? What actually works for the people who need the aid most?
Arthur E. (Gene) Dewey:

Since I’m going to talk about two roads and some road markers today, I’m going to put up what those markers look like and discuss some of these signposts, starting with the road we are on and then the road that we need to take. Believe me, they are not the same road.

The earth shifted mightily with the end of the Cold War, but the mapmakers who charted our routes out for the Cold War are using the same old signposts. And those signposts are the ones you see here. They’re the geopolitical markers, the economic markers, the national security markers. And in some places, there are no markers at all, and in those places where there are no markers at all, we see warning markers that have been put up. And one of those warning markers is Presidential Decision Directive 25 (PDD 25), which really talks about the dragons that have to be slain, the bureaucratic dragons that have to be slain, and the hurdles we have to get over before we get involved in today’s complex humanitarian emergencies. It’s like the old mapmakers. They labeled these unfamiliar parts of the world with a sign: “Here there be dragons.” And that’s sort of the way we have handled it with PDD 25.

The marker that concerns me though, is the marker that’s missing. It’s really reminiscent of the slogan we hear in political campaigns: “It’s the economy, stupid.” I think we have to realize now that “It’s humanitarian, stupid.” This is the reason that brings us in with troops, at least at the end of the day when everything else has failed and when the humanitarian agencies have had to shut down; it’s humanitarian interest that brings the international community to bear on these issues.

The road we are on and the road we need to take are different roads ... I think there are really five markers that set out the road we need to take. There is the situational awareness marker in terms of who are enemies, who are friends? The second marker is our destination marker, our mission -- where are we going? And how do we know when we get there? The third is how do we get there? What is the critical path to getting there? And the fourth is our tasks as supporting agencies. And this is where the military comes in, because the military is not in charge in these operations -- they’re a supporting agency. And then finally, the place of leadership – who is in charge?

Now with respect to our enemies, we know who they are. We know that they involve horrific violations of human rights, human suffering, and terrorism. Just a word on the antidotes that we need to deal with these threats today -- I think the antidotes have to start with an institutionalizing of humanitarian impact. Since it is humanitarian reasons that bring us into these emergencies, I think that we have to think about requirements for humanitarian impact statements. We have impact statements for just about everything else, environmental, gender, small business, but we miss the most important element of all, that is, the people impact. It seems to be more politically correct today to be a tree hugger than it is to be a people hugger. How do we change that?

I think that we have to think about the need for perhaps a new presidential decision directive, which can require, or mandate the requirement, for a statement of humanitarian impact for the things that our political leaders do, or fail to do in major policy decisions. Why couldn’t we have something like this in the reinvention of government that the vice president [U.S. Vice President Albert Gore] is working on? I think this could be something very substantive.
If you are still not convinced that this is needed, let’s just call the roll. Failure to slow or stop Germany from recognizing Croatia in 1991, which arguably accelerated the catastrophic dissolution of Yugoslavia. We see the importance of having to step back a little bit and think about the humanitarian impact of that. If you look at the U.S. and the German winking and blinking at the Croatian invasion of Kraina in 1995, where 200,000 innocent persons were displaced with no regard for their relief or their welfare. Even as we speak, the world is silent as Germany dumps busloads of Bosnian refugees on the doorstep of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees in Tuzla, with no provisions for their return and dignity or safety.

The second antidote has to do with the trigger that brings us into these emergencies. The fact is that the trigger -- the humanitarian trigger -- tends to be too long and too hard and too ragged, and we have to shorten that trigger. I think probably the best antidote to the threats that we face today is putting the humanitarian dimension at the top of the national agenda. How do we do that? We have to realize that the way we’re going about it now -- that is, to rely on an apology after the fact, just isn’t good enough. Remember the apology of President Clinton for genocide in Rwanda after the fact. That just doesn’t hack it anymore.

Let’s look to the second part of the situational awareness -- that is, our friends -- and we see the constellation of assets that we have to counter these threats: the international organizations that are legally internationally mandated with accountabilities and responsibilities; the non-governmental agencies that don’t have these legally mandated international mandates for accountabilities but are important implementing partners, or at least should work in concert with the lead international organizations; and of course, military forces that are in support. They are not in charge, but are very important; and then finally, the diplomatic institutions that we have to help us.

Another thing to remember is that there are existing systems for handling the major sectors of emergencies today -- the water sector in particular. We should respect those. We should not cut around them with gimmicks such as service packages, as were used in eastern Zaire in 1994. The service package that was most dangerous was the one used for water, where Germany was given the responsibility for water, and really supplanted the UNICEF, OXFAM U.K. relationship which had been taking care of the water sector for most of these emergencies in the past. So let’s not short-circuit these.

The final item here in terms of the friendly assets has to do with donor states and the funding that they provide. I think a principle which we used in the ‘80s, in the State Department anyway, was to look at the accountability and then make the money follow the accountability. This is a very sensitive, delicate area because we don’t do that anymore. We tend to go around the accountable, responsible international organizations and give the money directly to NGOs. And again, that undercuts the accountability and the clout that donors have in getting productivity out of these international organizations.

Going on to the destination. In mission planning, it’s important to bring in all of the players, particularly the support players such as the U.N. High Commission for Refugees and UNICEF and the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the World Food Programme (WFP). If you look at the military
planning that goes on for an involvement such as the implementation force for Bosnia, you see how this rule is ignored -- that the persons who are supported don’t tend to be brought in to express the needs that they have for support. How great it would have been if the Dayton Bosnia Peace Accords had been a comprehensive process like this where UNHCR and the NGOs involved could have been brought in and been able to set out for the military the range of tasks that they could have been expected to be assigned in this very important effort.

This has to do with the Presidential Decision Directive 56 (PDD 56), where again the missing elements in PDD 56 are this ability to access the supported organizations. There is a need for someone in charge. Before PDD 56 we had someone in overall charge of the U.S. interagency process -- the administrator of the Agency for International Development. After PDD 56, which was signed in May of last year, we’re not sure who is in charge. We have to establish again this trigger which starts the planning for the contingencies that we’re involved in.

The third marker on the road …. We need to take to the future is what I call a critical path marker. How do we get there, and how do we know when we’ve arrived in solving the problems of these complex humanitarian emergencies? If you look at this critical path for Bosnia today, the critical item for this year, 1998, is return of refugees and displaced persons. We know the UNHCR is on the critical path. They are the central agency on this critical path. But the U.N. high commissioner for refugees needs security support from the military forces, particularly from the multinational division north in Tuzla. So when Germany was dumping these busloads of refugees and asked for help at least to provide some security in the zone of separation, the commander said “No, we don’t think the situation is appropriate yet for resettlement.” So you see what happens when one of the players is able to block ... in effect block the critical path to mission accomplishment.

The next marker sets out some of the things that we should expect from the support team forces. Military forces should do, in my view, only the things that only military forces can do. They’re just too expensive to be giving shots, to be delivery food, if the security situation will permit the designated civilian relief agencies to do that work. The military costs about 10 times what the civilian agencies cost and their hands are completely filled with these security tasks and occasionally with the logistics, long haul logistics or even retail logistic tasks.

One final word on the military is this business of their reluctance to take casualties. Something has to be done about that. That something that has to be done resides in their political masters. When they went into Bosnia it was a presidential election year and so the military was constrained by the political masters from taking the risk that would have caused casualties. When we talk about the overhead that the military forces entail, this is one of the things we’re talking about.

Now the place of leadership -- this is so important because the United States needs to have the capacity to lead itself in these emergencies -- that is, to get its own interagency process together to have someone in charge. And it’s only then that we really have the moral authority to legislate or to require the kind of leadership in the United Nations and the international system that can bring success to these operations. For the United States, it’s clear that humanity’s first captain must be the president. Presidential leadership in the humanitarian area seemed to work in the so-called refugee decade of the ’80s, when the president would call the responsible person in the State Department directly when he
saw intense human suffering depicted on television. That happened repeatedly in the early ’80s, and those of us in the humanitarian trenches at that time made the most of it. The intensity of presidential humanitarian interest then resulted in what are widely recognized today as the finest hours of the United Nations …. That kind of presidential support for multilateral productivity also produced some of the finest hours of the United States.

As we stare into the next millennium we have an unparalleled opportunity to take any road, and the markers on the old road, I think we’ll have to recognize, took us in a lot of wrong directions. Now, for example, we know that saying you’re sorry after genocide and after ethnic cleansing has already taken place is not the path to take. We will be headed on the right path toward the next millennium when we can truly say that the highest level of humanitarian leadership in the United States means never having to say you’re sorry.

Reynold Levy:

…. The International Rescue Committee spends about $85 million dollars a year, works in 25 countries around the world and here in the United States providing relief services in a whole variety of fields from health to shelter, sanitation, education, physical infrastructure. Here in the United States, we settle about 12% of all the refugees who come into the United States. That number varies from about 8,500 to 10,000. We’re the only NGO located in the U.S. that does both -- that provides both relief and resettlement services. We also process refugees, prepare them for entry into the United States, and they number some 15,000. I am speaking to you from the point of view of a relatively new CEO -- in office for about 15 months -- of an agency so described, to try to address the question “Where should this field be headed?”

I have three imperatives to share with you about where this field should be headed. The first I would call the need for pluralism. The second I would call the need for even more intensive competition. And the third I would call the need for even more intensive cooperation and collaboration. Let me elaborate on each.

First, the need for pluralism. By pluralism I mean multiple sources of energy and initiative, multiple sources of advocacy and of funding. The field of relief and resettlement will spend roughly $5 billion dollars this year worldwide. Roughly, that will come from the critical mass of two dozen nation states, and instrumentalities of one kind or another created by them, with a patina of funding from individuals and from foundations and other collectivities.

There are few, very few, areas of endeavor, in the United States at least, that are so dominated by so few funding sources. What protects, enlivens, provides dynamism to this nation’s cultural institutions, its universities, its hospitals, its social service centers, are the multiple sources of energy, initiative and funding. Not the few, but the many. The humanitarian field, with some very important exceptions here in the United States, and any number of exceptions in Europe, has for a wide variety of reasons, not made as much headway in acquiring proponents, advocates, supporters, and adherents, as have these other non-profit fields. If the humanitarian field is to thrive, it needs to. It is an imperative. It needs to broaden the attention and involve publics that are interested in and supportive of, humanitarian activities, lest we drift as a country…. into a period of introversion, of isolation, of excessive domestic focus.
We need to take a growing share of a huge aggregation of wealth, larger than any other the country has ever experienced over the last eight or nine years, and shift but a very small portion of it to relief and development agencies, and do so block by block, individual by individual, foundation by foundation, corporation by corporation. Doing so will give agencies in this field greater flexibility, greater speed of movement, and more of a potential to advocate with a greater measure of freedom than they currently enjoy. Very often, to gain the attention of the media and to gain attention of policy makers, the identity of the messenger is as important, or more important, than the content of the message. This field can use more messengers -- more individuals who speak about it in perhaps less of a well informed way, less of a full-time way, but who spend enough time to grasp its essence, to articulate it to decision makers, and to articulate it to the media. I do not rule out the heads of very large foundations in this country, or the heads of very large corporations in this country -- both sectors of our society -- and I would include university presidents as well -- who have been relatively silent -- unheard from on these questions. That is a job of advocacy and persuasion that I believe lies in front of us.

I have frequently heard, since joining this field, about a beltway [Washington, D.C.] echo chamber, about a sense of the incestuousness of a committed community. The sense of an echo chamber, the sense of the incestuousness of a committed community needs to be changed by opening doors to fresh sources of energy and innovation that can support an enormously impressive mobilization of resources and of commitment.

Second, competition among NGOs is a very good thing. I smile when I think about the tolerance of corporate executives for the 99 different varieties of toothpaste and the thousands of different choices we see on our grocery shelves, but who the moment they see two NGOs in a given neighborhood, wish to have them merged, or wish to reorganize them, or comment on how untidy they are. If competition works to provide quality of services for us, refugees deserve no less. The competition needs to be bounded; to be fair. Once a certain number of NGOs prevail, they need to cooperate and collaborate in the most efficient and effective way on the ground.

But to assure quality to the most vulnerable who have no voice, I know of only two ways to do that. One is to have a bounded competition, and the second is to have media attention. Too often one finds the absence of both .... The American environment is ready for an acceptance of these three imperatives for significant increase in the number of actors in this field, supporters, partners, funders, collaborators, for increased competition and for new forms of partnership and collaboration.

I contrast the relative sophistication of the American public as revealed in most recent public opinion polls on the United Nations with -- pick your figure -- the 35-50 percent of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives who have no passport. I contrast the percentage of voluntary funding that Americans already provide to international organizations to the percentage of public funding provided to the same interests and causes. And I contrast my own experience and the experience of others to what I have frequently heard about fund raising and advocacy for humanitarian organizations -- that there is an insuperable CNN effect; that there are too many philanthropic summer soldiers and sunshine patriots among the American people who fade in and out when there is a crisis or there isn’t a crisis; that there is too much compassion fatigue; that Americans don’t care fundamentally about what happens on distant shores. I have found little of this to be true, and most of it when true, to be grossly exaggerated. There
is a responsive environment to fresh appeals, to the acquisition of new allies in this field. Their acquisition is critical to the health of humanitarian agencies as we face a new century.

**Philip Johnston:**

I have been asked to speak on the issue of collaboration, the survival strategy for the future, and pay particular attention to the issue of cooperation in the field. I want to begin by acknowledging the increase in the number and the effectiveness of formal and informal local groups that seek to address quality of life issues around the world. Yes, the number of refugees has increased in the past 20 years. And yes, there are 25 complex emergencies resulting in large numbers of casualties – 85 percent of which are [civilian] men and women -- and that is a horrible situation. But these tragedies should not cause us to lose track of all that has been gained, some in the quiet isolation away from the spotlight. I ask you not to consider your universe to be what is not working, but rather look at the gains that are being made in development assistance around the world through local initiative. Increasingly, self-help groups are linked by the Internet and other communication systems so that information exchange has replaced isolation as a reality in their organizational lives.

Today, they have access to enormous databases, which is both empowering and moving them electronically into the 21st century. A clear pattern is emerging which will carry them into the 21st century, which is that these formal and informal groups are forming their own coordinating entities because their own experience shows them that collective action is better than individual action in terms of reaching their goals. How many mayors throughout the world today will receive delegations of self-help groups that have studied their problems and are offering a solution asking the mayor’s agreement or the mayor’s participation or some such request? These groups followed the model that the women’s movement started and they have done very well and will continue to do better.

In the consideration of humanitarian aid challenges in the 21st century, we will continue to be confronted with natural disasters to which the less-endowed countries will continue to be vulnerable. The aid community can look with pride to its achievements in delivering assistance. Many emergency-prone countries have permanent committees for coordination, which involve their government officials, their local NGO community representatives, representatives of the international community. The disasters will not stop, but the local capacity to coordinate the relief assistance will certainly be improved.

In the case of complex emergencies where NGOs -- mostly internationals -- will have their greatest challenge, yes the number of this type of tragedy is increasing but it is the brutality that is associated with these emergencies which is most difficult to accept. The security exposure to NGO personnel has probably never been higher. The ingredient of ethnic hatred and ethnic cleansing seems to blind people to the inhumanity of what is happening, particularly by militias and young soldiers. Normal human behavior seems to have been suspended in these conditions. The development community has attempted to provide care and comfort to victims of ethnic cleansing and other dislocating activities, or drought combined with warfare, but it is a very difficult rendering of assistance. In this regard, I want to salute this year’s winner of the Conrad Hilton Humanitarian Prize -- Doctors Without Borders -- for their gallant rendering of assistance to the injured and the needy in many unsafe circumstances. The question which many ask…. is what to do. What will work in these circumstances? As a community we have had little significant success in mitigating these problems. We have had huge success given the
constraints of these dilemmas to deliver assistance to those that we can reach. The only solution is to render assistance to those we can reach, recognizing that there will be those we cannot reach, and that some supplies will be diverted, and wait for the diplomatic/military combination of influences to displace the militia and the others.

The steps that most NGOs adopt during the debate by governments and entities like NATO or the U.N. is to render aid as best they can, acknowledging that not everyone is going to be reached. This scenario relies on a very high degree of sharing, because in the uncertain circumstances of a low security issue, information is critical to improve the security and the knowledge about what might happen to the NGO workers. I wish that I could find or be a part of a group that could find a solution to these complex emergencies. As a matter of fact, I tried at one point during my life, in Somalia, by getting right on the front lines. But I did not succeed. It is a very difficult problem.

I do have a suggestion that may reduce the number of complex emergencies in the future, and that is to try to rank countries that may disintegrate. Rwanda is a country that, before it disintegrated, there were clear signs of social pressure, of economic disintegration. Perhaps if assistance had been more accurately targeted, Rwanda might not have disintegrated with 500,000 people having lost their lives in the process. The question is can we pinpoint countries that may disintegrate, that may become complex emergencies? Is there a method by which the U.N. and aid experts and NGO personnel could prepare a list of countries that have specific problems that might be the targeted focus of input to correct those problems before the countries disintegrate and war begins and slaughter and bloodshed reoccur? If one looks at the balance between cooperation in the field and what works and what hasn’t worked, I think it terribly important that a balance be struck between what we can look at and say we were directly or tangentially responsible or involved in so many wonderful things happening that put individuals on their own two feet, allowing them to go forward on their own, as we shifted our attention to others in need. Yes, we still have many problems. But we have many successes to look at.

**Question and Answer Session:**

*Begleiter.* I’m going to [refer] …. to the media’s role here, and just to pick up Reynold Levy’s toothpaste theory of providing humanitarian aid, carry it to what may be an absurd extreme … to inject a bit of the media perspective in this. That is to say, you’re right. There may be 99 types of toothpaste on the shelves, but I would venture to guess only nine of them get the lion’s share of the market. Others do all right or they wouldn’t be there…. but only a few get the lion’s share of the market, and they get that share not by looking for government assistance, not by running public service announcements on television, but … by buying very expensive advertising campaigns on television.

I’d like to just give you a little snippet of the kinds of things I face that directly affect the kinds of things you’re trying to do on television and in the media. And all of you have mentioned the use of the media here. Just pointing out the following two little factoids: During the O.J. Simpson trial, I was on the air doing a broadcast called “The International Hour,” which was not …. a Pulitzer Prize winning broadcast, but nonetheless was one that dealt with foreign affairs every day. During the O.J. Simpson trial coverage that program died in its sleep. It hasn’t been seen again. It was on the air for 10 years and it just simply disappeared. It was never placed back on the air after the trial concluded. During that coverage, CNN watched very carefully the number of viewers watching the network and at the
time that I or other newscasters were on the air -- let’s say you had this number of viewers going along at a pretty much regular basis--during the trial when the judge banged the gavel and came on the bench, that viewership increased five times, 10 times, and in many cases, 15 times as many viewers watching that trial than were watching my newscast.

During the Monica Lewinsky/Clinton scandal, however much all of you say you don’t pay attention to it, you don’t want to hear about it, you don’t want to talk about it, you don’t want to hear another piece of tape or another piece of evidence, our ratings have doubled and in some cases more than doubled when we broadcast information and news about that affair. I don’t know which of you are lying, but some of you are lying, okay? You’re watching. I only raise that to make the point that you may want to consider, as you lament the media’s inattention to your issues, the possibility of applying some of your resources to purchasing time so that your message gets through. If it means buying an ad in the Super Bowl, I can assure you .... in the Super Bowl coverage.... that more people will hear and see your message in one 30-second announcement during the Super Bowl, than will hear or see your message no matter how many press releases you put out, no matter how many times you get CNN’s coverage of some event or other that you stage. …

Q: Larry Minear, Humanitarianism and War Project. I want to ask Reynold Levy to spell out a little bit of his pluralism objective and what it implies. The road that Gene Dewey points us toward involves a higher level of professionalism, particularly in complex emergency settings. The trend seems to be that fewer agencies are mounting that kind of professionalism -- there are fewer agencies involved in complex emergencies -- fewer rather than more …. Is your interest in having more flowers blooming related to complex emergencies or to other kinds of disasters and development along the spectrum?

A: Levy. It’s related principally to other interventions. However…. the capacity to influence action politically and the capacity for the agencies involved, the larger and more professional, to exercise some discretion with their donors and some influence over their donors is directly related to their sources of support. A leveling and a substantial infusion of support from the private sector here in the U.S. would do wonders to increase that flexibility and to have agencies somewhat less concerned about scratching or biting the hands that feed them, considerably less so were there a portfolio of diversified funding sources to which they could turn, as is the case in so many other sectors of American life where non-profit services are provided.

I can’t emphasize enough how different this is as a field for me than running an institution of higher education or running a cultural center or running a social service center, precisely because of the presence of that pluralism. I’m thinking more in the structural governance sense that has implications for service across the board than I am thinking in the operational sense on the ground.

Q: Peter Walker, ICRC. To explore your competition model again a bit further. Yes, there are more agencies. Yes, there is more competition. The difference is, most of our customers have no buying power and no sense of structured or organized lobbying power to back us as suppliers. So in a world where you have competition between agencies, how do you ensure that the quality of those agencies relates to their ability to provide service rather than their ability to leverage funding?
A:  *Levy.* There are at least two possibilities here, both of which exist in part, but perhaps not in ample measure. The first is the degree to which those services are monitored. Monitored both by donors and other funders. The second is the degree to which they are covered, reported on, by external actors, other interested parties, monitoring agencies, freestanding, maybe even independent of donor sources. Other fields of course have accreditation schemes and accreditation systems that are longer, more developed, less informal than is the case in this field. . . . There are a variety of mechanisms available to, . . . at least partially compensate for the sovereignty of an informed marketplace.

Q: *Dr. Jean-Baptiste Richardier, Handicap International.* There was a time when humanitarianism meant rather clearly man-to-man expression of solidarity. . . . Once I was in Bosnia with Handicap International and Médecins Sans Frontières people, and we watched some French soldier within the U.N. watching a few people stabbed to death. Their mandate was humanitarian. The French operation in . . . Rwanda was labeled humanitarian and most lately, the humanitarian mine clearance has been the latest instance of difficulty to clarify military and civilian activity. For public education and perhaps our own education purpose, shouldn’t we renounce to the current semantic confusion between humanitarian, politics, military actions, as a first step to clarify roles and restore proper identification of different actors, or is it a rear-guard battle?

A:  *Dewey.* That’s a very important point that there has to be a rationalization of roles, even more now as funding is so much more scarce. There has to be almost a certification of the players who are allowed to come on the humanitarian battlefield. We used to do that. The host country or host authorities in the UNHCR and the involved player would sign a tripartite agreement before they were introduced. I think we’ll have to get back to that. We have to get back to this idea of overall accountability for how well or how poorly the operation goes. And that attaches to international organizations. It doesn’t attach to NGOs. But, the NGOs are the front line troops and they have their specialties which have to be respected and it’s like when I had a very acute need, in 1984, in Somalia, when we had an influx of refugees into Ethiopia, the first person I called was the head of CARE, Phil Johnston. I knew that he could deliver and he did. We negotiated a million dollar a month contract over the phone. We’ll have to get back to that pattern of operation.

A:  *Johnston.* I agree it is important to have one’s mandate articulated to the nth degree. The fallacy is believing that the circumstances are going to stay within the parameters as described in the contract. They don’t. I was in Rwanda and into Zaire in that problem with the French military. I saw them and others struggle with the evolving circumstances. Today it was peaceful, this and that was done, and the mandate as described was completed; the following day banditry, looting, raping, murder, slaughter. The same troops had to then shift the whole thing and it was very hard. Unless you go into the circumstances as the military did in Somalia under Chapter 7, which allowed them to engage in actually firing weapons and killing people, to ask soldiers to become a part of a battle but not to participate in the battle is extraordinarily difficult. I sympathize with the question, but I am of the opinion that the answer to that question is as thick as a book.

Q:  *Albina du Boisrouvray, Francois-Xavier Bagnoud Association.* I wanted to ask Mr. Philip Johnston to elaborate more on addressing issues in countries that we could pinpoint were going to disintegrate . . . Two countries that are disintegrating in very dangerous ways in front of our eyes right
now are Russia and Kosovo. What is there that the international community, NGOs or whoever should be doing?

A: Johnston. Let me answer by using a different country, an easier one because it is more in line with the idea of arriving on the doorstep and saying, “We, the world community, believe this is going to happen in your country.” Russia is three quarters of the way already down the tube, so let us start with a country that isn’t quite there yet, and that would be Colombia…. that is teetering on the brink of disintegration as a result of civil confusion and economic problems and drug problems and a whole bunch of other things. How terrible it will be if that disintegration continues to slip and slide down that slippery slope and we end up with a country that ceases to possess the ability to govern itself. The world community should say to Colombia -- and, for that matter, Venezuela is only a half an inch away -- “We are concerned about the stability of your country. We would like to work with you to try to address specific problems which, if not addressed, may result in an implosion or a disintegration or circumstances much worse than they are now.” As far as Russia goes, thank God I’m not in a position to have to do anything about Russia. I really don’t know what I would do.

Q: Ray Offenheiser, OXFAM America. With the selection of Médecins Sans Frontières as this year’s winner of the Hilton Prize, we have an extraordinary example of an organization that has distinguished itself by building transnational cooperation, and to take it a bit further, maybe what might be conceived of as a transnational humanitarian response capacity. I’d like to ask Mr. Johnston …. what he sees as the future of this sort of transnational cooperation. What are its opportunities and challenges?

A: Johnston. The opportunities are enormous for the NGO community, formal or not formal …. To the degree that you can stitch together a fabric that blends in and provides for self-help groups, no matter where they are, it’s enormously important to the quality of life in the world in general. We have become so focused on Bosnia and southern Sudan and Sierra Leone, Kosovo -- the other trouble spots of this world, that we have forgotten about the poor and the hungry and the needy in all of the other countries. We have forgotten about all of the people who are struggling to inch their way up the economic ladder …. We need to balance the scales. We need to take care of the wretched situations in those complex emergencies, but we need to somehow find a way to include in our caring and sharing and supporting the others who aspire to what we have been born into or received as refugees when we arrived here and in other countries. The more that we can do to help people climb that economic ladder, no matter where they are, the better off we are all going to be.
Panel Four

IS NEUTRALITY STILL POSSIBLE?
Politization of Humanitarian Aid/ Priority Setting in Ethical Dilemmas

Emma Bonino, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs

Emma Bonino has been a member of the European Union Commission since 1995. In addition to humanitarian affairs, she is responsible for fisheries, consumers’ policy, consumers’ health and food safety. She was elected to the Italian Chamber of Deputies six times, and to the European Parliament twice (1979 and 1984). Bonino is a tireless advocate of civil, political and human rights, particularly in the countries of Eastern Europe and most recently in Afghanistan. She has led international campaigns for a special tribunal on war crimes in the former Yugoslavia and for the establishment of a permanent international criminal court. She has proposed that killers of aid workers be prosecuted for war crimes.

Francis Amar, Head of International Organizations Division of the International Committee of the Red Cross

Francis Amar joined the ICRC in 1973. He served in numerous field assignments throughout the world, including Pakistan, Chile, Angola, Chad, Thailand, Yugoslavia and Romania, and headed several of ICRC’s delegations. At headquarters, his assignments included senior operational as well as personnel management. In 1988, he was appointed deputy delegate general for Europe and North America and, in 1992, delegate general for the Americas. In September 1998 he took up his present position as head of the international organizations division.

Larry Minear, Director, Humanitarianism and War Project, Brown University

Since 1972, Larry Minear has been working on international humanitarian and development issues. Following a year as Church World Service representative in the Sudan, he was based in Washington, D.C. from 1974 to 1992 where he headed up efforts by the Church World Service and the Lutheran World Relief to influence U.S. policy. More recently, he has been engaged in research and writing on humanitarian activities in situations of armed conflict as part of an independent university-based project funded by several dozen practitioner organizations and foundations. Minear has written extensively on human needs issues in more than 10 books and numerous articles. His article Terrorism vs. Humanitarianism was recently syndicated by Knight Ridder following the bombings in Kenya, Tanzania, Afghanistan and Sudan.
Panelists discussed the increasing difficulty, and the wisdom and morality of maintaining neutrality in the reality of today’s political situations.

Distinctions were drawn between impartiality and neutrality - with impartiality in the delivery of aid to those in need, regardless of their history, being an unquestioned imperative. However, neutrality as an alternative to blame-placing in the midst of aggressors versus victims, killers versus killed, is not a valid option. In fact, it is increasingly untenable and impossible, especially since the humanitarian workers or donors often are the only witnesses to violations of human rights and humanitarian principles. In any event, neutrality is not held to be an end in itself, but simply a pragmatic tool to be used in trying to save lives.

The question of neutrality is further complicated by the fact that humanitarians are not the only actors in a crisis. There are politicians, diplomats, military personnel and recipient countries themselves, each with a set of objectives that are not always complementary. It is important to distinguish who is doing what and what the boundaries are. In this mix of actors, for example, do humanitarian actors, absent political or military intervention in a crisis, remain on the sidelines waiting and hoping for diplomatic and military intervention, or do they call for it?

As for political and military intervention, while it is generally perceived that the world of realpolitik, or cold political reality, is no place for real consideration of human rights and humanitarian principles, it is time to consider that true economic and political interests are not served in dictatorships or repressive regimes; that an infusion of human rights principles into foreign policy would be beneficial in the long run to a country’s interests.

While the ICRC is seen as the standard bearer and touchstone for neutrality, the point was made that the ICRC does not equate neutrality with passivity or indifference. Not taking sides in the merits of a political dispute by and large gains the ICRC access to all sides in a dispute. That is not necessarily the same as keeping quiet, but in all instances, speaking is used as an option when all else fails and it is determined that speaking out will serve the interests of the victims.

The question of neutrality is perhaps best addressed by distinguishing between the roles and identities of the various players in the field of humanitarian aid. The U.N. and its agencies and NGO affiliates are in a different situation than the ICRC and independent NGOs, with neutrality being an option for the latter. The U.N., however, in its peacekeeping and diplomatic roles does take sides, making it more difficult, untenable and questionable for its humanitarian operations to maintain neutrality.

In the end it is the political sphere only that can address the violations of international law, especially human rights, while humanitarian aid can only address the consequences.

Begleiter:

At lunch today … Mèdecins Sans Frontiéres made a point again of its insistence on political independence, on its fierce independence from government influence, political influence, and so on.
Médecins Sans Frontières wears that independence with pride…. But you face the question, as organizations seeking both to have the ability to go in and fix a problem when you see one, and as organizations constantly begging at someone’s door for assistance, of having to decide whether neutrality is really the right course. In today’s political climate, in the post-Cold War era when there is no longer a side to be chosen, when that no longer exists, the question does arise whether neutrality is still possible in an atmosphere like that in Central Africa, for example, where there are multiple poles rather than simply two.

Emma Bonino:

It’s really a pleasure for me to attend to this sort of conference …. because we were celebrating a humanitarian achievement in a world which seems to me more and more busy outside this room dealing with the realpolitik, to which I will be back in a few moments. So much for the good news.

The very subject of this panel …. calls for an almost semantic distinction of what neutrality in humanitarian intervention means today, as compared for instance, with impartiality in the provision of relief assistance. I would like to make this distinction. One thing is, impartiality on the field which is, I think, a major, major value. A hungry child is a hungry child. No humanitarian should ask for passports or ask what ethnic groups or are you with your mother, brother, father, etc., etc., what religion are you, and so on and so forth. A wounded soldier is a wounded soldier, even being a soldier. A wounded genocidaire is a wounded genocidaire and deserves I think, humanitarian assistance. But that is impartiality on the field, which has very little to do with neutrality in pointing out who is the aggressor for instance. It seems to me there are two different levels and we cannot mix them up. So the basis of the Geneva Convention, and also the Red Cross and others …. should be restated. Humanitarian aid on the field should be provided independently of ethnic politics, religion, sex, and so on and so forth.

But another question is, what happens when NGOs or workers or donors are sometimes the only observers -- the only witnesses -- of what’s going on? Can they or can we, should we, be neutral? Should we be unable to distinguish right from wrong, the aggressor from the victim, the killers from the dead bodies? Frankly, …what kind of absurd wisdom could call for this organized ethical confusion? And that is something, it seems to me, that is becoming more and more one of the problems.

Another problem is that our previous speaker was rightly pointing out that in humanitarian aid -- it’s very important to have clarity and transparency -- who is doing what? Who can do what? Who has the mandate of doing what? Humanitarians are not the only actors in the international landscape -- there are the politicians, the diplomats, military, recipient countries, governments, and so on and so forth. So who is supposed to do what? Humanitarians cannot do everything. We do not have either the mandate or the tools. So when access is denied, should we have to try to do what we can, but wait for diplomatic or military intervention to put things right and allow us to fulfill our goal -- which more and more worldwide is exactly what doesn’t happen? Access is more and more denied. But not because we are providing food, but simply because more and more NGOs or humanitarian workers at large are becoming witnesses of what should not be seen. That’s why they are becoming, or we are becoming, more and more targeted, not because we are distributing food, but because we are becoming witnesses of something that should not be witnessed at all.
But the problem is again -- when we witness such a thing, when access is denied, when discrimination is clear under our eyes, when civilians are targeted in a disproportionate way as in Kosovo today, should we wait for diplomatic or military intervention or should we call for diplomatic, military, political intervention?

Frankly speaking, if it is not the donors, humanitarians at the headquarters, who know the plight of the victims, who dare to speak out and say, “Look, enough is enough,” -- who should do it? Frankly, who should do it? Because our final goal is to save life. It’s not to be neutral per se. Our final goal is to save life. Neutrality was thought to be one of the tools to achieve that. But not always. Or …. not any more. Let’s make clear again in the mind the distinction between impartiality and neutrality. We cannot compromise in such a way, also because at the end we have experienced it. When we accept a compromise betraying principles, at the end of the day we find ourselves at the bottom of the ladder with unprincipled behavior. And on top of that, we cannot even deliver, anymore, adequate humanitarian aid. Take Afghanistan, take Kabul. For one year and a half we accepted almost everything. At the end of the day we were not even in a position to offer adequate humanitarian aid in a non-discriminatory way to the women. … The world is changing, humanitarian catastrophes are also changing, and it cannot be that the humanitarian community does not take on board the changes which are happening worldwide.

I want to be very clear. My point is not at all to politicize humanitarian aid. Exactly the contrary. [It is] to try to put some humanitarian principle in foreign politics, which is exactly the other way around. And then comes the question between humanitarian aid, human rights and foreign policy, which is an awkward relation. It’s a sort of tricky triangle, like a marriage that is breaking down and where everyone distrusts one another.

In the relationship between foreign policy and human rights we are often presented with the alternative between realpolitik and ethical foreign policy. It’s like saying, “Okay yeah, human rights, humanitarian, that’s very good for Sunday speeches, but you must be realistic, we have to do something, and so on and so forth.” But it seems to me that these perceived dilemmas are often based on false assumptions …. Long-term goals of stability and economic opportunities are often much better served if human rights and humanitarian principles are incorporated in long-term policies in a serious way. Dictators and repression are never good for peace -- never. And there is nothing more volatile than politics. Even dictators can last for thirty years, then suddenly break out. So if we are interested in our economic development, in stability, it seems to me that a policy which is based on human rights, democracy, and humanitarian principle can much better promote economic development and prosperity than the so-called realpolitik one.

The last point is the following. At the end, humanitarian aid is often part of a political process that has, whether we like it or not, human rights issues as well as foreign policy decisions. We are not the only actor. More and more, we are the only actor on the field, that’s true. But worldwide, we are not the only actor. We can quarrel with each other, but on the field the humanitarian community knows each other, all of us. And more and more we are the only ones on the field. But we are not the only actors in the international landscape and many, many times foreign policy has goals or tools or methods which are exactly counterproductive compared to the humanitarian efforts that the same donors are making.
So from one end ... from the European Union, for instance ... luckily enough, we have a very generous budget as far as humanitarian aid for the moment. But on the other hand, there are not adequate political procedures, means and tools to tackle the problems as they are. We keep repeating more and more everywhere that humanitarianism is a value. But it cannot provide solutions to catastrophes which have political origin. We do not have either the goal or the tools. Not for that reason are we useless, because the other way around is because you’re not a solution, so you are just wasting our money, you are useless. That’s the other corner of the slogan, of the cliche. I think that it’s not true. I think that saving life is a value per se. If we do not have not even that kind of value, frankly speaking, what are we talking about? Humanitarians are very perceptive, but they’re not the solution and we, the humanitarians, should say more and more what we can do and what we cannot do. We cannot tackle 300,000 internally displaced in Kosovo .... If there is no political initiatives or solution, we are running toward a humanitarian catastrophe. It’s our responsibility to say it loud and clear. Not exactly waiting for some development, but calling for developments in the responsibility and transparency -- who is supposed to do what.

.... I strongly believe that our goal is saving lives. We cannot betray basic human rights principles in order to be credible, frankly speaking, and because experience shows us that it’s never, never, never a good pattern, a good model. Every time we have done it, it has been a subsequent disaster. We have saved maybe some lives, but threatening thousands of others just months later on. Being clear that impartiality on the field does not mean at all neutrality in distinguishing between some kind of right and wrong.

Francis Amar:

Fifty-two years ago, while visiting the headquarters of the (ICRC), Sir Winston Churchill called the organization “a platform, the only platform between the lines of battle where men could meet together and recognize their common humanity.” He was referring to its unique role as a neutral intermediary in times of armed conflict, a role enshrined in the Geneva Conventions. For 135 years, the ICRC has striven to realize Henri Dunant’s dream, to become the international humanitarian organization it is today. The founder of the ICRC, a chance witness to the bloody battle of Solferino in 1859 and the wounded who were left lying on the battlefield, was inspired to seek to build a bridge between civilians and the military to help victims of armed conflict, based on neutrality and impartiality. What have we learned today about the relationship between these two concepts and humanitarian aid?

As the British journalist William Shawcross recalled at the first Wolfsberg Humanitarian Forum convened in 1997 by the ICRC, a special place of torment is reserved in Dante’s Inferno for those who are neutral in life. He rightly pointed out that it is the difficult -- often bordering on the impossible -- duty of humanitarian agencies, in particular the ICRC, to ensure that neutrality not vacillate, but rather be constructive, that neutrality not be abused but rather made good use of, in coming to the aid of victims of conflict.

For the ICRC, neutrality is by no means tantamount to indifference or passivity. The ICRC is never indifferent, never passive, when it comes to human suffering. Neutrality, as Ms. Bonino rightly pointed out before me, is not an end in itself, but rather a means to an end, its basic purpose to secure the confidence of all parties to a conflict, thus ensuring unimpeded access to all victims. In fact, neutrality
has a very specific meaning: to discharge the mandate conferred on it by the states party to the Geneva
Conventions, and to take the humanitarian initiatives which are part of its role as a neutral intermediary,
the ICRC must not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial,
religious, or ideological nature. This requires scrupulously avoiding any connection with the dispute
giving rise to the conflict, or indeed, with anything that may be construed as being associated with the
dispute.

Neutrality is one of the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent
movement. It is a working tool and a safeguard against the politicization of humanitarian action. The
ICRC’s experience confirms that access to victims on all sides of a conflict depend on firmly staying its
course in this regard. For if the provision of humanitarian aid to certain population groups, were to
come - or perceived as having become - conditional upon the political position or the conduct of
the warring parties, some victims would inevitably be viewed as more deserving of protection and
assistance than others. Such a situation is intolerable and would violate the very essence of the
humanitarian spirit.

There is a growing concern within the United Nations as to whether its humanitarian activities should
become more tightly linked to an overall political strategy aimed at promoting international peace and
security. A move in this direction makes good sense for the U.N., but it reinforces the need for an
impartial and neutral body like the ICRC to preserve its independent identity. An overly direct
association of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement with the U.N. confuses the
perception of both the victims and the parties in conflict, and can jeopardize its action. When the world
moves beyond a system composed exclusively of sovereign states and into the realm of supra-national
organizations, the reasons for pursuing a policy of neutrality may become harder to see. However,
recent events confirm that the ICRC’s neutrality is as crucial as ever for the conduct of its operations.
What occurred earlier this month is a good example among many, illustrating the importance of ICRC’s
role as a neutral intermediary, when it was approached by the authorities in both Tehran and Kabul to
assist in repatriating the mortal remains of Iranian diplomats abducted in August in Mazar-I-Sharif.

Another aspect of ICRC’s neutral approach, the matter of public stance, has seen some rethinking in
recent years. Neutrality does not necessarily mean keeping quiet. In fact, the ICRC reserves the right
to depart from its usual discretion when it believes that circumstances warrant it. We have grown more
willing to make public statements on situations which have become unacceptable, and we are vocally
engaged in public campaigns, such as the prohibition of anti-personnel land mines. This course of action
has in no way undermined the institution’s neutrality. The ICRC realizes that its responsibilities are all
the greater when it is the sole witness to particularly grave events of which the public and governments
seem unaware. When considering a public appeal, the chances of success of any pressure brought to
bear by the international community on those responsible for the breaches being committed are carefully
weighed along with the effects - positive and negative - which making a public statement might have
on the plight of the victims. There is ample justification for outspokenness in cases of blatant disregard
for international humanitarian law, provided that it serve the interest of the victims we are endeavoring to
help.

The ICRC has defined the conditions under which it will issue a public statement condemning violations
of international humanitarian law as follows:
First, the violations of international humanitarian law must be persistent and on a large scale; second, confidential representations have failed to put an end to the violations; third, such publicity will serve the interest of the individuals or groups affected or threatened; fourth, ICRC delegates have witnessed the violations with their own eyes or learned of them from reliable and verifiable sources.

To mention only the most recent examples, a strongly worded statement was made on September 15 about the humanitarian consequences of the conflict taking place in Kosovo, where the situation has become so unbearable that the Security Council passed a resolution only a few days ago, and I’m afraid that’s only a beginning. A few weeks before, the ICRC issued a press release expressing its deep concern about the events in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

In such cases, the ICRC always consciously guards against two real dangers. The first is a temptation to make a statement that strikes an artificial balance, condemning breaches committed by all sides in conflict. Neutrality most certainly doesn’t mean denouncing all parties in the same terms, implying that each has committed as many violations as the other. The second pitfall, of which the ICRC is acutely aware, is the temptation to engage in political opportunism to pander to public opinion, which is why we sometimes find ourselves in an ethical dilemma. The ICRC most assuredly does not believe its principles and working methods to be more important than the human suffering which it has the duty to relieve. The essential point to the rules we set for ourselves is that they are tools that enable us to take action, to carry out the task assigned to us by the community of states. If the ICRC decides not to make a public statement, this is first and foremost, in order not to be denied, as a result, access to those it is mandated to assist. This choice implies no criticism of organizations which have set other goals for themselves, speaking out and exerting public pressure. Both approaches are complementary.

The ICRC has one goal: To come to the aid of victims of conflict, and its only one means of achieving it is persuasion. We must be willing to talk to people who are responsible for grave violations of human rights and international humanitarian law. We cannot publicly pass judgment on them if we aim to speak to them on behalf of those who have no voice, who have no one else to turn to. Our delegates often do this at considerable risk to their own personal safety, knowing full well that their words may fall on deaf ears. But as long as the policy of refraining from public condemnation makes it possible to save lives, the ICRC will stand by it.

To preserve the physical integrity and dignity of victims, the ICRC has the delicate task of maintaining regular, constant, and constructive dialogue with government authorities and movements guided by political, ideological, or even criminal outlooks which are anything but humanitarian. This is possible only because it does not involve itself and the issues underlying the conflict. The ICRC’s strength resides in its self-imposed limitations, refusing to enter into ideological controversy, to express condemnation or approval, or to say on which side justice lies. Its priority is to reach those affected by war and to take pragmatic action to alleviate their plights. The guarantee of neutrality is often what opens prison doors to ICRC delegates, or now, relief convoys displaying the Red Cross or Red Crescent emblems to enter conflict zones. The purpose of neutrality is action.
Larry Minear:

These have been two interesting presentations, not entirely contradictory. One from the standpoint of an advocate with governments in Brussels, the other from the head of a practitioner agency in the field.

My own perspective on these issues is from the research side. Our humanitarianism and war project, now in its eighth year, has interviewed people in many of these conflicts around the world and now, after some three or four thousand interviews, we’re trying to struggle with these questions and put together recommendations for policy makers. We asked the question, for example, “Is neutrality possible?” of the ECHO [European Commission Humanitarian Office] representative in Belgrade in 1993...June of 1993 ... and of the ICRC delegate in Belgrade, and have some interesting and somewhat different answers from each of those. We asked the question of neutrality [of humanitarian aid representatives in other crises repeatedly]....

My own answer to the question, in a word, is: neutrality is not really possible for the United Nations humanitarian organizations and for non-governmental organizations associated with them. On the other hand, it is possible for the ICRC and for independent non-governmental organizations. Based on those premises, which I’ll elaborate very briefly here, my own suggestion is that we need to have a re-division of labor, of institutional labor for the new millennium, that gives a clearer priority on the operational humanitarian side to the ICRC, and on the political and diplomatic and advocacy side to the United Nations and to ECHO and governments.

First, let me explain why I’ve concluded, based on our data from these various conflicts, that neutrality is elusive for the United Nations in many of these complex emergencies. We’re talking here about complex political emergencies, not about natural disasters or chronic underdevelopment. In crisis after crisis to which the U.N. has responded, there have been problems recurring again and again. The United Nations has difficulty conducting needs assessment missions in areas of contested sovereignty. In Nagorno-Karabakh, for example, where suffering was critical during the conflict there between Azerbaijan, Armenia and Nagorno-Karabakh, the United Nations was never able to mount a needs assessment mission because of the sensitivities of the warring parties. The United Nations tends to base its relief operations in the capital cities of countries that are in conflict, which already conveys a certain political meaning at a point which humanitarian actors would like to remain neutral. The United Nations has difficulty maintaining expatriate programming presence in armed conflicts. A good example of this would be in Chechnya where, despite the devastating suffering in Chechnya over a period of the civil war, United Nations operations were based around the edge and no United Nations personnel, be it UNHCR, WHO, WFP or whatever, were actually based in Chechnya -- again, for reasons of political sensitivity vis a vis the Russian Federation.

And finally, accountabilities on the U.N. side are obviously with the U.N. Security Council, with the governments that make up the U.N. and other specialized agencies, so there is a very political context in which accountabilities take place. This is true in crisis after crisis that these problems emerge. When you have crises that involve economic sanctions or military force -- in other words, the Chapter 7 of the U.N. Charter -- then these problems are even more excruciating. We found in places like Haiti or former Yugoslavia that U.N. personnel are really schizophrenic. On the one hand, if you work for UNICEF you’re part of the therapeutic U.N. trying to deliver services, but at the same time, you’re
working in a situation where the punitive U.N. has levied sanctions or imposed military force, so the difficulties are exacerbated there. In other words, frequently in these conflicts, the U.N. is a square peg … in a round hole.

As far as the ICRC goes, our impression from data throughout these conflicts is that its record is generally good in establishing and maintaining neutrality. It is able to carry out needs assessments in the Nagorno-Karabakh and in southern Sudan, before the U.N. had worked that out, without conveying political recognition of insurgent governments. It manages its operations for these conflict countries from Geneva, rather than from Khartoum or Kabul or Zagreb. It’s able to post expatriates in these conflict areas in situations into which the United Nations fears to tread. We know of course, that this has been done in peril to its own personnel, but to its credit, ICRC expatriates are in these situations and are the eyes and ears of the international community.

As far as accountability goes, the ICRC is able studiously to avoid the intrusion into its allocation of resources of governments who frequently would like to inject political agendas – “Will you help in this country? Will you not help here?”. The ICRC has found a way, although always struggling with this, to protect its independence of action. There have been some problems associated with the ICRC approach, and these we need to be aware of, particularly as we think about expanding the ICRC’s role in a new century. The insistence on neutrality means that normally the ICRC is unwilling to proceed with humanitarian activities on one side of a conflict until it can operate on the other side. In the Sudan in 1988, during a period in which 250,000 people died of starvation, the ICRC spent from March to December negotiating access both with the SPLA and with the Khartoum authorities, after which then it was able to mount programs. During that period, though, the loss of life was sizeable and the sort of attachment to neutrality was a disincentive to humanitarian action. Now in talking with my ICRC colleagues, there is some sense that one may be able to waive the normal ground rule here, and in a similar situation now, one might start in SPLA-controlled areas even without the permission of the government authorities, but that is a potential weakness of the ICRC approach.

A second problem is that the ICRC over the years has presented itself really in ways that minimize the intrusiveness of politics into its own activities. Francis told us that neutrality means neither indifference nor silence. I think that’s the way it has proceeded on the ground and in Geneva and in New York in its negotiations with governments. But frequently the ICRC has had such an arm’s-length relationship to politics that it presents itself almost as functioning in a political vacuum.

If you interview people in the field, you will get statements such as this: “Only if you’re politically savvy can you be politically neutral,” which I think is a much better statement … about how neutrality requires the utmost in political savoir faire in order to protect your neutrality. Interviewing one of his colleagues in June in Geneva about neutrality, this fellow told me that advocacy and denunciation are clearly something that the ICRC is willing to do, but within certain limits and on certain issues. He said “We don’t give a damn about greater Serbia but we do get exercised about ethnic cleansing and rape as a tactic of war.” The difference is not advocacy versus silence, but addressing the humanitarian dimensions of political issues, rather than addressing the full political context.

So I would suggest that the ICRC is really a round peg in a round hole. Not that it can do everything, but that it can do some things well, and it’s those things that require neutrality in contested situations that
are its particular strength. In conclusion then, what would a new division of labor be that looked at the comparative advantages of the U.N. and associated NGOs on the one hand, and the ICRC on the other? I think what we need here is a both/and approach, a both Emma and Francis, not an either/or, and definitely not a neither/nor. In other words, we want everybody in the act, but we need a clearer division of labor in terms of who does what. Sergio Vieira de Mello told us that humanitarian action cannot address the violation of international law, but only their consequences. And I think there’s a sense in which the political sphere has to tackle the violations of international law while the humanitarian organizations can bind up the wounded and can try to provide protection, as well as assistance.

In addition to taking a comprehensive approach, I think we could encourage the U.N. to focus on the political tasks that are quite clearly articulated by the U.N. Charter -- maintaining international peace and security, negotiating an end to conflicts, and doing less, similarly, on the operational humanitarian side. One of our interviews -- a U.N. person on the front lines in one of these conflicts -- had an interesting comment along these lines. “Would it not make sense,” he asks, “for the U.N. to come out as an essentially political organization whose manifesto is the U.N. Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights? Part of our job is to create the conditions in which humanitarian activities are possible, and of course, to undertake them. It may also be to use our humanitarian capacity to achieve certain benevolent political ends, speaking as a U.N. practitioner. But,” he says, “if despite protracted efforts, we in the U.N. are totally unable to create, foster, agree to those minimum political conditions with our interlocutors, I am not sure that we should be undertaking our own humanitarian activities. Might a more mature approach not be deliberately to play second fiddle to organizations, most obviously the ICRC, which are explicitly and exclusively humanitarian?”.

Question and Answer Session:

Q: Antoine Gerard, Doctors Without Borders USA. I’m pleased to hear the voice of Emma Bonino in this forum. I want just to add something and then make a question to the statement that has been done by Emma Bonino. I want to bring up another issue which has been brought up by Francis about independence. My question is, ECHO is mainly funding organizations who have a mandate or a charter to be neutral. And ICRC and IFRC are the main beneficiaries of ECHO, so I just want to know how much you combine... the statement in saying we have sometime not to be neutral and the fact that ECHO is funding a lot of organizations which are pretending to be at war being neutral or trying to be neutral, and would you, in some respect, hamper their work by some declaration you might take what might be conceived or might be perceived as non-neutral, and in that respect, might hamper their operation.

A: Bonino. I think that the answer is quite simple and I rely on what you said on the division of labor. For instance, at the ECHO office, we do not have the idea of duplicating efforts on the field. We think that there are fantastic NGOs, very professional … but we are trying to add the added value of maybe cooperation, information, advocacy, sharing services and so on and so forth. And again, I think that nowadays, frankly speaking, there is room for complementary activities. The dimension of crises is such that there is room for the Red Cross, which is 15 percent of our budget, for the NGOs of any kind, because there are also neutral NGOs and some other much more advocacy prone, which is something like 40-50 percent of our budget, and 30 percent goes to the U.N. family. So what I’m simply saying is that we have good cooperation with NGOs, we are not crying every day and we are not speaking aloud
every night. We were forced to come up on the front line on some specific issues, and we find agreement in all of them, even the Red Cross, on the Great Lakes, because the situation was so dramatic that we could not abide it -- but working together on this issue and its relation to advocacy, etc., is a learning process. But frankly, in the actual crisis there is room for any one of the actors on the field.

Q: Tony Kozlowski, American Refugee Committee. I was very interested in Larry’s division of labor for the new millennium…. Is it an either/or prospect? Do you see the U.N. and NGOs on one side and the ICRC on the other side? Or do you see NGOs, some NGOs as neutral -- trying to operate like the ICRC, and isn’t that possible in the new millennium? I’m thinking particularly of the situation in Goma ’94 to ’96, where there were a lot of pressures on NGOs who thought they were operating precisely as neutral organizations on the Goma side being criticized because they were prolonging the crisis.

A: Minear. For me, the NGOs have a choice between these two paradigms. Either the ICRC approach or the U.N. approach, and I think this will play out in situations wherever. For example, in the Great Lakes crisis in Angara, the UNHCR was basically given power by the Tanzanian authorities to channel funds and to license and to provide visas for cooperating NGOs, so there was a very small set, tightly disciplined NGOs, who did a concerted program of action that was vetted with UNHCR and did a much more effective job than what Michael Toole described in Goma. I think the profusion, the proliferation of NGOs that went ahead in Goma is not really a very effective model for the next millennium. I think NGOs themselves will have to be more selective in which approach they embrace.

A: Amar. I’d like to add to this that the ICRC’s ambition is definitely not to be isolated. And it is not alone in its camp, so to speak. First of all, it’s got with it...or it is with...the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement which abides by the same principles. I would like here to say that our colleagues represented here by a representative from Geneva are at the origin of the famous “Code of Conduct” which is a beginning of something that goes in the right direction that we all are seeking. Secondly, … many NGOs are trying their best and are doing very well in trying to abide by these same principles, and therefore, are lining up -- in Larry’s term -- in our camp. The only hitch there is the independence bit. We’ve got this slight advantage, so to speak, that we can remain, at a cost, independent, and that relates to the previous question about where the money comes from and what kind of pressures sometimes are put on humanitarians to do certain things and not others.

A: Bonino. Also the NGO community is changing. I’ve been working in the last three years with NGOs which started as very neutral and that on some issues are not neutral anymore, so again, it’s really a learning process in some way. And relations between human rights and humanitarians is another major field. Let me also add something -- which is that, it’s very good what you say, and I understand the dilemma, and also it’s mine, many times. But it’s also true that sometimes you don’t speak loud on the front line, but simply you ask me to do it.

A: Amar. You do it very well.

A: Bonino. Thank you. Which means that in this sort of advocacy, somebody has to do it. So let’s assume that not always, but let’s assume that sometimes, somebody has to do it. And I’m not more
independent than others. I have to report to 15 governments, 15 member states, the European Parliament, so it’s not without risk that (using Afghanistan as an example) after one year and a half of the pragmatic approach in Kabul by which “Yes, in six months, we will convince one Taliban which will allow us to open half a school in which possibly there will go two girls” … Frankly, yes, I’ve been cautious, I’ve been patient, I waited one year and a half, but that’s the reason there comes a moment in which, frankly speaking, enough is enough, because at the end, we find all of us without principle, having given up everything, accepting only to send humanitarian male workers. So this Taliban not only were imposing the discrimination to their own women and people, but were also imposing the discrimination on us. So frankly, I thought it was too much. I decided that enough is enough. I’m sorry, but simply to say … that sometimes, somebody, … has to do some advocacy and say frankly, “Yes, neutrality. Perfect. Yes, everyone. Yes, let’s dialogue with everybody. Yes, we talk to everybody. But…”

Q: John Paul Servidal, Action Against Hunger USA. There is a tendency among the donors’ community to become more and more operational in the humanitarian crises and to consider NGOs more as operators of their own agenda than to fund humanitarian organizations based on their own principle. How do you [reconcile] this tendency today with what you say about impartiality and neutrality? Do you think a donor can be neutral and impartial?

A: Bonino. I think there is no need to invent other actors in the field. As you said, sometimes there are even too many NGOs and too many actors in the field. What is more needed is some other common tool, information, etc., that the donor can provide. But also, please, let’s not confound donor and the bank. The donor also wants to be a partner in a different way, not only the operational, but we are also a partner. We are not simply the bank. So it means that we have to discuss together. It’s not that we are simply a bank without interest rates by the way, which is a strange bank. I think we should allow ourselves a way to discuss what to do and where and so on. Otherwise you go to private money. If I have to run public money, I have to be accountable first to myself. Secondly to the sort of court auditor, the European Parliament, national Parliaments and member states. So frankly there is no room if we do not start to discuss together.

A: Minear. Donor governments have legitimate humanitarian interests which they express through ECHO and through [USAID] and OFDA [USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance] and so on. That is a solid basis on which to do humanitarian programming. Beyond that, however, the context is political and so therefore, this is isn’t pure humanitarian action. I would also say, picking up on the comment … about the need to define humanitarian more closely, I think one could also define non-governmental organization more closely. I think this is a fork in the road in the future. Those of us who have worked with U.S. government legislation know that a private, voluntary organization may have up to 90 percent of its resources from the U.S. government and still constitute a private agency. To the extent that one has a larger and larger share of a non-governmental organization representing government resources, I think some of the neutrality that we’re talking about does come into question.

Q: Julia Taft. I’m curious about your construct, Larry, of putting much of the humanitarian action in the hands of the ICRC. What I would like to hear, and Emma, this is really to you, whether you have the same experience as we do in the United States. One of the reasons we get…such a generous amount of funding for humanitarian purposes is because we have very active NGOs who are on the ground, who report back to their churches, and their synagogues, and we get it back in the Congress
and in the executive branch, and it’s a very excellent advocacy and public information tool. So we get resources. Is that the same for ECHO? Do you find that your NGO grantees are also active with their respective parliaments? And then, to Larry, if we put all of our eggs in a basket that is neutral and not constituency based, how do you generate enough interest, commitment, awareness, and funds to be able to support this massive requirement for humanitarian assistance?

A: Minear. Well I think you point to a real limitation, and I’m reluctant to make a proposal that ends up by reducing the amount of humanitarian assistance or humanitarian activities that are carried out …. the constituency links that NGOs provide to church groups and to local organizations, local communities, could still be maintained, but maintained through other activities than working in complex emergencies. I mean, the longer-term development tasks that we heard about this morning that are in danger of being soft-pedaled, natural disasters, other activities in which NGOs are actively involved, including human rights. There’s still a constituency there and there’s still a role for NGOs, even if it’s not necessarily on the ground in Goma with the profusion that we’ve seen in the past.

A: Bonino. Yes. I do think that, at least from my European perspective, the generosity of the European budget on humanitarian has also very much to do for sort of an alibi for prolonged political inaction. “We are not so ready to step in politically speaking, nevertheless, we are etc., etc.” Which is very good. I don’t want my budget to be cut. …We must simply not accept this kind of thing and say, “OK, it’s generous but it’s not enough,” from the political point of view. From the public opinion, and I think that also again on humanitarian, still, it’s not become impossible to raise money, but it’s becoming more so. The NGOs I imagine will tell you it’s becoming more and more difficult. And again, it depends on the media. When you have major reports with images and so on in Kosovo, etc., you can get some kind of individual generosity, but it’s not steady. It depends on the occasion. It depends on the media coverage. It depends on the campaign. Otherwise it’s becoming very difficult.

A: Amar. Inasmuch as it is very flattering to have the kind of credibility as was given to us by Larry a moment ago, I think Julia is right. I would not want to be the only ones -- we would be totally unable to cover all the humanitarian needs. It’s not possible. It’s not realistic. I mentioned the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement. That partly answers your question in terms of accountability at the national level. And then there are all the other organizations who have a very specialized task…. I think one of the keys to the success of cooperation and coordination of humanitarian aid in the future, is probably a better re-definition of who is doing what, and let each one do what he has to do and what he knows to do best. Nobody can do it alone.

A: Minear. We’re recognizing today an organization which -- ten or fifteen years ago did not have U.S. presence. Now there’s a MSF U.S. with its own constituency. I think there are people who are aware of the ICRC’s work. I’m not sure one would need a U.S. committee for the ICRC, but the American Red Cross, the number of U.S. medical professionals and others who are working with the ICRC, I think there’s at least the beginning of a constituency there.

Q: Michael Schull, Médecins Sans Frontiérées, Canada. The way that neutrality was defined today, or at least the lack of neutrality was essentially...when one denounces or when an NGO denounces or conducts a campaign of [public advocacy]. Having been in the field and having been embroiled in several of these campaigns, I know that what leads up to them is a very long and sometimes
acrimonious internal debate before you actually go out and denounce what it is you’re seeing. And much of the same risk assessment that Mr. Amar referred to goes on within MSF. But what’s frequently very disappointing is that after having gone through this debate and made the decision to actually say something, you find that no one’s listening. That the press isn’t listening, that the politicians aren’t listening, and the public’s not listening, and nothing happens, and yet you’ve exposed your mission and also the people that you’re trying to help, to the risks of your campaign. So my question is, what can we do about that? And I know it’s a very large question, but are there means, are there ways, that you can suggest to ameliorate that situation?

A: Amar. I don’t have the answer. I have a practical proposal to make. I think this...the whole debate is being taped, and I think we’re...several of us have sent messages to Mr. Milosovic. Why don’t we send him a copy of the tape?

A: Bonino. We are trying and in some countries we have been more effective. First, I thank you very much to stress over again that before going public, normally there is years or months of assessment and trying and dialogue and so on and so forth. It’s not that somebody gets up early in the morning and says, “What do I do today? Okay, let’s make some advocacy.” It doesn’t go like that. So I thank you for underlining that. The only thing that again, we can try, is to do it in a coordinated way. Some campaigns have been more effective than others because you were not alone, I was not alone, and the others were not alone, and we tried to come up with a short and more coordinated way. And I think that is one of the first steps to start with.

A: Minear. This kind of coordination also limits the exposure to your overseas staff so that you’re not the target of the government for having protested in New York or Geneva.
WRAP-UP AND DISCUSSION

Participants:

Ralph Begleiter, Moderator

H. Roy Williams, Rapporteur Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Director, Bureau of Humanitarian Response, U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

As head of the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, Williams oversees disaster preparedness, relief and rehabilitation programs throughout the world. Before joining the agency in January 1998, Williams served with the International Rescue Committee for twelve years. His last position was vice president for Overseas Policy and Planning. During his tenure at IRC, Williams oversaw a five-fold growth of IRC’s international budget as well as the systemization of its operations and its diversification into such new program areas as shelter, income generation, communications, infrastructure rehabilitation, agriculture, education and mental health. He helped conceptualize and create IRC’s Emergency Preparedness Unit and establish permanent IRC offices in several African countries.

Ralph Begleiter:

Our plan was for Roy Williams and I... Roy in a more fully integrated way than I... to summarize today’s discussion and then to have a few remaining questions.

….Almost every speaker has commented on what Robert Seiple referred to as the attention deficit syndrome ... Reynold Levy referred to it as the need to broaden the attentive public, the need to get these issues back on the agenda again for public and politicians. Morton Abramowitz and Sergio Vieira de Mello both made references to the governments’ roles. Despite NGOs’ desire to remain independent and to see themselves as distinct from the government, both of them asserted that the governments remain the primary movers and shakers in the field of provision of relief assistance. Ms. Bonino made the point about NGOs needing to be advocates. Vieira de Mello also commented on whether evil is prevailing and his suggestion there was that there might be some need to counteract that on the part of this community. And Francis Amar indicated that neutrality does not necessarily mean that you have to keep quiet.

Roy Williams:

We have heard much on the new sense of what constitutes a crisis. I think it used to be clear that when one talked about a crisis everyone knew exactly what was meant. But certainly in the first session it became clear that that is not necessarily the case, that the interweaving of the political and the humanitarian has certainly complicated the way we look at what constitutes a crisis. Issues of humanitarian action and humanitarian space are increasingly under attack….If I understood [correctly] these people are saying that the people involved in defining humanitarian acts and humanitarian space are themselves equally under attack, at least even in terms of their own motivation, and even in terms of
their discussions within their own community. There is a breakdown of norms and of respect for norms. It was pointed out that civilians are now the primary target of warfare as it is now practiced. There were examples given of what it used to be like, and certainly percentage-wise as to what the casualty rates are in contemporary conflict. We heard something of the impact of economic conditions and the effect that these economic conditions have upon humanitarian issues. Again, this is something which was not usually reduced to humanitarian discussions, maybe perhaps in terms of migration and movements of people, but other than that, not necessarily so.

In this environment, it was pointed out that the International Criminal Court becomes even more critical. Another aspect of the new view of crisis is that humanitarian workers are drawn into conflicts as they, by providing assistance, are seen as taking sides …. Neutrality is here no longer an automatic mantle of protection for humanitarian workers. *Staying Ahead of the Next Crisis*, as was the title of the first panel, did not seem to emerge as a predictable option, except in terms of the lessons learned and Michael Toole’s comments on what we have learned from earlier crises as regards to responding to need. There is no predictability in this other than perhaps to organize your structures and to train your people in relation to what, ostensibly, has been learned.

On the geopolitical, there was a picture presented of the present and future components of our world in relation to population growth, issues of equity, and extensive need for job creation. Complicating this absolute increase in numbers and needs is the reality of people on the move. So we have a combination of growth of population, migration, and the impact of this combination upon areas in ways that we have not been particularly successful in dealing with. The need for multi-ethnic states obviously becomes critical in that kind of environment because the break-up of states as we have seen recently is very much conditioned upon the failure to maintain a multi-ethnic society.

The Asian Development Bank, and the principles that they operate on -- basically sustainable development -- is the foundation for social change. The point was made that funding must touch the lowest levels in society building, in short, from the ground up. NGOs were enjoined to find creative ways to use local staff …. the use of local NGOs was critical both in terms of developing the capacities of their respective societies and in reducing the ways in which international expatriates had to be sent into the field.

The role of business was discussed and apparently there was a sense that that role is too often negated by less than public spirited behavior, but that doesn’t necessarily mean that such behavior is impossible; in fact, that it should be encouraged.

Finally, I think this geopolitical perspective recognizes the need to acknowledge that the face of society has changed and that recognition of this is essential as a precondition to meeting the challenges. We can’t simply deal with society in the static terms to which we’re accustomed. These changes, which have become profound over the last decade, are really going to make all of our analyses sort of passé unless we’re very careful.

Collaboration. This session had some interesting points. I think it began with comments that the road we’re on is not the road we should be on, and our enemies are known to us. A statement of humanitarian impact is needed, sort of setting all of this in perspective. The consequences of political
action in relation to humanitarian action must be considered, going back to where we started in terms of a definition of crises, that the overlay of humanitarianism and political action are definitely going to affect the way we look at crisis and the consequences and the way in which we deal with them.

There was a recommendation that we move humanity to the top of our political agenda. I think that would lead to some discussion as to just how one were able to do that. It ties into the final issues that we were discussing as to neutrality and impartiality, because everyone has a stake in what’s at the top of the agenda. Avoid politicizing relief such as service packages, which undercut the lessons related to NGOs. This was a good example of the confusion between a sort of functional and political approach to a situation on the ground, where providing a service package is a grandiose attempt to involve other nations in dealing with humanitarian relief situations, in effect, you might be paralyzing the very thing that you’re trying to serve, as I think Gene Dewey pointed out -- that you overtake the ability of people to build from the ground up and utilize resources which are already there. And then mission planning … should include NGOs and agencies on the ground, and to the extent that the real implications of some of the larger decisions should be understood, they’re best understood by those agencies that have had to live under the absence of these arrangements.

The next part of the session moved into three points. The need for pluralism [in funding] and the need to widen the basis of funding support. The need for more competition. There was an extensive discussion as to just what that meant, and whether, in fact, more competition meant more NGOs or fewer NGOs who are better in a position to do the job. And the need for collaboration. These were seen as speaking to the issue of collaboration, the three premises under which it could be moved forward.

Then there was a slight departure from the above theme in terms of focusing upon the effectiveness of local groups, and looking at gains and development assistance by local institutions. There was an attempt to inject a positive note that if you look at local institutions and their capacity to coordinate relief assistance, the odds of doing a better job of dealing with relief situations are likely to improve. Again though, we heard … that there is an increase in the practice of disregard of conventional norms and how the military/political will play out its own role, regardless.

There was a recommendation that it might be useful to rank countries on the probabilities of disintegration, providing preventive assistance where possible in mitigation and anticipation of potential problems. In point of fact, that’s one thing that my office tries to do, obviously not with a great deal of success if one reads the papers ... but anyway. The recommendation was made that high profile advertising should be considered. If you look at the number of people that watch the Super Bowl, then if it were possible to insert an advertisement for humanitarian and relief assistance in such a situation, this presumably might change the way people looked at things.

Then we reverted to discussion of the value of pluralism in the NGO community. In short, whether it makes more sense to have 200 NGOs in Goma as opposed to 15 or 20 in Angola and Tanzania, which works better. Again, we reverted to the discussion of humanitarianism. The term keeps coming up and keeps being used in slightly different ways. We looked at transnational cooperation as having considerable potential in terms of local groups …. Then we moved into the last session which, as it just ended, I found the most difficult because it dealt with some of the most difficult concepts, I think, that have underscored much of what we’ve been talking about. We began with the question of...the
distinction rather...between neutrality as opposed to impartiality in the field, and Ms. Bonino made that point. And to be perfectly honest, as a Rapporteur, I’m still wrestling with that distinction. But that’s my failing here. But then … it certainly in my view, … sort of puts wraps around a lot of what was being said today. Because certainly, some of the most fundamental issues from the field perspective are these issues of neutrality, how the other person sees you regardless of how you see yourself. You might think of yourself as neutral, but if the other person doesn’t, it really is irrelevant.

**Begleiter:**

Thank you Roy Williams. In addition, the financial issue of overhead also struck me as …something that was really interesting and worthy of much more discussion. A questioner raised the issue this morning of how organizations are going to deal with the contrast between requirements to limit their overhead and the demands on their organizations to meet the needs of many people who need relief all around the world. It just struck me as something for a future conference perhaps.

**Question and Answer Session:**

**Q**: Susan Walker, International Campaign to Ban Land Mines. … As Roy said, civilians have been targeted largely in ...in modern warfare. One of the most pressing examples of that is anti-personnel mines. Given the humanitarian disaster caused by anti-personnel mines worldwide, are governments, the U.N. and/or the European Union funding civilian mine clearance programs -- otherwise known as Humanitarian Demining Programs -- in international relief and development programs from the beginning, since it’s seen often times as an obstacle or a major impediment to reconstruction in war torn countries. If that’s not included, why not? Would they be willing to allow humanitarian demining components in NGO budgets from the beginning?

**A**: Bonino. I didn’t get exactly the question because this is a... because this is exactly what we are trying to do. But the problem is that also, I want to be very careful not to assume in the humanitarian budget all the demining projects, because it’s so expensive, so I want all my colleagues’ budget lines to be involved in the mining, because if I have to become the only address for invoices as far as the mining, that goes very quick. My work is finished by January 10. So that’s what we are trying to do. To have the demining since the beginning when possible.

**A**: Minear. One of the items that was taken away from the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and put, I believe, in the peacekeeping side of the U.N. as part of the last reorganization was the demining program, so that while normally post-conflict funding does go to demining, the actual administration of this within the U.N. system is elsewhere than within Sergio Vieira de Mello’s department.

**Q**: Joelle Tanguy, Doctors Without Borders USA. I second what you said, Emma, about this whole semantic difference between neutrality and impartiality, and as I was listening to you I was hearing the rationale and the thinking that grew in the teams of Mèdecins Sans Frontiéres over the years in many ways. But then I started to question in what capacity were you making this statement. If you are in the capacity of a donor, the question I have for you and for Roy is when you said, “We must be more activist. We must sometimes step back from neutrality and be advocates.” I think that we both welcome the governments and foreign policy to actually take that step, but were you actually making a
statement as a funder of humanitarian agencies and how do you guarantee that the advocacy statements you will make will be forcefully independent from the 15 people you’re reporting to?

A: Bonino. There is no guarantee. The European construction is challenging but very complex, so the Commission has some roles and the political decision is taken by the 15 member states. The same humanitarian office is in-between. We are not implementing on the field. We are a sort of partner with implementing NGOs or agencies. The Commission has no capacity to deliver any kind of political decision per se, which has to be taken by the 15 member states. But what the Commission can do is at least go in front of the 15 member states and say, “Look, this is the situation, then it’s up to you to decide.” That is the sort of complex, institutional position in which the Commission is in the European construction. I’m not an NGO on the field, and I am not a Minister, sorry.

A: Williams. I think the way you put the question is precisely why I wasn’t sure exactly what you meant. I wasn’t sure in what capacity the question was being presented, whether it was someone actually working on the ground, someone serving as a donor, or someone serving as an advocate. To my mind, when you deal with neutrality and impartiality, the role that you’re occupying at the moment is critical in deciding what your options are.

A: Bonino. Maybe it’s simpler than that, in the sense that if we advocate on the need for military intervention, as was our common voice in November ’96 as far Great Lakes were concerned. Of course, I do not have an army, neither national nor European, so I’m not a National Minister…. I can just make this proposal to the European minister of foreign affairs who has to decide. That is the capacity you are talking about. I am in a capacity to make a proposal, but the decision body is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Q: Doug Bauer, SmithKline Beecham Foundation. I’m frankly very struck today that there has been very little discussion about the role of the private sector in humanitarian aid…. I think some of the more interesting work is going on in the private sector and its role, especially in the developing world and social change. I’m curious whether we’re not getting through to people, or what advice you have to businesses such as SmithKline, which happens to be the 50th largest business or company in the world. What are we not doing right in getting our message out to you about the seriousness of our interest in affecting social change?

A: Bonino. I’m not very sure exactly on the role of private in humanitarian emergency. It’s more clear to me on development, long-term and social changes. I’m not very clear what the private sector can do, for instance, in refugee camps of one million people that we hope to dismantle in one year. But if you have ideas, the needs are such that we are absolutely interested in listening. But maybe you have experiences, I don’t know.

A: Amar. I would like to add my voice to those who say the private sector should be given more attention. Maybe we should try to attract their attention to what we’re doing. It’s in their interest that the world gets better. On top of that, the things are linked; we need their money.

A: Unidentified. A different angle on this grows out of the work that we’ve been doing in the Caucasus. In interviewing humanitarian organizations in Georgia and Azerbaijan and Armenia, we found
that oil companies are now playing an increasing role in terms of giving direct contributions to aid agencies, which then do projects in the health sector, for the most part, or in education. Interestingly though, the larger humanitarian contribution, which is now just beginning to come into focus, is that the pressure of corporate, international corporate oil interests for peace settlements in Georgia -- so that pipelines can be built to extract oil -- is potentially of much greater humanitarian value than these more focused contributions.

CLOSING COMMENTS

Ralph Begleiter:

As someone who approaches this from the outside, today has been really quite an inspiration for me. It was truly inspirational for me to learn more about Médecins Sans Frontières and about all of your obvious respect for that organization. Also for me to learn about all of your passions, no matter what they are. You’re very committed to your work. I just want to commend you for your good works.

Steven M. Hilton:

On behalf of the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation Board and staff, I want to say that we very much appreciate Ralph Begleiter’s superb job as a stern taskmaster in keeping everything on track. [And thanks to the] panelists, and really all of you, because to make this work, you need everybody -- not just the folks up front here. If I could plagiarize a mind that I think has offered a lot of insight to business management thinking -- Peter Drucker once said that “Good intentions don’t move mountains. Bulldozers move mountains.” …. You are the bulldozers, but the mountains are hunger, disease, torture, armed conflict. I think to the extent that this type of an interaction sharpens the mind and deepens the wisdom, you can take those bulldozers -- which are your resources, your people, your skills -- and more effectively, hopefully, nibble away at that mountain, knowing there’s no way that all of the humanitarian resources in the world can eliminate these problems that we face. But I think we can alleviate, hopefully, a certain amount of it by our works. I applaud all of you for the good work that you’re doing.
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National Council on Islamic Affairs  

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Senior Advisor  
UNICEF

Mr. Pietro Petrucci  
Office of European Commissioner for Humanitarian Affairs

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President  
International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims

Dr. Louis Pizzarello  
Medical Director  
Helen Keller International

Ms. Regan E. Ralph  
Executive Director, Women's Rights Division  
Human Rights Watch

Dr. Farshad Rastegar  
Executive Director  
Relief International

Mr. Peter A. Reiling  
President and CEO  
TechnoServe, Inc.

Jean-Baptiste Richardier, M.D.  
Co-Founder and Director for Communication and Development Handicap International

Mr. Peter S. Robinson  
Executive Vice President  
Humanitas Foundation

Ms. Karin Ryan  
Human Rights Program  
The Carter Center
Rev. Richard Ryscavage, S.J.  
National Director  
Jesuit Refugee Service/USA  

Ms. Julie A. Sandorf  
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Corporation for Supportive Housing

Mr. Marc Sauveur  
Liaison Officer  
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International Committee for the Development of People

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Ms. Victoria M. Sheffield  
Executive Director  
International Eye Foundation

Ms. Sheila Sinclair  
Doctors Without Borders U.S.A.  

Ms. Lisa Slifer-Mbacke  
Director of International Programs  
WorldSpace Foundation

Mr. Guy L. Smith  
Vice Chairman  
AmeriCares Foundation, Inc.  

Barbara Smith, Ph.D.  
Vice President, Overseas Programs  
International Rescue Committee

Mr. Paul A. Sobiech  
Executive Director  
Water For People  

Ms. Lovisa Stannow  
Doctors Without Borders U.S.A.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organization/Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Honorable Julia V. Taft</td>
<td>Assistant Secretary of State</td>
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<td>Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration</td>
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<td>U.S. Department of State</td>
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<td>Ms. Pina Taormina</td>
<td>President and Executive Director</td>
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<td>Orbis International</td>
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<td>Michael J. Toole, M.D., DTM &amp; H</td>
<td>International Health Unit</td>
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<td>MacFarlane Burnet Centre for Medical Research</td>
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<td>Mr. Terry Vasey</td>
<td>Director, LEPRA</td>
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<td>The British Leprosy Relief Association</td>
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<td>Mr. Rudolph von Bernuth</td>
<td>Associate Vice President, Division for Humanitarian Response</td>
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<td>Save the Children</td>
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<td>Ms. Jane Andrews Walker</td>
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<td>Dr. Peter Walker</td>
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<td>International Federation of Red Cross &amp; Red Crescent Societies</td>
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<td>Ms. Claire Thomas</td>
<td>Vice President, Development and Public Affairs</td>
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<td>Freedom from Hunger</td>
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<td>Mr. Alastair Troup</td>
<td>Chief Executive</td>
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<td>Medical Emergency Relief International</td>
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<td>The Honorable Sergio Vieira de Mello</td>
<td>Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator</td>
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<td>Ronald Waldman, M.D.</td>
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<td>Mr. H. Roy Williams</td>
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<td>USAID</td>
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<td>Ms. Joan D. Winship</td>
<td>Mr. Roger P. Winter</td>
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<td>The Stanley Foundation</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Honorable Timothy Wirth</th>
<th>Ms. Aloisia Worgetter</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>Permanent Mission of Austria to the UN</td>
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<td>Former U.S. Under-Secretary of State for Global Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<th>Dr. Tetsunao Yamamori</th>
<th>Ambassador Linda Tsao Yang</th>
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