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A United World or Divided World? Reflections and Policies for Human Unity

By Jonathan Granoff

President, Global Security Institute

Special Representative of United Religions Initiative

Presented at

Religions & Peace: Do Universities Have a Role?

Harvard University, December 2, 2013

This paper updates a presentation by Jonathan Granoff to the World Summit of Nobel Laureates held in Rome, Italy, November 11, 2004. Mr. Granoff presented on behalf of the Nobel Laureate Organization, the International Peace Bureau at the Summit. The paper sets forth the author's personal reflections that can form the basis for promoting interfaith and intercultural dialogue and a method for success using existing institutions such as universities and the United Nations. The author wishes to thank Rhianna Tyson Kreger, Alyn Ware, and Dr. Urs Cipolat for their assistance.

Introduction

Saadi, the Persian poet of the 13th century, sang:

*The human family is one body with many parts
Creations arising from one unseen essence
Any harm to any part summons an awakening
a dis-ease and a healing response from all parts
You who fail to feel the pain of others cannot be called truly
human.*

On the Casuarian Coast in the flat mangrove swampland of Indonesian New Guinea, where water and land intermingle with a rhythmic ebb and flow, a tribe of about 20,000 people live in harmony with the environment. They call themselves the Asmat, “the people – the human beings.” Everyone else is called Manowe, “the edible ones.” The Asmat are cannibals. They do not organize for total war. Their killing practice is ritualized, limited and controlled.

We ignore at our peril the fact that the civilized nations of the world since World War II have spent astronomical fortunes, in excess of ten trillion since the end of the Cold War alone, organizing killing apparatus capable of destroying all life on the planet many times over. Today, conflicts rage in numerous killing fields driven by religious, ethnic and racial bigotry. In good conscience religions permit these horrors – horrors in which the vast majority of victims are innocent women and children -- noncombatants.

Coupled with weapons of mass destruction, this modern capacity for organized carnage, if guided by religious bigotry and the use of modern weaponry, especially nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction, could easily lead to the unspeakable. This makes would make us all “edible ones”.

Al Qaida utilizes religious symbols and language in its attempts to rationalize its crimes against humanity. Such abuse is certainly not new and has occurred and continues to occur in many guises. For example, Europe suffered population decimation through thirty years of chaos when Protestants and Catholics slaughtered each other between 1618 and 1648. The Treaty of Westphalia, through which the basis of the modern nation state system was formally established, deftly divested political process from the capacity of religions to stimulate endless war. What Europe experienced in the 17th Century due to religious intolerance cannot be allowed to happen on a global scale with today’s technologies of destruction.

In the face of current challenges, many recognize a growing global awareness of the power of universal compassion nested within each religious tradition, and yet this awareness does not diminish the knowledge that each tradition has the ability to dehumanize and destroy the “other” either by conversion or genocide. We come together as a human community when we awaken the unity expressed by Saadi in the quest to fulfill our own humanity. For us who are aware of the power of universal compassion, for us, there are no “edible ones.”

Threats and Solutions

We cannot ignore the dangers inherent in the use of force outside international legal constraints coupled with a culture of violence and fear. We simply must commit to promoting a culture of peace founded on the rule of law, the dignity of our higher qualities, and deeper dialogue amongst peoples.

The greatest threat that faces humanity might be understood as the indifference toward extraordinary human suffering from poverty, environmental practices that ignore our responsibility to future generations, and the willingness to threaten the use of nuclear weapons. This indifference indicates a failure of caring for life. Its severe consequence is political apathy toward critical issues and a reversion toward violence, provincialism, and prejudice. This indifference must be overcome by an awakening of our capacity to learn to live together as one human family..

It is now common knowledge that for the human community to survive we must live in harmony with the natural world. This ecological consciousness can be taught -- universally and effectively. We must now learn that coexistence between and amongst peoples can be taught, universally and effectively. The old model of competitive and dialectical discourse, whereby one attempts to refute the claims of the other, must now grow into a new model of cooperation and dialogue.

One crucial step will be the promotion of interfaith and intercultural understanding through the institutionalization of forums for dialogue.

Scriptures of the major religions, from the Bhagvad Gita, to the Bible and the Quran, are replete with explicitly acceptable violence as well as admonitions upon which to base universal love, justice, and appreciation. We must find ways of institutionalizing the loving dimensions so that "loving ones neighbor as oneself" can become the norm.

In the Quran (Sura 49:13) we find:

"O humanity, God has created you male and female, and has made you nations and tribes that you may know one another. The noblest of you before God is the one with deep piety and good deeds. Behold God is all knowing and all aware."

How can such directions be fulfilled unless we really come to know each other?

We need not come to agreement about theology in order to seek mercy and justice. Why should there be fear of the "tribe" with whom we might disagree? Abraham, with the most profound insight into the nature of justice and as an example of fulfilled humanity, pleaded passionately for mercy for those with whom he did not agree -- the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. We need not agree on theology to address cooperatively the global crises of human rights, justice, poverty, hunger, ecological destruction and nuclear annihilation. Compassion and helping those in need are universally recognized spiritual principles. We need to communicate to learn this.

Who is the beneficiary of today's Good Samaritan and to whom do we owe a sense of responsibility in an interconnected world? Why should the Imam not visit the temple and share and the Rabbi not visit the mosque and share? Will someone be diminished or confused? Why should the priest not share with the minister? How else will we really learn what is profoundly held as truth by our neighbor so that we might love one another?

The contemporary Sufi master Bawa Muhaiyaddeen often said: "Separate from yourself that which separates you from other lives." The same qualities that separate us from other lives -- such as anger, fanaticism, falsehood, pride, jealousy, greed, hatred, hastiness -- separate us from the immeasurable power of goodness beyond name, gender, and form that many call God. The same qualities that bring harmony with other lives -- such as, love, compassion, tolerance, peacefulness, patience -- bring us into harmony with our self and its source. That harmony ultimately awakens wisdom which can investigate the meaning of our lives. How glorious, unifying and full of justice is this mystery known only to those who open their hearts to lives other than their own.

If we do not learn such principles of harmony and put them into practice, we face a world ruled by the law of power, rather than the power of law; a world ruled by the love of power, rather than the power of love.

Pride of Power

Nuclear weapons represent a form of security apartheid. Like apartheid, both sides are injured. Those threatened reasonably feel the terror of the threat of destruction. Those threatening have their moral foundations corroded or live in denial of what they are doing. The continued reliance on these horrific devices provides the modern world with its most severe and divisive irony. The means of pursuing security are serving to breed insecurity. And the inequity inherent in the system pulls at the fabric of human unity. As Vartan Gregorian of the Carnegie Corporation recently pointed out, "All declared nuclear powers – the US, Russia, Great Britain, France, and China and now India and Pakistan (Israel in an undeclared nuclear power) – insist they possess nuclear weapons only to deter others from using them. Yet there have been many times in the past, and there will surely be times in the future, when major powers have used their nuclear capability to gain some political end by intimidation."

Intimidation through the threat of annihilation of millions of innocent people is unjustified legally, morally, and remains the greatest threat to the stimulation of the proliferation of weapons. Thus, continued threat to use these weapons is impractical. One must therefore wonder if the irrational pride of power informs the policies of those who seek to perpetuate and "improve" their arsenals of devastation. They claim such "improvements" result in better security. Henry David Thoreau's critique of "improved means to unimproved ends" would be more appropriate. One must wonder if the club of nine nuclear weapons possessing states consider themselves somehow superior to all others in some bizarre form of technological pride. Imagine if such pride in technological superiority in the pursuit of security and power were coupled with the pride of religious fanaticism and intolerance.

Pride of Religious Exclusivity

The mystery of the source of life and creation itself from which we come, toward which we return and in and through which we live and are sustained cannot be measured nor can it be fully described by symbols or the intellect. In fact, even the great religions are only means of honoring, remembering and describing – sacred metaphors – but not the actual reality itself. Thus, exclusivity based on the elegance of the metaphor does an injustice to the primacy of the unbounded foundation. The founders of the world's great faiths reached out with good news and a universal embrace, particularly holding the outcast, the downtrodden, the rejected – quite the opposite of today's exclusivists.

Today's exclusivists have turned their backs to the power of the original embrace of love and compassion upon which each of their traditions rest. This attitude is caused by ignorance, fear and arrogance. It leads to the quest for unlimited power based on insecurity. Exclusivism cannot effectively open hearts -- a precondition of the wisdom needed to understand the divine mystery -- nor can it address adequately the three evil dynamics of this modern age – unnecessary pandemic poverty, irresponsible selfishness that leads to environmental degradation, and the irrational hazardous reliance on the threat to use nuclear weapons as a means of pursuing security.

On the contrary, exclusivism will only exacerbate our present inadequate levels of cooperation. Its main characteristic is the belief, “Our way of thinking and pursuing reality is the only good way.” What does it mean to say that the way to the Father is through Jesus unless His quality of love is pursued? What does it mean to be one of the Chosen People without treating one's neighbor as one wishes to be treated? What does it mean to follow the dharma without seeking refuge in the power of compassion? What does it mean to honor Allah without affirming the quality of mercy by which He is known? The characteristics of the founders of each faith have been extraordinary, immeasurable kindness, mercy, compassion, love and wisdom.

Many exclusivists actually believe that the divine have ears only for their language. Others believe that his messenger(s) requires a building at a particular location in order to save souls. Others believe that establishing real estate boundaries is more important than cultivating love and understanding. They are incapable of imagining that blessings can be universal. They all believe that their method of explaining the origins of the universe and the end of days are the only true way. Although none of them have ever actually seen the creation of their holy scripture, they all believe that their word is the unique word of truth and that all others are wrong. Many are even willing to kill for their ideas about the divine mystery and many others are willing to die for these ideas. Few have experienced, integrated, or are capable of sharing divine love, mercy, or compassion. All have strongly held ideas.

Exclusivism is most dangerous in the potential short-term political advantage that its passions can provide to a political leader. Imagine the temptation to politicians to cater to the mythology that exclusivists propound? Imagine what can happen in a modern state with global influence when its leaders are identified with such passions? Imagine the dangers if

leaders in a country with weapons of mass destruction become subject to the interests of exclusivists in their society?

Even if a person believes a stone is the Lord, their beliefs should pose no concern to the political order; however, if they want to throw the stone or condemn those who believe the Lord is formless, then concern is warranted. Likewise, those who believe God is formless and want to stone those who believe in stones can hardly be considered models of mercy, love and compassion. It is not the fundamental beliefs of any religion that is a problem; it is the exclusivist arrogance of those who use religion to acquire power over others that is the problem.

The quest to enforce any one faith that derogates all other beliefs will surely fracture the peace of the world. The capacity to use religious faith to dehumanize others coupled with modern technologies of killing presents an unacceptable risk. We simply cannot ignore this risk.

Hot Spots

Every day in the news, we find a crisis in which religious bigotry helps fan flames of violence. Today we can see it between Jews and Muslims in Israel and Gaza or between Shiite and Sunni Muslims in Syria. Tomorrow who knows where ignorance will be a tool for abusing someone, some people, some nation?

Without even addressing the extremely hot conflict in Jerusalem, where exclusivists in three faiths believe that the Savior of humanity requires their group to possess a particular piece of real estate (the present location of the Dome of the Rock where the Temple of Solomon used to be located) in order to save humanity, it is easy to see numerous extremely volatile regions flamed recently by religious misunderstandings. Let's just list a few:

Cote d'Ivoire: Muslims, Indigenous, and Christian
Cyprus: Christians and Muslims
East Timor: Christians and Muslims
India: Animists, Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs
Indonesia, Ambon and Halmahera: Christians and Muslims
Kashmir: Hindus and Muslims
Kosovo: Serbian Orthodox Christians and Muslims
Macedonia: Macedonian Orthodox Christians and Muslims
Nigeria: Christians, Animists, and Muslims
Northern Ireland: Protestants and Catholics
Pakistan: Sunni and Shiite Muslims
Philippines: Christians and Muslims
Russia, Chechnya: Russian Orthodox Christians and Muslims
South Africa: Various Animists
Sri Lanka: Buddhists and Hindus
Sudan: Animists, Christians, and Muslims

In most instances, civilian populations are terrorized. In most of the instances where these conflicts are in the developing world, there is a history of fortunes squandered through the

purchase of weapons, almost exclusively from one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council – US, Russia, France, UK, or China. In each of these cases, killing has been performed in good conscience, with the blessings of religious figures.

Thousands were killed at the World Trade Center. But, what about little Rwanda, a tragedy of epic proportion which could have been stopped? It could have been prevented had there been concerted efforts to bring intercultural understanding into the lives of the people in a systematic and sustained fashion. It could have been prevented had there been a political will to look at the depth of the hatred and address it squarely. It could have been prevented if there had been a rapid deployment of international forces through the UN or other multilateral channels. The risks of tribalism, like religious exclusivism, must not be ignored.

The events of 9/11 demonstrated both that low technology can be leveraged to cause tremendous injury and that the risks of tribalism, whether ethnic or religious, cannot be permitted to overtake the world. The situation takes on urgency for those who pay attention to the tons of nuclear materials in existence. Yet, we cannot throw up our hands and surrender the future to a world riddled with untenable risk, where identity politics could drive us into an abyss the horror of which Dante alone could describe. Can we expect unilateral militarism of one superpower to save us? Can we sit back and watch a slow descent into new fault lines of religious bigotry? Do we have any choice but to strengthen multilateral cooperation for security building based on the rule of law?

A step toward that level of cooperation would be demonstrated if Russia and the US would take the lead in moving toward a world without nuclear weapons. While doing so, it is necessary to take extreme precautions to ensure that nuclear materials are not available to terrorists or other malicious non state actors and to prevent any further proliferation beyond the nine countries that already possess nuclear weapons. These are matters that must be addressed at the highest levels of state. But, the passions that drive ethnic and religious violence must be addressed at a community level. Changing hearts and building a culture of peace cannot be accomplished by the application of technology nor by diplomacy and the stroke of a pen. It is far too subtle and subjective.

We can and must establish institutional structures to systematically address prejudice and hatred and build a culture of peace. We must demonstrate at a public level that interfaith understanding is to be promoted.

Practical Proposals

1. Establish Centers for Ethno-religious Studies and Understanding

Such centers at universities, using existing multidisciplinary resources, could host relevant courses, conferences, presentations, and focused interfaith and interethnic dialogue. These would soon be identified as venues for conflict prevention and resolution, places for both study and practice at the great universities around the world, and where possible, would sponsor programs in cooperation with the United Nations. However, establishing such centers

should be done independently of the UN as such work has intrinsic educational value of the highest order. It will enhance relevant pedagogy, inspire students, and contribute to a safer world.

There is a critical need to promote interfaith understanding through interfaith dialogue. The United Nations is in a unique position to stimulate such structures where greater utilization of the faith-based traditions in the pursuit of preventive diplomacy could be achieved. There are many related programs, studies, resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, advanced through UN organizations and the Office of the Secretary General ranging from the broad mandate of promoting a Culture of Peace to the very specific focused World Interfaith Harmony Week. The profusion of such efforts is referenced at <http://www.un.org/en/events/interfaithharmonyweek/docs.shtml>

The cost of creating university centers would be very low relative to the conflict prevention value and the prestige for the participating institution. Such centers could help create a critical mass of educated people who are committed to greater levels of interfaith and intercultural understanding and who are able to help ensure a global norm of tolerance and an appreciation for the value of pluralism.

These Centers would be obvious partners with the ongoing efforts of the Alliance of Civilization as well as with the UN Academic Impact program, which is designed to coordinate efforts of the academic world with the UN agenda.

In addition to their own ongoing efforts to inspire students in ethno-religious understanding, these Centers could help educate students and the general public about related programs of the UN and thus help create a constituency that can see beyond mere national interests.

The knowledge and skills available in such Centers are exactly what is needed for the discipline of preventive diplomacy, which aims to prevent disputes from arising between parties, to stopping existing disputes from escalating into violence, and to limit the spread of conflict. Governments alone cannot accomplish this. In fact, religious institutions, academic institutions, non-governmental organizations, businesses and professional communities all need to see the value of greater levels of intercultural and interfaith understanding. They need to participate and feel a sense of responsibility to help accomplish goals of peaceful coexistence.

2. Establish a UN Center for Conflict Prevention and Resolution at UN Headquarters

A Center for Conflict Prevention and Resolution as part of the UN headquarters could utilize all available means of mediation, negotiation, conciliation, and nonviolent conflict prevention and resolution in addressing current and potential conflicts. The Center would utilize fully the good will of many of the world's religious leaders as well as academic institutions which hopefully will become places where ethno-religious literacy and understanding will increase and provide relevant scholarship and inspire and train people with professional skills relevant to conflict prevention and resolution.

Over 1,000 religious leaders gathered at the UN for the Millennium Peace Summit and nearly every one expressed a willingness to help in such an endeavor. The UN Center for Conflict Prevention and Resolution in New York could also serve as a place in which:

a. To utilize the great religious traditions of the world as a resource for promoting transnational ethical values. Thus we recommend an ongoing forum where religious leaders can dialogically address the pressing need to establish common values and serve as a resource to advise the Secretariat and the Member States.

b. To explore the promulgation of programs which teach tolerance, cultural appreciation and harmony at a profound level by creating forums for authentic inter-religious dialogue and the experiential sharing of the different methods of prayer, contemplation and meditation. We suggest the promotion in UNITAR and amongst UN personnel and the personnel of all national missions to the UN of retreat seminars focused on prayer and meditation in each of the world's major religions. The resulting shared understanding represents preventive diplomacy at the deepest level, for when there is authentic spiritual sharing, trust and confidence are easier to accomplish. Also, the UN community will begin to actually be a model of intercultural respect and tolerance to which the Member States can look for guidance.

c. To provide experiential courses on each of the religions' prayer and meditation methods. Each of the world's religions utilizes prayer and contemplation to help achieve inner peace and harmony. Such experiences lead people to a greater ability to perform inspired public service. We thus encourage the use of such methods be made explicitly available to all in the UN community in the form of offerings of on-going regular events designed to enrich multi-religious, ethnic and cultural development and understanding and for the enrichment of the personnel such that greater inspiration in documents and programs might be forthcoming from the UN.

d. To engage religious communities in service to the suffering. Charity, service and compassion are universally-recognized values in all religions and areas of social development that can be more fully utilized by the UN. Religious communities, as a world resource, have been underutilized in this regard, and could help in coordination of resource distribution.

e. To create a true vocation of service at the heart of UN work, forums need to be created in which shared spiritual and moral values and experiences can be expressed by UN personnel to one another.

The UN Center for Conflict Prevention and Resolution will reinforce the many academic and local and regional efforts at which on-going multi-cultural, interreligious, and inter-ethnic dialogue is taking place already. It could take full advantage of the world's religions and could, in this context, be utilized to preempt cycles of misunderstanding, fear and violence. The extraordinary waste of resources on armaments and the suffering caused by their uses simply cannot be overlooked when addressing poverty. As long as resources are disproportionately diverted to pursuing peace and stability through military means and

fortunes expended on weapons, ending poverty will remain beyond reach. The costs of an effort such as this one would be minuscule compared to military expenditures.

Conclusion

By finding ways of promoting openly the process of interfaith appreciation, the quiet study of our common humanity is stimulated. One of the greatest gifts received by the open-hearted is the gratitude of being part of the human family -- a sense of joy in its variety of expressions of awe, love, and the sacred. Those who have this sense of gratitude are the ones who can step forward to assert our common ground, the place where exclusivism and fanaticism cannot flourish. Where our common humanity is affirmed and love expressed, fear, the breeding ground for fanaticism, is overcome. Where our common humanity is affirmed, the precondition for justice is established. Justice is the foundation for peace. 9/11 has shown us that a fractured world where fanaticism is allowed to grow, where grievances find no peaceful means of redress, where people demonize innocents who do not believe as they do, could, if it grows, be catastrophic.

Where compassion informs action, hope results. Where justice and peace are pursued, hate, hopelessness and fear are dispelled. Let us be guided by our highest values and wisdom and create more places where our capacities for great achievements are affirmed.

Whether garbed in extremist political ideology, racial or tribal identity, or religious dogma, the exclusivist's vision diminishes our common capacity to work cooperatively, reason together, identify our common interests and establish rules and laws of governance.

The successes of the modern world have demonstrated that Hobbes, who believed life to be short, brutish and nasty, was trumped by Locke and his philosophical stepson Jefferson, who viewed our fate with the faith that we are blessed with inalienable rights, regardless of our religious beliefs, that no state can remove and that we are capable of establishing institutions to protect those rights. This optimistic view is the basis of the United States, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the UN System. It challenges all fanatics who deny civilized give and take. A first step to discover that all people possess such human capacities is through direct interfaith and interethnic interaction.

We no longer have the luxury of living in religious ghettos. We must come into the open space of our greater humanity and assert the highest ideals that the founders of every faith proclaimed: "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Our humanity is revealed the deeper we realize and live this admonition.

Let me conclude with two quotes. The first is obviously informed by spiritual experience, while the second arises from a man with unassailable scientific credentials.

Bawa Muhaiyaddeen:

*"If each of you will open your heart,
your actions, your wisdom, and your conduct and look within,
you will see that every face is your face,*

*every nerve is your nerve, each drop of blood is your blood,...
all hunger is your hunger, all poverty is your poverty...all lives are your life.
You will experience this in your nerves, in your body and in what you see.
When that state develops inside you, that is God's love...
If that love develops you will not hurt any other living thing, you will not cause pain,
you will not reject any life, and you will not torture any other life, because if you hurt anyone it will hurt
you.”*
-Book of Gods' Love, p.23.

Albert Einstein:

Oh Youth:

Do you know that yours is not the first generation to yearn for a life full of beauty and freedom?

*Do you know that all your ancestors have felt the same as you do –
and fell victim to trouble and hatred?*

Do you know also that your fervent wishes can only find fulfillment

if you succeed in attaining a love and understanding of people,

and animals, and plants, and stars, so that every joy becomes your joy and every pain becomes your pain?”

Quoted in David and Beatrix Hamburg's comprehensive work,

- Learning to Live Together, p. 363.

Appendix A – Fact Sheet: Global Challenges, Threats to Humanity

These threats all share a common characteristic. To solve them, greater levels of cooperation are required and religious and ethnic bigotry must be overcome to achieve success. Achieving the universal nondiscriminatory legally-verifiable elimination of nuclear weapons, protecting the global environmental commons, and ending poverty are all public goods of the highest value.

Poverty

*Despite progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals, about one billion people will still live in extreme poverty in 2015.i

*780 million people lack access to clean water. 3.4 million people die each year from a water-related disease.ii

*Women spend an estimated 200 million hours each day collecting and carrying water. That's the equivalent of building 28 Empire State Buildings every day.iii

*1.8 million people die every year from diarrheal diseases; 90% of these deaths are children under five years old. iv

*Of the 67 million primary-school-age children who are not enrolled in school, 53 percent are girls. Of the lower secondary out-of-school adolescents, 52 percent are girls.v

*Fifty-seven countries have a serious or worse hunger situation in 2012 than 1990.vi

* One in three children in the developing world are underdeveloped, due to hunger. Nearly one in four children under age five—129 million—is underweight, and one in ten is severely underweight.vii

Nuclear Weapons (see also Appendix B)

*There are approximately 17,000 nuclear weapons in the world.

*Over 95% of them are in the hands of Russia and the United States. Of these, many remain on high alert status just as they were at the height of the Cold War.

*The United States is on track to spend between \$620 billion and \$661 billion on nuclear weapons and related programs over the next decade.viii

*There are five declared nuclear weapon States: the United Kingdom, China, France, Russia, and the United States. Additional States that have acquired nuclear weapons over the past fifty years include India, Israel, Pakistan, and North Korea.

*The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) estimates that a total of 44 countries presently possess the resources and technology to develop nuclear weapons, and that another 60 States could become capable of doing so in the near future.

*Despite many legal and political obligations to reduce and ultimately eliminate existing nuclear arsenals, the nuclear weapon States are engaging in expensive modernization programs that will ensure the continuity of their nuclear arsenals for decades to come.

Military Spending

*World military expenditures in 2011 totaled \$1.74 trillion—or \$2.94 billion each day.ix

*Expenditures for United Nations peacekeeping operations from July 2012 to July 2013 equaled roughly \$7.23 billion.x

*James Wolfensohn, former President of the World Bank said on May 23, 2004 at his commencement address at Brandeis University: “You young people should understand the way the world is spending its money today. We are spending \$900 billion a year on military expenditures, \$350 billion a year on agricultural subsidies, which affect developing countries adversely, and maybe \$50 to \$60 billion a year on development. We should be spending \$900 billion on development, and then we would only need \$50 billion on military expenditures.”

Over fishing

*In 2010, nearly 87 percent of the world's fisheries are classified as overexploited, compared to 85 percent in 2008.xii

Climate Change

*Global sea level rose about 6.7 inches in the last century. The rate in the last decade is nearly double that of the last century.xiii

*Since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, the acidity of surface ocean waters has increased by about thirty percent. This increase is the result of humans emitting more carbon dioxide into the atmosphere and hence more being absorbed in the oceans. The amount of carbon dioxide absorbed by the upper layer of the oceans is increasing by about two billion tons per year.xiv

*China and the United States are by far the biggest contributors to carbon dioxide emissions, with 23.53% and 18.27% of the world's total emissions, respectively. The European Union is in third place, with 13.98%. India and Russia, with 5.83% and 5.72% compete for a distant fourth place.xv

Deforestation

*While forests still cover about thirty percent of the world's land area, swaths the size of Panama are lost each and every year. The world's rain forests could completely vanish in a hundred years at the current rate of deforestation.xvi

*Tropical forests in Latin America disappear at a rate of 2 percent per year. In Africa, the pace is about 0.8 percent per year, and in Asia it is 2 percent per year.xvii

APPENDIX B – FACT SHEET: Why Nuclear Weapons remain a deadly threat

About the bomb. The most devastating arms known to humankind, nuclear weapons derive enormous explosive power from a nuclear reaction. A fission reaction releases energy by splitting atoms of uranium and plutonium (known as fissile material). The only two nuclear bombs ever used in conflict, dropped by the United States on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, were fission weapons employing uranium and plutonium, respectively. In the 1950s the United States and the Soviet Union developed hydrogen weapons, which use a fission reaction to drive a fusion process, and release an explosive power many times that of their fission brethren: while the Hiroshima blast had explosive power equivalent to fifteen kilotons (15,000 tons) of TNT, some fusion weapons are on the magnitude of twenty megatons (20,000,000 tons) of TNT, making them more than 1,300 times more powerful. Less than 200 nuclear weapons could cause a nuclear winter rendering civilization untenable. Credible estimates place the number of nuclear weapons required to destroy Russia at 50 and the US at 120.

The effects of a nuclear weapon. Comparisons with TNT are incomplete, since in addition to the blast effect, a nuclear weapon releases thermal and nuclear radiation. Thermal radiation scorches exposed parts of the body and can ignite devastating fires over a wide radius. Nuclear radiation, which results from the neutrons and gamma rays associated with fission, is lethal in high doses, and has many insidious and lingering effects, including increased cancer rates and organ damage. A large-scale exchange would threaten the very existence of the human species. According to an analysis in the May 31, 1962 *New England Journal of Medicine*, if one 20 megaton bomb were dropped on a city such as Boston, almost 2.5 million people would be killed. Deaths from a full nuclear exchange, even one targeted at military facilities, would be exponentially greater. In a potential phenomenon known as “nuclear winter”, the debris raised by multiple nuclear explosions and the resulting fires could effectively block out the sun, gradually choking off life as we know it.

Senator Alan Cranston emphasized that a peace based on the threat to use these devices is unworthy of civilization, constituting a kind of terrorism. In less than fifteen minutes the leader of Russia or the US must verify an incoming attack, consult advisors and give orders, if computers notify him that there may be an attack. Several accidents put us on the brink of accidental nuclear war. According to the US Navy, the number of accidents, malfunctions, and false alarms is in the hundreds. For example, in January of 1995 Russian radar mistook a weather satellite for a Trident launch and placed its President in an unacceptably risky position for about ten minutes.

Nuclear weapons, ethics, and law. The willingness to utilize a weapon that cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants is morally and legally problematic. In 1996, the International Court of Justice ruled that the threat or use of nuclear weapons is generally illegal, and that states have an obligation to conclude negotiations on their elimination. The Holy See has said that nuclear weapons “cannot be justified. It is increasingly accepted that the use and threat of use of nuclear weapons are in violation of international humanitarian law. The International Court of Justice ruled, in 1996, that “the threat or use of nuclear

weapons would generally be contrary to the rules of international law applicable in armed conflict, and in particular the principles and rules of humanitarian law.

The danger of hair-trigger alert. Even today, US and Russian leaders have 15 minutes from the time a computer senses a possible attack to verify the incoming attack, consult advisors and give orders to strike with a nuclear weapon before their own arsenals are hit. Several accidents put us on the brink of accidental nuclear war. According to the US Navy, the number of accidents, malfunctions, and false alarms is in the hundreds. For example, in January of 1995 Russian radar mistook a weather satellite for a Trident launch and placed its President in an unacceptably risky position for about ten minutes.

The costs of nuclear weapons. The United States is poised to spend \$640 billion on nuclear weapons and related programs over the next ten years, or about \$175 million a day. By comparison, the IAEA has an annual budget of less than \$160 million for safeguarding nuclear facilities.

Fissile materials. There are over 2000 metric tons of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium in the world. In Russia alone, there are approximately 1200 tons of fissile material, much of which is improperly safeguarded. It takes only 30 pounds of this material to build a crude bomb with the capacity of the one dropped on Hiroshima. A missile is not needed to deliver such a device. A tugboat or truck could be used.

Nuclear disarmament. 190 countries have signed and ratified the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) codifies a promise by the five declared nuclear weapons states to eventual elimination of their nuclear arsenals pursuant to a negotiated disarmament process in return for a commitment by the non-nuclear states not to acquire nuclear weapons. The discriminatory aspects of the NPT regime can only be resolved by fulfillment of its disarmament pledge.

The prestigious Canberra Commission, convened under the auspices of the Australian government stated the issue clearly in two striking paragraphs:

“Nuclear weapons are held by a handful of states which insist that these weapons provide unique security benefits, and yet reserve uniquely to themselves the right to own them. This situation is highly discriminatory and thus unstable; it cannot be sustained. The possession of nuclear weapons by any state is a constant stimulus to other states to acquire them....The proposition that nuclear weapons can be retained in perpetuity and never used - accidentally or by decision - defies credibility. The only complete defense is the elimination of nuclear weapons and assurance that they will never be produced again.”

There are threat-reducing steps which could be taken incrementally, which would further efforts to make us safer and move toward achieving the global elimination of nuclear weapons:

- Taking nuclear forces off alert by removal of warheads from delivery vehicles
- Creating an inventory and safe storage system for all weapons grade fissile materials
- Ending deployment of non-strategic nuclear weapons
- Ending nuclear testing
- Initiating legally binding, verifiable, irreversible agreements to further reduce US and Russian nuclear arsenals
- Reciprocal agreement among the nuclear weapon states of reciprocal not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and a pledge not to use them ever against states which do not have them
- Commencing a preparatory process leading to negotiations of a universal nondiscriminatory verifiable convention or framework of instruments to eliminate nuclear weapons.

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- ii World Health Organization (WHO). (2008). Safer Water, Better Health: Costs, benefits, and sustainability of interventions to protect and promote health; Updated Table 1: WSH deaths by region, 2004.
- iii <http://water.org/water-crisis/water-facts/women/>
- iv “Facts and Figures,” World Health Organization, 2004. http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/factsfigures2005.pdf
- v UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), Global Education Digest 2011: Comparing Education Statistics Across the World, UIS, Montreal, 2011.
- vi 2012 Global Hunger Index: The Challenge of Hunger: Ensuring sustainable food security under land, water, and energy stresses
- vii Ibid.
- viii “What Nuclear Weapons Cost Us,” Ploughshares Fund Working Paper, September 2012: [http://www.ploughshares.org/sites/default/files/resources/What%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20Cost%20Us%20Final%20\(100212\).pdf](http://www.ploughshares.org/sites/default/files/resources/What%20Nuclear%20Weapons%20Cost%20Us%20Final%20(100212).pdf).
- ix SIPRI 2012 Yearbook. See: <http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/17-april-2012-world-military-spending-levels-out-after-13-years-of-increases-says-sipri>
- x <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/resources/statistics/factsheet.shtml>
- xi http://www.unfpa.org/aids_clock/
- xii Food and Agriculture Organization, “State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture 2010,”
- xiii Church, J. A. and N.J. White (2006), A 20th century acceleration in global sea level rise, Geophysical Research Letters, 33, L01602, doi:10.1029/2005GL024826.
- xiv <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/co2/story/What+is+Ocean+Acidification%3F> (Note: The pH of surface ocean waters has fallen by 0.1 pH units. Since the pH scale is logarithmic, this change represents approximately a 30 percent increase in acidity.) See also: <http://www.pmel.noaa.gov/co2/story/Ocean+Acidification>; see also; C. L. Sabine et.al., “The Oceanic Sink for Anthropogenic CO₂,” Science vol. 305 (16 July 2004), 367-371
- xv See: http://unfccc.int/ghg_data/ghg_data_unfccc/items/4146.php
- xvi See: <http://environment.nationalgeographic.com/environment/global-warming/deforestation-overview/> xvii See: <http://www.globalchange.umich.edu/globalchange2/current/lectures/deforest/deforest.html>