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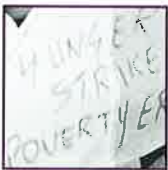


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*One More Time?* Rebuilding bombed-out Europe, including the World War II enemies, was the core of George Marshall's (inset) strategy for constructing a lasting peace. Today, some people say it will take an effort like the Marshall Plan to rebuild post-Cold War Russia.

inside

## HIGH STAKES IN RUSSIA



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

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**I**t's 1991. The Soviet Union has collapsed, and the US is ready to do almost anything to promote democracy and market reforms in Russia. Negotiations take place on many issues. One of them is withdrawing Russian troops from the Baltic States. The Russians say they want to pull their forces out of the Baltics, but have nowhere to house the officers back home. Now it's 1993. The US offers to pay for some new housing for the officers in exchange for the troop withdraw-

al. Both conservatives and liberals, Democrats and Republicans, like the deal. They are just happy to get the Russians out of the Baltics. Move ahead to 1995. The US is turning inward and, except in foreign policy circles, Russia is all but forgotten. US veterans' groups are complaining that paying to house Russian officers is outrageous when 17,000 enlisted Americans need food stamps just to subsist. This spring the new Republican-controlled Congress removes a portion of the money

earmarked for the Russian housing program, and some Russians charge the US is renegeing on a deal.

The complexities behind the officer-housing plan and the understandable reaction of ordinary Americans are emblematic of America's shifting attitudes toward Russia. Members of Congress who believe it is in America's interest to help Russia

Russia

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## Russia

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become a stable democracy, especially when it involves foreign aid, have a hard time selling that idea to an American public fearful that their Social Security or veteran's benefits will be cut. However, this shift in thinking could have dramatic negative consequences for the US.

The fragile and uncertain relationship between the US and its former enemy was the subject of the Stanley Foundation's Foreign Policy Forum, an annual conference in March, held to engage congressional staff members on key foreign policy issues. This year's meeting focused specifically on US-Russian relations and the state of Russia's efforts to reform its economy, military, and political institutions. In planning the conference, Stanley Foundation Vice President David Doerge said, "As the war in Chechnya continues, as the Russian economy teeters on the brink of collapse, and as parliamentary and presidential elections loom on the near horizon, it becomes clear that the Russia of the future will emerge from what is unfolding there today."

Russia is still one of the pillars of US foreign policy, even though it poses less of a threat to US security than the Soviet Union did during the forty years of Cold War. Blair Ruble, director of the Kennan Institute for Advanced Russian Studies which cosponsored the conference, said there are three main issues for the US when it comes to Russia. Foremost are Russia's 30,000 nuclear warheads. Second is the potentially huge market for US products. "They could become an important economic power and partner for the US," Ruble said. Russia's third strength lies in its large supply of natural resources such as oil, petroleum, and forestry products, "which, if they started dumping them on the world market, could cause problems for the US, as we saw recently with aluminum...and it cost a couple thousand jobs in the US. Our fates are still inter-

twined, but in a different way from the Cold War."

Ambassador Jack Matlock opened the three-day dialogue by saying there is potential for democracy in a country that's never really had it before. But he cautioned his audience that Russia's future is still an open question, and change will not occur overnight. "Will Russia build a society that doesn't threaten others, or will it regress? The corollary [to that question] is what we can do to enhance this [process]." Matlock is concerned that if Russia fails to become a democracy with a market economy, "they become the political and economic equivalent of a black hole. That's not a pleasant thing for anyone, because black holes tend to suck things in and destroy them. I think the quality of life in the twenty-first century for everyone on the planet, and Americans in particular, depends on what happens in Russia."

Despite growing cooperation between the two former enemies, there are several major problem areas on the table. At the May summit President Clinton won only minor concessions from Russian President Yeltsin on Moscow's proposed sale of nuclear technology to Iran, made little headway on Russia's brutal attempt to suppress the independence movement in Chechnya, and could not allay Russian fears about the proposed expansion of NATO. Still, John Herbst of the US State Department said in March, "We're far better off in terms of geopolitical cooperation than a few years ago." And the administration will continue its policy of "promoting democratic reforms and disposing of concrete security threats to the US."

## ELECTIONS

Russia is scheduled to hold parliamentary and presidential elections this December and next June. Everyone is waiting for the outcome of those polls, and to see if they'll even take place, before risking many predictions about Russia's future. Because the parliament is currently a very weak

body, no one is too worried about its elections being canceled. Next year's presidential elections, though, are an open question. "If they're canceled," warned Blair Ruble, "we're in for a rough period in Russia, because a lot of people from the communists and nationalists to the democratic reformers have been content to play electoral politics, and they're getting ready for the elections. If they're canceled, the extreme elements will take to the streets."

## RUSSIA'S CRUMBLING MILITARY

No one sees any immediate threat to the outside world from Russia's decaying military, aside from its formidable nuclear capability, which everyone is concerned could fall into the wrong hands. "The Russian military has virtually no ability to carry out offensive operations outside Russia..." Lieutenant General William Odom said. Odom, who headed the National Security Agency under former President Bush, attributed the military's deterioration to Mikhail Gorbachev, who no longer gave the military top priority. Then glasnost allowed the public's hostility toward the military to surface. "Russian and other nationalities began to complain about what Soviet military service meant.

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**courier**

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The abuse, the hazing by senior soldiers, [and] the large number of suicides and noncombat-training deaths caused massive draft resistance and mothers' groups to form and to condemn the military internally. The military ended up with a heavy officer corps and a small number of enlisted men because of draft resistance."

### EXPANDING NATO

The predominant and most contentious issue at the conference was what affect the proposed expansion of NATO eastward would have on Russia's stability. Even the limited expansion General Odom advocated into Poland, the Czech Republic, and Hungary was hotly debated. Some policy-makers question the relative value of expanding NATO if Russia is left feeling threatened. Bruce Parrott, director of the Russian Area and East European Studies at The Johns Hopkins University drove home that point when he said, "it's clear some kind of understanding is needed between NATO and Russia for long-term relations to prevent a sense of isolation by Russia," said Odom.

### ECONOMIC REFORM

Russia has arrived at a fork in the road. "Russia can be a democracy or an autocracy," Ambassador Matlock told his audience, "and free enterprise is the main guarantee they won't go back to autocracy.... We need to make the country attractive to investment." However, most American businesses in Russia are still taking a wait-and-see approach before investing large sums of money, according to John Sullivan from the US Chamber of Commerce's Center for International Private Enterprise. While generally optimistic about Russia's economic future and potential rewards, foreign companies "still regard major investments as risky," Sullivan said.

James Millar, the director of the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies at The George Washington University, sees tremendous problems for the Russian economy. "Shock therapy destroyed the old economy," Mil-

lar said, "but there's no longer the romantic view that the economy can be converted in a short time."

In terms of real income, seventy to seventy-five percent of the Russian people are worse off than they were before perestroika, according to Millar, and the safety net formerly provided by the government is gone now. The average Russian's economic problems are compounded by the breakdown of law and order. Ariel Cohen of the Heritage Foundation told the group that in "all opinion polls

Russians say crime and rampant corruption are the worst problems.... Today you have a fusion of the police force with organized crime. Everyone's on his own, and guns are proliferating. This creates an international threat, because organized crime is getting involved in international arms smuggling—including technology for weapons of mass destruction. It creates a worldwide drug problem."

### DON'T IGNORE RUSSIA

Because Russia poses both a great threat to the world and potential rewards, there was broad consensus at the conference that Russia remains a high-stakes relationship for the US. There are many private and government initiatives to strengthen Russia's civil society and promote democracy there. As William Bader of the Eurasia Foundation, which makes small grants throughout the former Soviet Union, said, "It's the biggest single challenge since those dark days of 1945 and 1950—the days of bringing Europe back into economic health and the democratic process." Today the US doesn't have the kind of money it spent on the Marshall Plan, acknowledged Ariel Cohen, "but to cut beyond the bare bones level will help



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those who want to disengage from a constructive dialogue.... All the indications are that this is a country that lost a major conflict. Instead of shutting it off like we did [Germany] after World War I, we should get engaged like we did after World War II. After all, the majority of our foreign trade [today] is with Japan and Europe."

Despite Russia's problems, former Ambassador Matlock doesn't want Americans to lose sight of all that Russia has achieved since the Soviet Union disintegrated. "Elections are coming up.... You still have a free press...and you can't have a democracy without a free press [or] opposition politicians who can speak their minds, and Russia has that. They've never had this before under the czars. So Russia is now freer than it's ever been in history. It's not totally free and lacks some needed institutions, and it may take a long time. But I think there's some hope, and no reason to give up that hope."

—Mary Gray Davidson

**Old Allies, New Day.** President Clinton, British Prime Minister John Major, and other dignitaries at the Red Square parade to mark the 50th anniversary of Germany's defeat. The US stake in Russia's future is different, but still high.

(A two-part radio series from the conference is available. See page 10.)

*Fifty years after the creation of the United Nations system, the performance of these organizations is being closely studied.*



## A Uniting Vision?

A widely shared vision of how world economic development should unfold is the key to better collaboration between the UN and the Bretton Woods institutions (BWIs)—the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). That conclusion emerges from a February Stanley Founda-

tion conference involving eighteen experts on these institutions.

The UN and BWIs were born in the aftermath of World War II, brought on in part by calamitous world economic conditions between the two world wars. Creators of the new international organizations wanted them to play a major role in preventing a recurrence. The UN and BWIs

were supposed to share responsibility for global economic development and management.

However, events haven't unfolded that way. The BWIs and UN have been at odds over economic policy more than they have been in concert. The BWIs use weighted voting with the major industrial powers, who contribute the most to them, exercising effective control.

## People's Future

When diplomats from around the world met at the UN in New York this May to decide the terms of extending the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, they had company. Representatives of 198 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) were outside the building and in the hallways trying to influence the outcome. And, when the Fourth World Conference on Women convenes in Beijing this September, a parallel NGO Forum is slated to be held and draw an expected 30,000 women's rights activists.

The presence of large numbers of NGOs and their usually dedicated members has been a factor at UN-sponsored world events since 1992. In fact, numerous speakers on the future of the UN at an April symposium in Iowa City, Iowa, noted that the engaging of citizens through nongovernmental means is the most dynamic area of activity in the lives of international organizations. That process can play a key role in energizing the UN as it faces the twenty-first century.

Keynote speaker Stephen Lewis, former Canadian ambassador to the UN, said only civil society can put pressure on political leaders to affect change. That is true within individual nations and at the world level. However, he noted, political leaders can be expected to resist citizen pressure.

Women are already feeling that resistance, according to Charlotte Bunch, director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership at Rutgers University and a luncheon speaker at the conference. She said, "Women in civil society have moved out of the shadows and are more fully integrated. But now there is a backlash marked by hostility and indifference" on the part of political leaders. That backlash is responsible for the Chinese government's attempts to marginalize the NGO Forum at the Beijing conference and of several governments' attempts to roll back women's gains in reproductive rights.

The April symposium, "UN at 50: Preferred Futures for the UN," was sponsored by the Iowa Division of the UNA-USA, the Uni-

versity of Iowa Program on International and Comparative Law, the World Order Models Project, and the Stanley Foundation. The meeting drew more than 200 participants, primarily from the Midwest.

The conference was the culminating event in a process which spanned several months in which citizens in various communities around Iowa met in community forums to discuss the role they would like the UN to play in shaping a more peaceful, secure, and just future. Recommendations to achieve these goals were set out in the "Iowa Declaration," a comprehensive document approved by the participants.

Opening one of the discussion sessions, Saul Mendlovitz, director of the World Order Models Project, said that this is an "open moment in history." It is important for citizens to get involved, he said, because by establishing concrete goals to be achieved over the next 20-25 years there is an opportunity to achieve "human governance" of the planet.

—Jeffrey Martin

At the UN General Assembly and Economic and Social Council a principle of one nation-one vote prevails with tiny developing countries holding the same clout as the US, Japan, and Germany. In recent years the UN has accused the IMF and World Bank of being brutal in imposing structural adjustment policies that hurt developing countries. BWI representatives have, in turn, accused the UN of being nothing more than a talk shop.

#### **A Push for Progress**

Recent pressure to improve coordination and collaboration between the BWIs and UN comes from grassroots groups who are concerned about the widening gap between the rich and poor. Many national governments share that concern and the seeming unmanageability of the global economy.

The report of the Stanley Foundation conference, "UN-Bretton Woods Collaboration: How Much is Enough?," lays out three models of economic development which were discussed by the participants:

- Traditional Economic Development—a model which emphasized growth led by the private sector. Institutions are needed to stabilize monetary flows, facilitate growth in the developing countries, and assure access to global markets.
- People-centered Development—a model which emphasizes overall social impact of policies rather than gross domestic product (GDP) as a standard of evaluation. International institutions should assure an accessible and fair process and should promote

social development on an even basis with economic growth.

- Blended Social and Economic Development—a hybrid of the first two. It recognizes the need for GDP growth, but with an eye toward the corresponding importance of social development concerns.

Conference participants identified some mechanisms which promise to improve coordination between developing countries, the UN, and BWIs. However, the report concludes that truly effective collaboration is most likely to occur when there is general agreement on a development strategy that balances economic and social progress, a tall order in the current environment.

—Jeffrey Martin

*See page 10 to order the full report on this conference entitled United Nations-Bretton Wood Collaboration: How Much is Enough? or the related Common Ground program called Global Institutional Failure...or Success? (#9512).*

## **Strained Relations**

**U**S relations with the UN are in the throes of a bittersweet paradox. On the one hand, activities all around the country, indeed the world, are being set to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the founding of the UN. Former American presidents, various US officials, nongovernmental organizations, and others are reminding the country of the critical role the UN has played in supporting and furthering US objectives and values.

On the other hand, with the election of a new Congress—which is decidedly skeptical and often critical of the UN—with calls for cutting US financial contributions and support, and with legislation aimed at limiting US involvement in multilateral peacekeeping activities, relations with the UN have reached a post-Cold War nadir.

From the UN perspective there is a serious financial crisis precipitated in part by the lack of US support which feeds into an already healthy resentment toward the US, as well as some other powerful countries regarding their lack of commitment and responsibility toward working together to help ameliorate the world's problems.

In spite of these hard times, one fact seems to remain, the US and the UN need each other. The US needs the UN to help pursue US policies and objectives in the world both efficiently and

effectively. From the UN perspective, if it is to realize its potential and achieve some success in the future, the US continues to remain its most important member.

This strained but unbroken bond between the most powerful country in the world and the only international governance body set up to deal with global problems forms the basis of the Stanley Foundation's project on US-UN relations. This project will examine:

- The current state of US-UN relations.
- Issues concerning US leadership and influence at the UN.
- The pros and cons of US involvement in multilateral peacekeeping/peacemaking operations.
- Issues of funding and efficiency at the UN.
- The impact of the decline in US support for the UN.
- What kind of UN the US wants, and the UN view on the ideal US role.

The Stanley Foundation is convening meetings to gather information from the various perspectives in both the US government and UN. The project will culminate in the fall at a conference to explore the most promising avenues for improving this relationship without compromising the integrity of US policy or the UN mission.

—David Doerge

*See page 10 to order the report entitled US-UN Relations (#9510).*



# A Process to Aid People

“The old business of the rich giving to the poor as a solution to the world’s problems, while well motivated in terms of charity, hasn’t in fact worked,” said Juan Somavia, the man responsible for the World Summit on Social Development held earlier this year in Copenhagen. Finding alternatives to charity brought 118 heads of state, hundreds of other world leaders, and 3,000 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) to this so-called Social Summit.

The stated goal of the UN organized summit was devising new strategies for the elimination of poverty, unemployment, and social disintegration—problems faced, to varying degrees, in nearly every country of the world. The participants, to the extent their political agendas would allow, looked for ways to share resources and expertise in battling these ills. “If the UN is to have meaning in the world, it has to deal with the basic issues that produce uncertainty and insecurity in the world. And that’s what the summit is trying to do,” said Somavia, former Chilean ambassador to the UN.

The Social Summit can be seen as part of a larger cycle of informally related UN mega-events. These include the World Summit for Children (1990), the Earth Summit (1992), the World Conferences on Human Rights (1993) and Population (1994), and this summer’s Fourth World Conference on Women scheduled for Beijing. The common thread through these global gatherings has been a search for ways to enhance and preserve economic development, the environment, human rights, and social development.

The search has most often turned up controversy, since those issues sometimes call for contradictory responses. Protecting the environment, for example, may hamper economic and social development. Development may collide with human rights, which in turn could clash with environmental protection. NGOs, often organized around just a narrow part of one of these issue areas, come to the summits to promote their agendas. Governments, concerned chiefly with self-interests, often come to the events to preserve the status quo or, at the least, ensure that actions taken will not jeopardize their sovereignty. Despite these impediments, there are those who can point to progress.

“In late January, Jim Grant, the executive director of UNICEF, passed away—a tremendous loss to the world,” said Robert Berg, president of the International Development Conference and a senior consultant to the World Summit for Children. “[Grant] saw the Children’s Summit, the first global meeting to really make human progress under UN sponsorship, as the wedge issue to working on poverty. And this [Social] Summit is that poverty focus, if anything. The bottom line of this summit is poverty. And Grant saw that once the world got serious about poverty, it could then be in a much better position in the twenty-first century to be serious about a more equitable world,” said Berg. “This movement of [UN-sponsored] meetings indicates the increasing centrality of the multilateral system in recognizing problems and in coming to agreement on solutions.”

## Rich and Poor

The use—and effectiveness—of the multilateral system also seems to hinge on a recognition that the global problems and solutions are no longer divided between the rich countries of the North and the poor of the South. “It’s perfectly clear that we live in a much more interconnected and global world than such a division recognizes. And certainly the developed countries now know that. They are experiencing some of precisely the same problems that developing countries are experiencing,” said Richard Butler, the Australian ambassador to the UN and president of the UN’s Economic and Social Council. “This is one of the very interesting things about Copenhagen. The past language of North-South division, them and us, is to be found far less in these documents than in any comparable documents in the past. There’s a much clearer sight of how we’re all in this boat

*...global problems are no longer divided between the rich of the North and the poor of the South.*



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS

together, and we're going to sail it together or we'll sink," said Butler.

The official documents from Copenhagen include a Declaration and a Programme of Action. The Declaration is made up of ten commitments dealing with issues such as legal reform, eradication of poverty, full employment, human rights protection, gender equity, access to education and healthcare, accelerated development of the poorest countries, reform of structural adjustment programs, and social development resources and coordination. The Programme of Action outlines ways these commitments will be implemented.

#### NGO Criticism

NGOs had some impact on drafting the documents, and most were glad to see the summit recognize poverty and gender inequity as global ills. But, overall, there was deep criticism from the NGO community. "Our disappointment lies in the fact that we believe the UN system could have done more at this confer-

ence," said Desima Williams, a member of the women's rights group DAWN. "Larger commitments could have been undertaken. For example, a commitment to reduce, with a goal toward eliminating, military expenditure. That was not done. We are disappointed that the issue of poverty was not more squarely and urgently addressed," said Williams, one of several women who participated in a hunger strike in the middle of the conference center to remind summit participants of the billion poor in the world. "What these women are doing, and what we are all trying to do is to move the governments to act. We've got the words. We want the action now from the governments," said former US Congresswoman Bella Abzug.

Abzug, one of thousands of women preparing for the Fourth World Conference for Women this summer in Beijing, wants to ensure that governments are held accountable for the promises they made in Copenhagen. "We invited Ambassador Somavia to come to Beijing and give us a six-month

progress report as to what the governments have really done since they signed the piece of paper," said Abzug.

#### Consciousness Raising

For his part, summit organizer Somavia says the success of the Social Summit may be similar to advances made at the 1972 Stockholm conference on the environment or the 1975 Mexico City conference on women. "At that time we did not have the environmental consciousness that we have today. And yet, twenty years down the road we have all changed. And it is not because we threw money at the issue. The environmental movement hasn't been overfunded in the world," said Somavia. "And we have made an incredible change of consciousness in relation to gender issues. It wasn't because they received all the money in the world that we have been able to change the vision of the role of women. It's just people getting together with people, working within the civil society, and making things change. The UN has played a role in generating the momentum for that change of consciousness. And what I believe the Social Summit will do for social development and for human security is what the conference of '72 did for the environment and the conference of '75 did for women. This is what this conference is about."

—Keith Porter



#### On Strike.

While at the Social Summit, the members of some citizen groups held a hunger strike to dramatize the need for fraction to eliminate poverty.

*It's just people getting together with people, ...making things change.*

Keith Porter, producer of the Stanley Foundation's nationally syndicated public radio program, Common Ground, was among the 12,500 Social Summit attendees. Tapes and transcripts of the programs he produced in Copenhagen are available. See the resource information on page 10.

# The Beijing Conference Reporting on it

Over 2,000 years ago in China, Confucius, telling the story of ten officials who had rebelled against the royal court, asserted that "there were only nine that took part in the revolt, because there was a woman who could not be counted." But since 1975 at the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City held during International Women's Year, women around the globe have insisted that they must not only be counted but also heard in the making of international and national policy.

In September 1995, an estimated 40,000 women and men from around the world will meet in Beijing, China, for the Fourth World Conference on Women and the corresponding Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO) Forum. Along with official government delegations from UN-member nations, an unprecedented gathering of representatives from voluntary organizations and grass-roots movements will discuss issues of vital importance to women worldwide—from education, economic opportunity, and political participation to reproductive health, rural development, peace, and disarmament.

## Media Contact

Mass media play a crucial role in anticipating, reporting, and disseminating and analyzing the results of these conferences. They also help to foster continuing dialogue afterwards. In March, the Stanley Foundation joined with the Ford Foundation and the University of Iowa to bring together journalists from across North America with eight Chinese women who will be instrumental in planning and working with the international media at the Beijing conference. At the invitation of Judy Polumbaum of the UI School

of Journalism and Mass Communication and coordinator of the World Women and Media Workshop, CNN, the Washington Post, the Dallas Morning News, the Toronto Globe and Mail, the Des Moines Register, National Public Radio, and others sent journalists to meet with their counterparts from China. They made personal contacts and established new lines of communications for planning coverage of the Beijing summit. Academics, activists, and students also participated in the interdisciplinary exchanges that took place.

The North American journalists came to the meetings looking for specific answers to such questions as: What would they be allowed to cover in Beijing? How would they get their stories? The Chinese journalists wanted a better understanding of the importance of NGOs and what they could expect from the international media. Differences emerged over international issues such as human rights and sensitive Chinese issues like Tibet and the ancient tradition of footbinding. The Chinese urged Western journalists to look beyond these stories to others.

Workshop participants made it clear that people everywhere approach definitions and interpretations of domestic and international issues from their own cultural, ethnic, racial, and religious backgrounds. This can lead to emotion-charged, cultural misunderstandings. The Chinese journalists stressed that, particularly in observing an ancient society like China's, international journalists need to put their perceptions of issues and events in the historical and cultural contexts. As Dina Eng, in her column for Gannett News Service, wrote after the workshop, "We didn't eradicate our cultural differences. But



Wu Qing. Municipal People's Congress

everyone came away with greater understanding of just how wide the cultural chasm can be and what we can begin to do to bridge the gap."

## Conference Preparations

Anne Walker, director of the International Women's Tribune Center, and Shang Shaohua, Chief Editor of World Women's Vision (Shijie Funu Bolan), said the world conference will discuss concerns like political empowerment, unequal access and opportunities to education, violence against women, inequitable sharing of the poverty burden, and health and reproductive issues.

Time and again participants agreed that not only journalists but people throughout the world need to understand that all issues are women's issues and that the issues of women should be the issues of all. Talin Vartanian, producer of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's *As it Happens*, spoke of the importance of bringing women's voices to the media in stories, in approach to media coverage, and especially in the news. Gail Evans of CNN insisted, "It matters who makes it [the news]; it matters who says it; it matters who tells it."

Hosting its first UN meeting of this magnitude, China is promoting it internally. Deputy Director Luo Xiaolu of the Beijing Women's Federation and head of Beijing '95 NGO Media Committee, reported that a forty-five minute program about the conference is televised daily.

*People  
everywhere  
approach...  
issues from  
their own...  
back-  
grounds.*



Wu Qing, elected deputy to the Beijing Municipal People's Congress and the first person to cast a negative vote in the municipal government, explained that one-sixth of the world's women who live in China share the critical policy issues of people everywhere. Population, development, education, health, immigration, ethnic conflicts, human rights, and national security can no longer be seen as separate from the issues of international women.

Keynote speaker Bonnie Campbell, former attorney general of Iowa and recently named to be director of the Justice Department's new Office on Violence Against Women, connected the importance of violence against women from the international to the local levels. From rape and domestic abuse to female genital mutilation and violence by lack of equal amounts of food and being targets of war, women face violence throughout the world.

How the summit itself and the issues being discussed are dealt with in and by the media is crucial to the success of the world conference. What kind of attention does the summit get? How much attention do individual issues get in national and local news? Does the media play an ongoing role in making the voices of women heard or are those voices quieted again after the summit is over? Most participants at the conference hope that the entire international community and the media, in particular, understand that no longer can "women's issues" be isolated on a "women's page" or in a "women's magazine." Indeed, the message that all issues are women's issues and that women's issues are issues for all was a message that transcended cultural differences at the workshop.

—Joan Winship

## The Beijing Conference Bringing it Back

In the past, there have been many world conferences that have produced documents outlining comprehensive strategies for global change. But the strategies are rarely translated into concrete proposals for public policy or financing. Thus, the impact of the summit stops at consciousness-raising, networking, and standard-setting. Organizers of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women hope to change that.

Around the world, governments, women's rights organizations, and involved citizens are preparing for the conference to be held in Beijing, China, September 1995. The conference will assess government implementation of the Forward Looking Strategies that came out of the Third World Conference in Nairobi, Kenya (1985).

### Citizen Involvement

In addition to an intergovernmental meeting of UN delegates, Beijing will also be the site of an NGO (Nongovernmental Organizations) Forum. Twenty to thirty thousand women representing organizations from around the world will come together to petition the government delegates at the formal meeting to be responsive to the interests of diverse communities of women and to provide valuable information and expert advice.

Over the last several years, local communities around the world have begun preparing for Beijing by holding educational forums and generating policy recommendations for their national governments. Many governments have held conferences to canvass women's opinions and concerns. Preparatory meetings have been held at the regional level in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and the European Union to draft documents as inputs to the final

Platform of Action from the Beijing meeting.

Focus on the preparatory process makes it difficult to think about post-Beijing implementation. Yet, the conference itself is designed to translate words into action. It has been called the



'Conference of Commitments.' Women are no longer simply raising consciousness about their issues but demanding that governments make a real commitment to crafting policies that will fundamentally alter the conditions of poverty and discrimination characteristic of the lives of the world's women.

### Following Up

In response to the problem of translating rhetoric into action, the Stanley Foundation has begun a project focusing on post Beijing implementation. It has convened some meetings, community forums, and strategy workshops between government officials, NGOs, and financing institutions to discuss how to translate commitments into action, specifically here in the US.

A major conference is scheduled for November 1995 that will have both policy and community outreach components associated with it. The policy dialogue will bring government officials together with NGOs to discuss a plan for implementation. The community workshops will bring local NGOs from around the US, government representatives, and individuals from foundations together to discuss how the categories of women's concerns outlined in the Beijing Platform of Action can be implemented locally.

—Ellen Dorsey

*The conference itself is designed to translate words into action.*

## *Common Ground*

### Selected Cassettes and Transcripts

- 9524—Stephen Lewis on the United Nations  
A look at UNICEF and the UN at 50. (June 1995)
- 9523—Israel and Jordan: A Model for Peace?  
Ambassadors from each country discuss the process. (June 1995)
- 9522—Inside the Chechen War  
An eyewitness account of this brutal conflict. (May 1995)
- 9521—Haiti's Challenge  
Author Mark Danner on Haiti and democracy. (May 1995)
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# FROM MUSCATINE TO THE AMAZON

**I**n August 1994, seven middle school students from Muscatine, Iowa, traveled with their teacher to the Amazon rainforest of Peru. The students raised over \$7,000 to pay for the adventure. They came back not only with a greater understanding of the rainforest's importance to the global environment and a glimpse of another culture but also with some newsgathering skills. *Common Ground* Producer Keith Porter sent a tape recorder and microphone with the students to record sounds, interviews, and their impressions during their week-long stay. Upon their return, Porter worked with the students to produce their own half-hour *Common Ground* program. The following are excerpts from their production. For a complete transcript or audio cassette of this program see the ordering information on page 10.

**STUDENT:** Our guide this day was Dr. Bob Stiles of Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama. He helped us understand the relationship between the fish, the forest, and the people who live there.

**DR. STILES:** We estimate there are probably 3,000 species of fish...in the Amazon Basin. That's almost as many species as there are in the whole North Atlantic Ocean, and it dwarfs what we have in North America. The fish are very important to the local people—very, very important. For one thing, they are the staple of their diet. The fish in turn, are dependent upon the forest. During the high-water season a lot of the fish come into the forest to feed. They actually go up into the flooded forest.

**STUDENT:** Dr. Tom Antonio, director of the Chicago Botanical Garden, took us through the forest.

**DR. ANTONIO:** Tropical rainforests are millions of years old. That's [a] reason that people believe that they're so diverse—because they've been around so long. This is why the tropical rainforest is so valuable as a living pharmacy—because of all the many different types of plants that are in here trying to survive. Because they are trying to survive, over the millennia...they have evolved different types of chemicals within their tissues...to try to protect themselves from being eaten.

*Near the end of their stay, the students from Iowa visited the Vanilla Village School, where they were greeted with a song and flag-raising ceremony and exchanged messages of friendship.*

**STUDENT:** I have enjoyed my week's stay in Peru, and I thank you for letting us come to your school and see how you learn. I see how much alike we are.

*After having a chance to reflect on their experience, the students recorded these thoughts back in Iowa.*

**STUDENT:** I would like to have more people get involved in saving the environment and trying to help save the rainforest.

**STUDENT:** I wanted to find a new species down there, but I didn't. So, I want to go back there and find a new species. And, it's very peaceful down there. That's another reason why I want to go back.

**STUDENT:** I came back thinking that my house looked like a mansion compared to what some of the people down there are living in. When you go down there and you see that they don't have all the nice clothes and stuff like that, you come back knowing that you don't always have to have the best.

**STUDENT:** I didn't think it was going to be that bad, but everywhere you looked there's little kids without shoes, some without clothes, and some without houses. It was terrible.

**STUDENT:** They don't have a lot of electricity and stuff, and they do a lot with their families. I think Americans need to realize that they should sit down with their families and talk to their families and do more family things like they do in South America in the rainforest.

— excerpted by Mary Gray Davidson



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