



PROVOKING THOUGHT AND DIALOGUE ABOUT THE WORLD

The Cuban Evolution

While Cuba may evoke images of rum, cigars, sugar cane, and tropical romance for many people, those in Washington see it as a foreign policy headache and a political hot potato. In an attempt to ease this sour atmosphere, the Stanley Foundation convened a group of Cuba policy specialists to see if any areas of agreement on US foreign policy toward Cuba have materialized in the four years since the end of the Cold War.

The October 1995 meeting, part of the foundation's 36th Strategy for Peace Conference, was organized in response to subtle yet significant shifts that were taking place both in US policy and the Cuban economy. Participants discussed at length the economic reforms put in place by Fidel Castro. These include the opening of tourism and mining in Cuba to foreign investment, as well as new opportunities for Cubans to work as small entrepreneurs, grow food for farmers' markets, and establish consumer craft markets.

Bottoming Out?

While there have been positive impacts on the Cuban economy from these reforms, conference participants were divided over whether the economy had finally bottomed out. Production levels in Cuba remain low. The 1994-95 sugar harvest was the smallest in fifty years. The market for nickel is getting tighter, and net profits from tourism will total merely 250 million dollars from an estimated one billion dollars in tourism revenues. These indications point toward the need for more economic reforms.

No, no, no! A tourist in Havana rejects an offer on black market items. To bolster the collapsing economy, Cuba has, among other things, legalized possession of US dollars, prompting more trade in that currency.

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Conference.

US, India, and
China.

Yet the Cuban government, according to conference participants, is itself divided on the shape and desirability of future reforms. Hard-liners fear giving up government control, while reformists loyal to Castro "feel that another mini-crisis is needed to show that the system must move on to the next stage, which will require a significant devaluation of the peso in order to link the Cuban economy more closely with the international economy," according to the report from the conference.

The group noted that inefficient, state-run businesses are a drain on the economy and may require eliminating 500 thousand to 1.5 million surplus workers. This, of course, would create different economic problems. In addition, stagnant agricultural production may only improve if farmers are allowed to sell a greater percentage of their produce on the open market.

Capitalist Apartheid

Thus far the government has shown a preference for reforms that bring in hard currency without threatening their control of the economy. But the report says foreign investment in limited sectors is creating "what some critics have called 'islands of capitalism' or, more pejoratively, 'capitalist apartheid.'"

These limited reforms still face the possibility of being reversed. In fact, the group agreed "if Castro thought he could reverse the reforms without suffering serious economic or political consequences, he would do so," according to the report. Future reforms, however, will be much harder to reverse.

Money and Power

The economic reforms in Cuba have not been accompanied by similar political reforms. But changes in the economy have had an impact on political activity. The conference report identifies five

areas of fallout. First, the government's hand may, in fact, be strengthened by some of the reforms which ease the discontent brought on by economic hardship. Second, citizens who gain most of their income from small, yet private, enterprise may feel less beholden to the government and display more freedom of action at a personal and grass-roots level. Third, some members of the group observed that Cubans have shown, since the economic reform process began, greater willingness to speak out against the government as the cause of food and consumer good shortages. Fourth, an increased willingness to challenge the regime may be the cause of increased church attendance in Cuba. And fifth, the dissident movement in Cuba has been "directly and aggressively confronting the government on its human rights record," even though it has meant routine harassment and imprisonment.

Castro's Future

There was consensus among the group that there are no immediate threats to the continuation of the Castro government. In fact, the economic reforms, while thus far failing to turn around the economy, have been of great benefit to the one group vital to Castro's existence—the military. The military controls major state enterprises, including tourism, and therefore has had access to hard currency since the economic reforms began. This success puts the military on the side of the reformers in the government and against the so-called hard-liners.

But the reformer's allegiance to Castro is unclear. As the report states, "At least some of them believe that they, like some of their Eastern European and former Soviet counterparts, would be able to reinvent themselves as social democrats if communism collapsed in Cuba."

Two groups with more clear disaffection with the Castro government are blacks and youths. Blacks make up 40 percent of the current population, as opposed to 20 percent in 1959. But they have fewer relatives in the United States and Europe sending hard currency to them, and they have a difficult time being hired in the tourist hotels. This leaves them doubly removed from any relief brought by economic reforms.



Economic reforms in Cuba have not been accompanied by similar political reforms.

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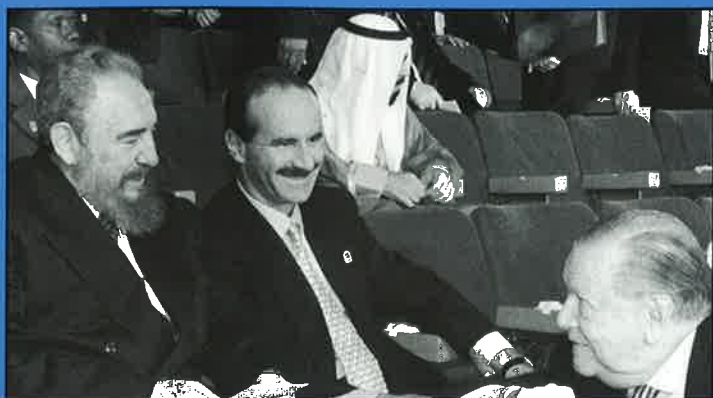
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|---------------------|--------------------|
| President | Richard Stanley |
| Editor | Jeffrey Martin |
| Managing Editor | Amy Bakke |
| Correspondent | Mary Gray Davidson |
| Correspondent | Keith Porter |
| Editorial Assistant | Bonnie Tharp |

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The Stanley Foundation
216 Sycamore Street, Suite 500
Muscatine, Iowa 52761-3831 USA
Phone: (319) 264-1500
Fax: (319) 264-0864
Internet: stanfound-sf@mcimail.com

Changes: Home and Abroad. (Left) Free market prices are the rule at farmers' markets, permitted in Cuba since October 1994. (Below) Cuban President Fidel Castro exchanged his fatigues for a business suit when he addressed the United Nations last October. Here he visits with Latin American leaders prior to the speech.

AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTOS



Young people in Cuba have no memory of life before the revolution and, therefore, find it hard to generate enthusiasm about the Castro government. What they do remember is that during the time of Soviet assistance life was much easier in Cuba. This leaves them with little optimism about the future and a growing sense of disillusionment and impatience with socialism.

The report summarizes the net effect of the economic reforms saying that they are hurting groups which do not have easy access to dollars, but have "reduced the short-term possibility that growing poverty could lead to mass unrest. The group agreed the reforms that have already been made will probably have to be followed by additional reforms, at the very least to deal with new challenges caused by the changing economic and social situation in Cuba and the world."

The US Embargo

The group had no consensus on how the reforms would be affected by a gradual lifting of the US embargo. Were it legal, many US companies would be interested in entering the Cuban market. Some conference participants believe a "gradual lifting of the embargo would propel the economic reforms forward, since Castro would quickly lose control over the economy. Others believe that,

without additional reforms prior to the embargo's lifting, any foreign capital entering Cuba would only reinforce Castro's hold on power, since it would give him the resources he now lacks—thereby removing the incentive for further reforms."

The discussion on how changes in the US embargo of Cuba would affect economic reforms in Cuba highlights the post-Cold War transformation of US-Cuban relations. The issue has become more of a domestic rather than foreign affair. No longer worried about Soviet expansion in the Western Hemisphere, the immediate US concern with Cuba is controlling immigration.

Cuban-Americans

This shift has exposed a major division in the Cuban-American community. While President Clinton has sharply limited the number of Cubans allowed into the United States, some Cuban-Americans have supported him and a "...policy that involves cooperating and working directly with the Castro government in order to prevent future inflows into Florida of thousands of Cuban refugees," according to the report. But another part of the community, including the powerful Cuban-American National Foundation, "...continues to regard cooperation with the Castro government as the beginning of a slippery slope that will

inevitably lead to the lifting of the US embargo and a normalization of relations with Havana."

US Policy

Interestingly, the conference indicates that while Cuban-Americans will continue to play a powerful role in shaping US policy toward Cuba, "...the fact that it now speaks with several voices gives more latitude to a US president to pursue a two-track policy toward Cuba." On the other hand, the president will find it hard to use this freedom when faced with a Republican Congress promoting a hard line toward Cuba.

The US business community, however anxious to do business in Cuba, is unlikely to actively lobby for a lifting of the embargo. At 11 million people, the Cuban market is much smaller and less appealing to business than Vietnam's 75 million. Further, US business is unwilling to risk the wrath on the part of the Cuban-American community which would be offended by such lobbying efforts.

Next

Congress and a large part of the Cuban-American community want to see the US embargo remain in place or be strengthened. The US business community is on the sidelines. This leaves the US president, according to the report, as a potential candidate for lifting the embargo. But conference participants agreed this would not happen prior to the 1996 presidential election. And it is not clear Clinton would lift the embargo even if he won a second term. As the report concludes, "Much will depend on what is happening on the island at the time and whether he and the Congress, which will probably remain under Republican leadership, believe that a two-track policy of maintaining the embargo and increasing communications and contact with the Cuban people is facilitating a transition to a market economy and a democratic polity."

—Keith Porter

Were it legal, many US companies would be interested in entering the Cuban market.

See page 14 to order the report of this conference entitled The United States and Cuba: Where Do We Go From Here? or see page 15 for a Common Ground radio program on this topic called Cuba and the United States (9548/49).

Mexico's Crisis Year

The economic and political crisis that hit Mexico during President Ernesto Zedillo's first year in office may be the most serious crisis of state since the 1910 Mexican Revolution. At least one million Mexicans lost their jobs in 1995. Inflation in Mexico rose more than 50 percent. The peso tumbled 55 percent against the dollar, and the economy shrunk by 7 percent. Coupled with this economic disarray are official corruption, the two-year-old Indian uprising in the southern state of Chiapas, and several unsolved assassinations—including that of the ruling party's presidential candidate, Donaldo Colosio.

Mexico is perhaps the only country to achieve "first-tier" status in US foreign policy based on issues that are more closely linked to "domestic" US concerns rather than as traditional foreign policy concerns. While US foreign policy-makers are on alert due to the crisis in Mexico, it may be that state and local governments, businesses, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) will have as profound an impact on US-Mexico relations as their respective federal governments.

This past fall the Stanley Foundation brought together representatives of the US and Mexican governments, private business people, members of NGOs, and scholars on Mexico to consider how the current crisis in Mexico will affect US-Mexican relations; who the key players are in shaping bilateral relations; and what role, if any, the various actors in the United States should play in Mexico's attempts at political and economic reform.

There was little doubt at the meeting that economic issues are foremost in US-Mexico relations today and that the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is driving the increased integration of the two economies. At the same time, the peso devaluation has prompted a Mexican economic crisis with consequences that go far beyond the economic sphere. Social unrest and street demonstrations could increase if the economy doesn't improve in 1996, as President Zedillo has promised. And participants at the Stanley Foundation meeting were relatively certain that the economic situation in Mexico is likely to worsen before it improves. As the final report from the meeting concluded, "This [economic deterioration] will have an important impact on many aspects of Mexican society—especially since it will exacerbate the already serious disparity between the rich and poor. A prolonged economic crisis will make job creation for the growing numbers who will join the labor market very difficult for the Mexican government and private sector.

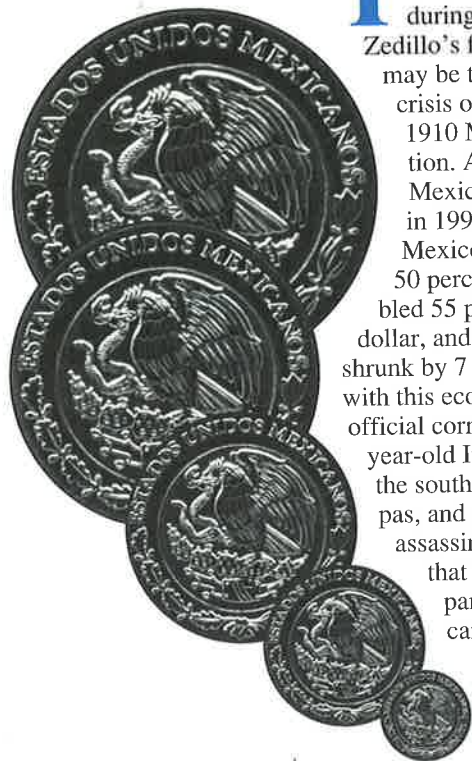
One of the most significant implications for the United States is that as these individuals confront the absence of jobs and persistent economic hardship many will choose to make the trip across the border." With the US Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) deporting a record 51,600 illegal aliens in 1995, the majority from Mexico, their prophecy seems to be borne out. Unlike past economic refugees, more and more illegal immigrants from Mexico are also "abandoning a system that they feel has betrayed them and which they cannot hold accountable," the report said.

Roots of the Crisis

Mexico's latest economic crisis is traced back to December 1994 when the government decided to

devalue the peso. An uncontrolled freefall occurred during the next 12 months. So far the United States has loaned Mexico \$12.5 billion to rescue its economy, and Mexico has repaid \$700 million. In its end-of-the-year report, the US Treasury Department said, "For 1996, the Mexican authorities have indicated continuation of sound fiscal and monetary policies," and are making progress in privatizing Mexico's economy. But participants at the Stanley Foundation conference were not as confident, some believing that President Zedillo handled the devaluation poorly and that the 1996 economic plan is too late to remedy the situation. They fear a second, more serious crisis because of the weak peso, the fragile banking system, and the lack of investor confidence. Foreign investment advisor Rogelio Ramirez de la O said in a radio interview at the meeting that if he were looking at investing in Mexico he would "stay out until I understand what is exactly the political game there. The fact that we [could] wake up any day and see there is a new crime or there's an agreement with the Zapatistas or the peso has gone through the roof or the bottom...that does not help cement plans with these investors."

Ramirez' comments refer to the ongoing political crisis in Mexico and attempts to reform the ruling party's 70-year stranglehold on power. "Many in the group felt that the recent reforms implemented by President Zedillo are little more than symbolic attempts to gain credibility," the reports says. That is, "although the president may intend to make good on his pledge not to name his successor and to separate his government from the ruling party, so far his efforts have been half-hearted and ineffectual." And several felt that the US State Department has been complacent about the slow pace of overall political reform.



The peso devaluation has prompted a Mexican economic crisis with consequences that go far beyond the economic sphere.

Multilayered Relations

It was clear during the discussion that many US actors, and not only the federal government, have a strong role to play in Mexico's affairs. For example, many believe that US officials and investors may be more effective in convincing President Zedillo of the necessity for change in Mexico than Mexican influentials have been. Also, the decline of traditional security concerns and the primacy of economic issues in US-Mexican relations have opened the door to many nontraditional actors in shaping the relationship. These include NGOs, private firms, labor unions, state and local governments, and US border communities. Relations today are no longer strictly government to government but are increasingly multilayered. In fact, the group noted that many aspects of US-Mexico relations never come to the attention of the US State Department, because they take place at the regional and local levels. Indeed, business communities in the border cities are bypassing their respective federal governments and working together to develop the necessary infrastructure to facilitate the flow of goods across the border.

The federal government has not diminished its role, however; and some agencies are even increasing contacts with their Mexican counterparts. The INS, for example, is working with the Mexican government to combat the growing trend of smuggling illegal aliens into the United States, and the crime and violence that often accompanies the industry. The State Department is also involved in the new Border Liaison Mechanisms which work with Mexican and US border groups to solve problems associated with economic integration at the border.

These burgeoning relationships are still new, though; and their results so far have been mixed. State and local legislative leaders have tried to foster functioning bilateral relationships, but they are still largely symbolic. The

report from the conference says similarly that, "business actors, labor unions, and environmental and human rights organizations in the United States have been frustrated in their attempts to establish working relationships with their Mexican counterparts. US labor unions have found Mexican unions uncooperative in their attempts to raise wages and challenge working conditions in Mexico. Lack of cooperation in this area is due in large part to the fact that organized labor in Mexico is closely tied to the president and the ruling party. Similarly, US NGOs have found that despite the growing interest of Mexicans to alleviate environmental degradation and human rights abuses, there exist very few Mexican organizations whose objective is to address those problems."

Blurring Boundaries

The conference group pinpointed the border region between the United States and Mexico as the driving force behind future US-Mexico relations. They believe

that the joint efforts underway in the border region will serve as a model that will facilitate more complete integration of the United States and Mexico. They concluded that, "local level solutions do not resolve the major problems that are at the core of the bilateral relations. Nonetheless, [they do] play a key role in creating an environment that is conducive to having the respective federal governments and other national level actors find mutually beneficial ways to address Mexican economic and political reform and migration. And, ultimately, the US-Mexico relation depends on how these issues are managed."

—Mary Gray Davidson

Relations today are increasingly multilayered.



From Bad to Worse. An elderly couple begs at Mexico City's main plaza. The Mexican economic crisis is having a crushing effect on the poor.

See page 14 to order the report of this conference entitled *Reshaping America: Blurring Boundaries Between Mexico and the United States* or see page 15 to order a Common Ground radio program on this topic called *US-Mexico Relations* (9547).

The US Role in the Persian Gulf

In the five years since the gulf war dominated US headlines and street corner conversations, the Persian Gulf has faded into a relatively low-level foreign policy concern for most Americans. But the strategic importance of the gulf region remains the same; and as we've seen with the Arab oil embargoes, the US hostages in Tehran, and the gulf war itself, the region always holds the potential to grab the attention of the US public in a heartbeat.

The region has undergone great change in this decade beginning with the end of the Cold War, the turmoil of the gulf war, and now the dramatic progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process. The United States, with its ongoing interest in access to gulf oil and its

proven role as protector of many gulf states, is the predominant outside power. The

Arab states of the gulf are also undergoing profound political and economic changes, and their outcome is far from certain. These factors led the Stanley Foundation to convene a discussion group on *The Future of US Persian Gulf Strategy* at its 36th Strategy for Peace Conference in October 1995.

Participants looked at three key elements of the US role in the gulf. First, they examined the relationship with the states known as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). This includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. Second, the group discussed the future of US relations with Iraq; and third, they looked at relations between the United States and Iran. A number of policy recommendations were also considered.

GCC

These countries have benefited from the relative calm created by the US policy of dual containment against the largest military threats to regional security: Iran and Iraq. But conference participants drew attention to the fact that many of these states may see internal threats to security and threats from within the

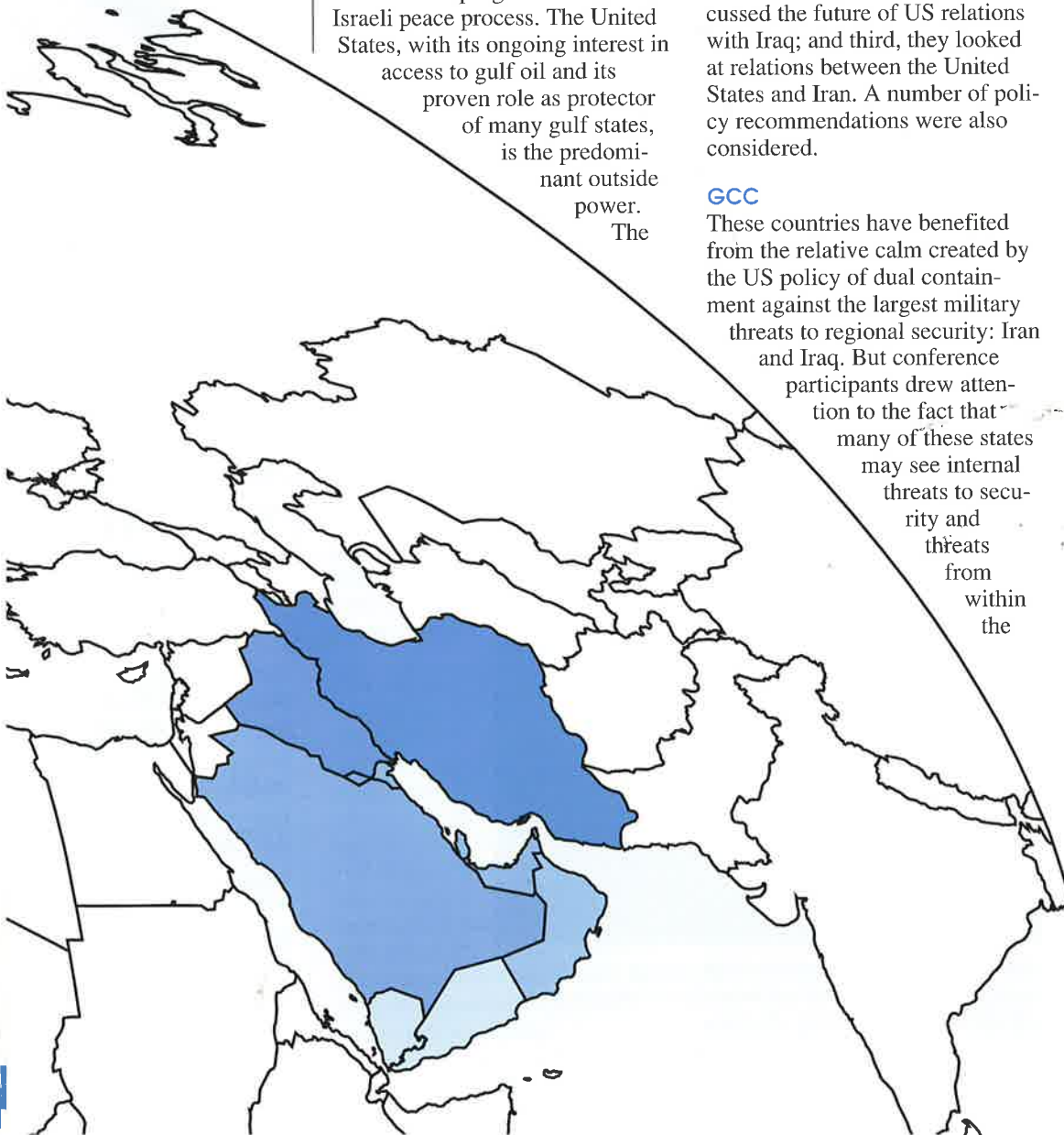
GCC as greater concerns. According to the conference report, one participant noted that "some smaller GCC states invoked the Iranian threat mainly to please Washington, whereas their real object was US protection against Saudi hegemony."

The group identified a number of trends in the GCC states which could impact US policy:

- Efforts to promote political liberalization and human rights in the region.
- The role of generational change in GCC national leadership—especially in the case of Saudi succession.
- The potential of Islamic movements to affect the course of events in gulf countries.
- The changing economic situation in the GCC, including the poor prospects for oil revenues.

Other recommendations from participants for US policy toward the GCC included:

- Greater US engagement with society in the GCC beyond contacts with the government or elites.
- Increased respect for local political institutions, like the newly established Consultative Council in Saudi Arabia, which may one day become important political actors.
- Adoption of an economic strategy that includes promotion of economic reforms and greater GCC involvement in international financial institutions such as the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund.
- Reducing arms sales to the region.



Iraq

Current US policy toward Iraq is not sustainable according to conference participants. The United Nations, with US pressure, has maintained sanctions on Iraq for five years. Yet, these sanctions have not led to an overthrow of Sadaam Hussein. "Many in the group believed that, while the regime was slowly eroding, in the short term Sadaam was not likely to be overthrown," according to the report.

So what will happen? The group discussed at length the possibility of civil war and the breakup of Iraq. Although most participants saw the breakup of Iraq as unlikely. Some, however, saw conflict—including intervention by neighboring powers and partition of Iraq—as a real possibility.

Participants examined two alternatives for the future course of Iraq: retribalization or institutional continuity. The report says, "In the case of retribalization, older ties and identities such as patron/client relations, clan membership, and family solidarity would be paramount. One participant said that retribalization is Saddam's strategy for ruling the country now: in a divided polity, only he can govern."

Others, though, say institutional continuity will be the path of Iraq due to the strong Iraqi nationalism that has developed over its 75-year history. In addition, the intermarriage of Shia and Sunni Muslims in Iraq will work against the emergence of retribalization.

US policy toward Iraq is centered on maintaining both the sanctions and the isolation of the country. The group agreed that UN sanctions on Iraq "are unlikely to be lifted before the next US presidential election." There has been some weakening of international support for the sanctions, especially in the Arab world where some may think the Iraqi people are being unfairly punished. On the other hand, the ban on Iraqi oil exports benefits oil-producing nations, by limiting competition.

Iran

"The likelihood is for continued tensions, since there is no constituency in either Iran or the United States for better relations," according to the conference report. The United States, concerned about Iran's effort to acquire nuclear weapons, foster terrorism, and obstruct the Arab-Israeli peace process, instituted a trade embargo against Iran last May. Iran's troubled internal situation shows few signs of improvement as they head into parliamentary elections this year and a presidential contest next year.

Participants feared that US policy toward Iran was becoming more like US policy toward Iraq. The report says, "This could have the effect of driving them (Iran and Iraq) either together in an anti-US alliance or more likely into anti-US alliances with Russia, China, or India. One participant, in a formulation that found favor with the group, suggested that the United States should consider having a policy of dual containment from a military point of view, and a dual engagement in other, particularly commercial, areas." Again, participants were doubtful that such change in US policy would take place before the next US presidential election.

Since little change in US policy is likely, the group suggested that the reintegration of Iran into the world community may be left to private companies, nongovernmental organizations, and multilateral institutions like the World Bank. One member argued that, "The United States should be prepared to lessen its hostility to international loans and credits to Iran in return for Iranian concessions."

The United States and the Gulf

The report concludes that no comprehensive US political strategy toward the GCC states exists beyond providing a defense shield. Further, there is no US policy toward Iran and Iraq beyond dual containment and the current sanctions. The report does, however, offer four suggestions for developing further policy:



Old Wounds. Five years after the US-led intervention in the Persian Gulf, the United States remains the predominant outside power.

- 1) Add carrots to the current US sticks by offering some reward for moderation by Iran or Iraq.
- 2) Make more use of economic instruments available to the United States.
- 3) Consult with other states on gulf policy and better integrate this policy with the US global position.
- 4) Pay greater attention to domestic developments in the gulf states, especially the increased demands the people are placing on their governments.

At the moment, the United States may enjoy a strategic advantage in the region. This, coupled with the always vital US interests there, makes clear the need for policy-makers to give immediate attention to long-term US goals in the Persian Gulf.

—Keith Porter

See page 14 to order a report of this conference entitled The Future of US Persian Gulf Strategy or see page 15 to order a Common Ground radio program called The Persian Gulf: Five Years Later (9605).

Keeping the Spirit Alive

A Midwestern journalist recounts sitting in Davenport, Iowa, on November 12 with tears in her eyes; a woman from Kenya reached over and took her hand. Why was she crying? Because about fifteen high school and college students had seized the podium at the end of a two-day women's conference. There they articulately and emphatically expressed their commitment to furthering the women's movement on their campuses and in their lives. It was a galvanizing moment in an already high-energy gathering.



AMY BAKKE

Making a Pledge. Laura Reznicek was one of several students who moved an audience by promising to pursue improving the lives of women.

The conference was a follow-up to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Just as the world convocation challenged governments to make commitments to women, so too different speakers at the Iowa meeting called for individual commitments. The young women at the podium pledged to work toward improving the lives of other young women in their schools, colleges, and communities. They spoke about applying the principles espoused in Beijing to their own personal lives. And they challenged older women to mentor the young and help them develop the leadership skills necessary to carry the women's movement into the next century. In return, an older woman challenged the young to mentor older women as well, so that together the generations might be dynamic forces for social change.

And what of the Kenyan woman? She and the journalist shared their own personal stories. The Kenyan came from a family where almost all the girls had endured the tradition of genital mutilation. But at the age of eleven this woman refused to undergo the ritual. Her

mother supported her and was put on a death list. Now this woman is in the United States completing her doctoral degree and working to end the genital mutilation of women everywhere.

This story reflects what the UN Fourth World Conference on Women was all about and what is now happening not just in Iowa, or the United States, but throughout the world. As women who attended the conference in Beijing last September returned to their communities, they have time and time again shared the energy, experience, and strategies exhibited in Beijing. Six months after the conference, various groups and networks have established speakers bureaus, and citizens throughout the world are learning more about the relevance of the Beijing conference to their own lives and to public policy at all levels.

A National Conference

The November 10-12, 1995, meeting was the first national follow-up conference to the UN Fourth World Conference on Women. Sponsored by the Stanley Foundation, *Bringing Beijing Back: Local Actions and Global Strategies* was attended by more than 400 people who came together to develop strategies for implementing the Platform for Action passed in Beijing. National leaders came together with educators, service providers, activists, and students to discuss a broad range of issues that were the focus of conversation in Beijing and that affect women's lives everywhere.

The conference began with a series of background reports on different areas of the Beijing Platform. Members of the official US delegation as well as women from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) led the sessions. Strategy workshops to fulfill the promises of Beijing were held on such topics as:

- Global and domestic economic issues.
- Workplace issues.
- Partnerships with the global South.
- The Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).
- Violence.
- Health.
- The impact of race.

Still other workshops looked at:

- Enabling strategies for the disabled.
- Building intergenerational coalitions.
- Demystifying communications networks.
- Responding to the challenges of the religious right.

Several practical skills training and information sessions gave women the tools they need to navigate the Internet, to raise money for local grassroots actions, and to effectively use the media.

In a special videotaped greeting to conference participants, first lady Hilary Rodham Clinton said, "I have seen the dramatic difference that NGOs and even individuals can make in the lives of women, girls, and families.... But they can not do it alone. Even governments can not do it alone. We all share responsibility for ensuring that the hope and promise of the women's conference becomes a reality. Your discussions this weekend are vital to this process."

Bella Abzug, former New York Congresswoman and cofounder of the Women's Environment and Development Organization (WEDO), inspired participants in the opening plenary when she said, "Beijing has given impetus to a movement for the empowerment of people." She compared the Beijing Platform for Action to what she derisively termed Newt Gingrich's "Contract on America" when she said, "[the Platform

is]...an agenda for change based on a transforming vision.... I regard [it] as a contract with the world's women." In the closing speech Charlotte Bunch, director of the Center for Women's Global Leadership, declared: "[The Platform] may not be legally binding, but we will make it politically binding. You do not have to know all of the details, you just have to know the spirit of that document.... We have to use this event and see where it takes the world."

Susan Mooney, executive director of the Institute for Global Communications and the person responsible for coordinating computer networks for NGOs at recent UN world conferences, said the Iowa conference revived her enthusiasm. "We talked about school boards, we talked about lobbying, and we talked about the '96 elections.... More and more women are recognizing [that] all of those pieces are important."

Ongoing Efforts

Conference participants have already used their energies to implement follow-up actions. In Iowa, two women's studies faculty members have reorganized a spring semester course to use the Platform for Action as the organizing agent. They have also organized an on-campus computer bulletin board to focus on a "commitment a week." Another professor is conducting a new seminar on language and gender, again using the Platform as the model for study. A bipartisan group of women in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, has drafted resolutions calling for adoption of the Beijing Platform by their respective presidential caucuses in February. Other women have organized city- and county-wide town meetings, which include people testifying about the human services they currently have available and identifying gaps between those and the Platform goals. They then will draft resolutions for adoption by local governments. Still other efforts include movements to encourage the adoption of CEDAW by local governments—as the city council of Iowa City,



Iowa, recently did—especially since the US Senate has yet to ratify this convention.

From a minister including Beijing issues in her weekly church bulletins to a high school student organizing a petition drive against sexist jokes on the Internet to another pushing for a stronger sexual harassment policy in her school to individuals pledging to better educate themselves, friends, and family members, women at all levels are actively implementing ideas and strategies discussed in Davenport.

Nationwide, numerous activities are taking place. One of the commitments already fulfilled by the US government is the newly established President's Inter Agency Council on Women which is pursuing Beijing initiatives. NGOs across the nation are active in individual and collective programs and campaigns. From International Women's Day on March 8 to voter registration campaigns

for the November 1996 elections, groups are trying to coordinate their commitments, campaigns, and energies.

Bella Abzug's charge to participants at the *Bringing Beijing Back: Local Actions and Global Strategies* conference was to, "Never underestimate the importance of what we are doing here; never, ever give in or give up." It was an apt charge to people throughout the world who are seeking the commitment of individuals, institutions, and governments to recognize the theme expressed over and over in Beijing: "Women's rights are human rights."

—Joan D. Winship

Empowering Women. At a November conference, women learn computer skills (above left) and participated in a panel (above right). The goal is to create a healthier world by placing women in a position to make a difference.

See page 15 to order a Common Ground radio program called Beijing Briefings: Grassroots Activities (9608) or Beijing Briefings: US Commitments (9607).

A conference report entitled *Bringing Beijing Back: Local Actions and Global Strategies* will be issued in late spring 1996. Contact the Foundation to receive a copy. See page 15 for the address.

A Troubled Relationship

In 1991 a UN authorized multinational force led by the US rolled back the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait with Operation Desert Storm. President George Bush declared the beginning of a new world order. Expert observers inferred that the UN would have a prominent role to play in that new order and that the UN would be a more frequently used instrument of US foreign policy.

At the UN, there was a sense that the organization would finally have a chance to work as its creators meant it to work. The Security Council, stymied for more than forty years by the Cold War, met almost daily, passed resolutions, and made statements. The major powers worked in concert.

Those heady days at the UN were, chronologically, just a short time ago. But politically, they seem to have been in the distant past. Today, relations between the UN and its most important member are as low as they have ever been.

The UN is held in especially low regard in the US Congress. Critics

of the organization freely give voice to their concerns. Supporters are largely silent. Both demand reforms. Still others are indifferent. Congress routinely holds back on appropriating money for the full payment of US dues to the UN and threatens a new round of cutbacks.

Public opinion polls show the American public holding generally favorable thoughts about the UN. But that support appears to lack depth and commitment. The UN is a nice idea. But if that nice idea impinges on US sovereignty in any way or threatens America's interests, it needs to be set aside.

The sorry state of US-UN relations was the subject of a series of short meetings culminating in a weekend conference organized by the Stanley Foundation in 1995. The meetings involved congressional representatives, Clinton administration officials, UN officials, and concerned scholars.

Assessing the Damage

Participants agreed that the US and the world are undergoing a

period of dramatic and rapid change. The American people don't have a clear sense of what role their country should be playing in the world. Furthermore, they feel threatened by the transition from a national to a global economy. The highly competitive global economy has often cost Americans their jobs and contributed to a sense of a declining living standard.

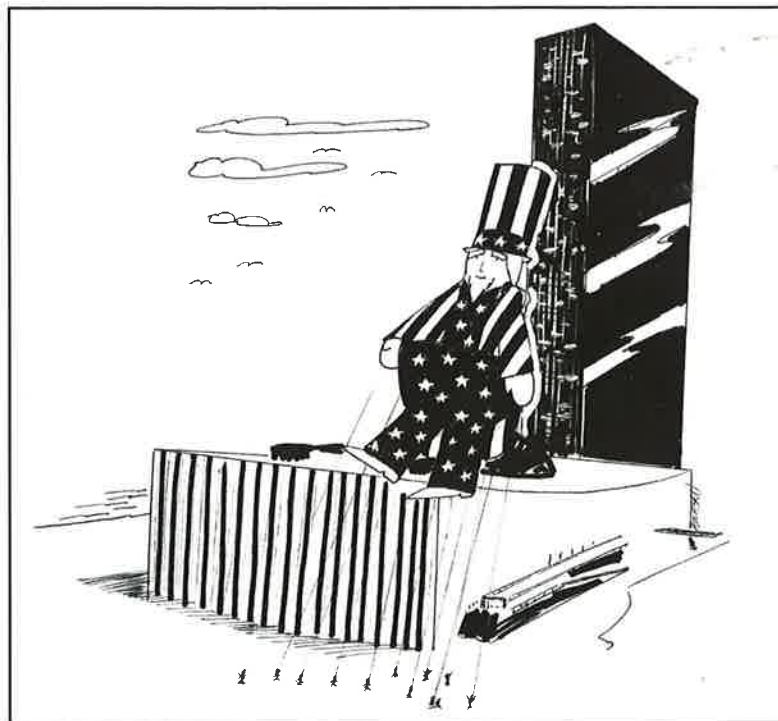
In this uncertain period, Americans have become suspicious of large institutions, especially the federal government which seems unresponsive to their concerns. Little wonder then that Americans place no faith in international institutions which are even more removed from their control and often seem incapable of dealing with the most fundamental problems like keeping the peace.

But US-UN relations are bothered by more than just a general queasiness in the American public. There are concrete issues that will not be easily addressed. Among them are:

- **Reform.** The UN is frequently criticized for having a bloated and ineffective bureaucracy. The personnel system is indisputably corrupted by government patronage, the budget process is incomprehensible to outsiders, and systems of accountability and efficiency are nearly nonexistent. Yet, none of these problems are remedied by the US tactic of withholding funds in order to force change. Participants in the foundation's meetings said the US should "be a prime mover for sensible change," and then support the UN when it gets the desired results.

- **Dues.** Sometimes the US tactic of withholding dues does bring about needed changes at the UN. More often, the practice alienates friends and hinders UN work on issues of interest to the US. The arrearage issue suggests to many

Relations between the United Nations and its most important member are as low as they have ever been.



ALLEN ASWEGAN

countries, including close allies, that the US is merely being punitive and self-indulgent and is not interested in affecting positive change.

- **Leadership.** Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali has alienated important figures in Washington because he is more activist and sometimes provocative than his most recent predecessors. Participants said Boutros-Ghali has also been given more than his share of the blame for failed peacekeeping operations. Many of them said, however, that an announcement from him that he will not seek a second term could clear the way for improving US-UN relations.

- **Security Performance.** The UNs record in peacekeeping operations during this decade is mixed. Operations in Haiti, Namibia, Cambodia, and Mozambique have been relatively successful. But there have also been big failures in Somalia, Rwanda, and Bosnia. As the report of these US-UN meetings notes, "When the UN fails in this, its most visible role, it becomes a convenient scapegoat for...irresolvable disputes and US support for the organization plummets." All of this is part of a vicious circle in which the UN is used as a dumping ground for intractable problems, not given sufficient support, and then, predictably, fails. While these problems are generally recognized, there is no consensus on how to make the UN a more reliable performer on peace and security issues.

- **Economic and Social Performance.** The UN has been largely eclipsed by the Group of Seven industrialized nations, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Trade Organization as the leading international economic institutions. Yet, developing countries, dissatisfied with the latter institutions' commitment to development, keep pressing the UN to take the lead role in that area. That has led to countless

meetings resulting in nothing concrete, and irritating the US.

Improving Relations

The participants in these US-UN meetings do not look for a quick turnaround in US-UN relations. However, they also noted that it is in the US interest to have a strong UN. Peacekeeping operations can reduce American costs while still serving US interests. The UN has expanded the concept of the rule of law and advanced human rights, democracy, and free markets. The key to improving relations is in seeing that both parties' interests are served by them.

The US, as the conference report says, "is grappling with the globalization of economics, finance, and information. US businesses, nongovernmental organizations, and citizens have become engaged globally.... That is why the US has a "national interest" in maintaining a safe and stable world which facilitates global activities." Despite its uneven performance in the past, the UN can help maintain a more stable world.

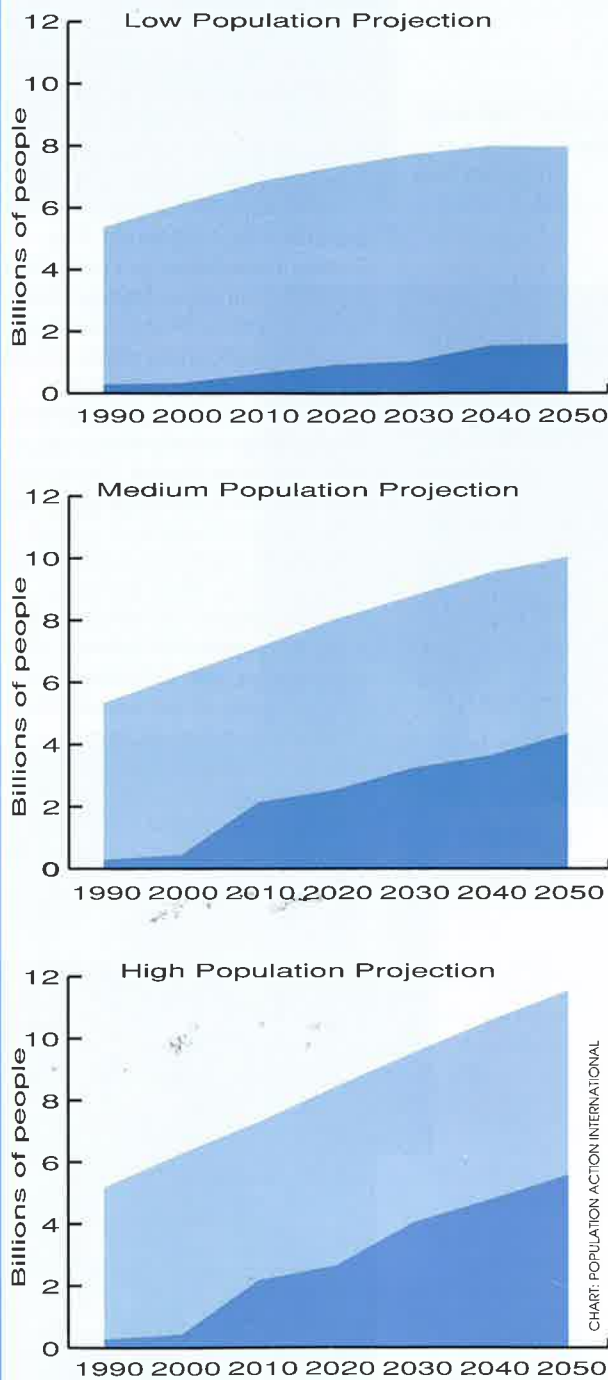
For its part, the UN needs the US to take an active leadership role within the organization, pushing for reform and not just demanding cuts. Again, quoting the report, "The US must press the UN to prioritize its functions and activities and choose carefully the roles and initiatives that it will exercise. It also means that the US should act consistently and reliably—it should follow through on promises. This is the leadership role required from the world's sole superpower." Beyond that, the UN needs the US to recognize that trying to solve its problems through strictly domestic initiatives will fail in an increasingly globalized world. And finally, of course, the UN needs the US to pay its dues.

—Jeffrey Martin

See page 14 to order the report entitled US-UN Relations.

Consider This...

World Population and Arable Land Availability, 1990-2050: Three Projections



Abundance
(more than 0.07 hectares per capita)

Scarcity
(less than 0.07 hectares per capita)

The speed of population growth largely determines the number of people living in countries with scarce land.

India, China, and the US

Despite the fervent nationalism of political leaders in China and India...the "foreign" presence in both China and India is growing.

India is poised to surpass China as the most populous nation in the world. That's according to projected growth figures which put India at 1.6 billion people by the middle of the next century. Right now the two countries have a combined population of 2.1 billion. Because of their sheer size, and particularly their market potential, relations between US society and those in India and China have mushroomed at all levels. The Stanley Foundation, in conjunction with the Council on Foreign Relations's Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy program, chose to look at how those relationships are transforming official US policy. The meeting was another in the New American Global Dialogue Series which is premised upon the idea that governments no longer hold nearly exclusive control over foreign policy. More and more, policy is affected by rapidly burgeoning connections between societies, groups, and individuals in different parts of the world. From global corporations to human rights and environmental activists, these new transnational actors are operating across national boundaries in ways that used to be inconceivable.

Together with the United States, China and India represent over 40 percent of the world's population. The report from the conference states that their "combined weight...[is] likely to determine the shape of the world in the next century....and [they] will eventually be the first, second, and fourth largest national economies. Whether one is concerned about future markets and workers, sources of pollution, international migration, or almost any other emerging global issue, developments in China, India, and the United States have to be taken into account." The report also maintains that these three countries are truly transnational nation-states because a substantial part of their activities takes place beyond their political borders. There are now large Chinese and Indian communities throughout the world. And in just the past two decades, the Chinese-American and Indian-American communities have grown significantly in numbers, visibility, and influence, increasing the societal ties between all three countries.

Different Histories

China has long been a first-tier concern for the United States,

particularly in the second half of this century when Cold War politics were paramount in Washington. India, with its policy of non-alignment with either superpower, never held as much sway as China did during Washington's struggle with Moscow. Therefore, India never gained the same amount of public/media attention. The business community, too, seems more captivated by China's potential market opportunities than by India's. But the conference participants are certain that is due to change and that US-India relations politically and economically will grow in importance in the future.

Despite the fervent nationalism of political leaders in China and India and the closed nature of the Chinese communist system, the "foreign" presence in both China and India is growing. Economic reforms in the two countries have been the greatest catalyst for increasing ties with the United States and the world as they try to attract foreign capital and gain access to global markets. India's reforms have attracted far less attention though, because its society has not been closed to the outside world.

Because China has only recently cracked its door to the outside, it serves somewhat as a microcosm for the globalization happening worldwide. Nixon's and Kissinger's overtures to China in hopes of gaining a strategic counterweight to the Soviet Union began a process of political normalization between the United States and China. As state-to-state relations improved, society-to-society contacts mushroomed. Now, as the report from the conference says, "in trying to develop a sustainable policy, Washington must take into consideration the concerns of human rights groups, women's groups, environmentalists, business, labor, right-to-life groups, religious supporters of the Dalai Lama, pro-Taiwanese Chi-



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

Ready to Trade.

Stockbrokers gather outside the Bombay stock exchange in 1993, a few days after Sikh militants bombed it. Despite the danger, the Bombay exchange is India's most active.

nese-Americans, pro-Beijing Chinese-Americans, Chinese undocumented immigrants in America, and others.”

Future US Ties

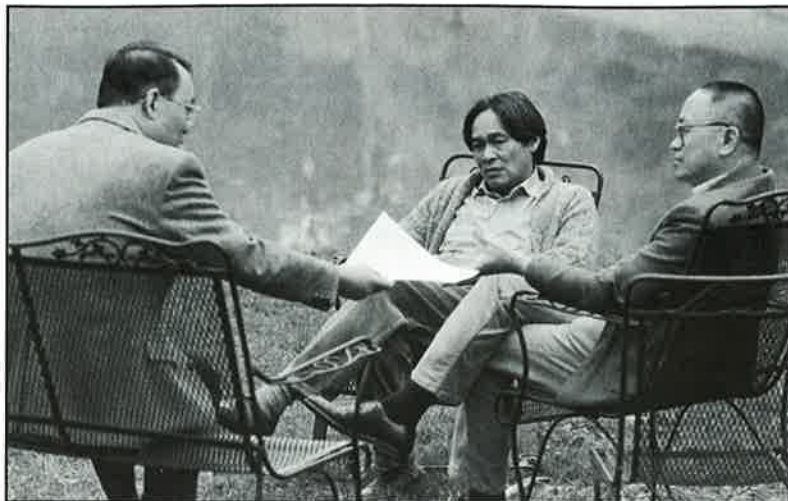
The conference group noted six areas that will likely determine future American relations with China and India.

- **Government Policy.** Geopolitics and government relations still take precedence. Most participants agreed that government decisions “set the parameters within which nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other societal actors must operate. If official relations prosper, societal ties will expand. If official relations deteriorate, they will contract.” Several in the discussion took exception, however, noting that the power of central governments to enforce decisions on society seems to be declining.

- **Chinese-Americans and Indian-Americans.** Both groups are growing and becoming much more involved in the two bilateral relationships. It is important to note, though, that there is a wide range of opinion within these communities regarding US policy; no one segment can be taken as representative of the entire community.

- **Nongovernmental Organizations.** NGOs have played leading roles in human rights, population, and environmental debates. “But their success,” the report states, “will depend a lot on their ability to link up with strong counterparts in China and India.” India has a very strong indigenous NGO sector; but China has few, independent NGOs.

- **Opportunities for American Business.** If investment and trade grow, they will significantly change US relations with these two countries in surprising ways. For example, the report says,



MARY GRAY DAVIDSON

Time Out. Three conference participants talk during an informal break.

“American imports from China have grown so rapidly that Beijing could soon replace Tokyo as the main target of our concerns about unfair trade. Conversely, as more and more Chinese provinces become dependent on US trade and investment, it may actually increase US leverage over Beijing on human rights and other issues.”

- **Actual Events.** Dramatic events can create sudden shifts in attitudes and relations as we saw in the Tiananmen Square incident. If China tries to crack down on democracy when the British hand over Hong Kong in 1997 or if it makes a military move against Taiwan, then US relations with China would be significantly affected.

The group agreed that US relations with China and India are clearly in transition and the ability of central decision makers to determine policy has declined. The question is whether that decline in power is only temporary and that international relations truly are an affair of states. Or whether the global reach of societal actors—including business, ethnic groups, global issues groups, and others—continues to expand.

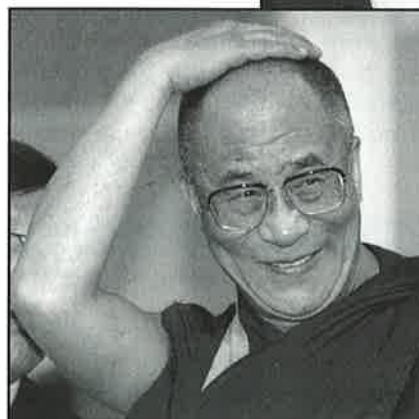
—Mary Gray Davidson

Famous Dissidents.

Human rights activist Harry Wu (right) and the Dalai Lama, spiritual leader of Tibet (below), are thorns in the sides of Chinese officials who want more normal relations with the US.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

See page 14 to order the report entitled *American Relations With China and India: The Growing Impact of Politics and Society on Foreign Policy*,

Publications

Single copies free, see order form for multiple-copy charge.
Blue entries indicate new publications.

Conference Reports

United Nations

US-UN Relations.

After hitting a high point a few years ago, US-UN relations may be at an all time low. Participants consider prospects for improvement. September 1995.

Making Peace With the Future: The United Nations and World Security.

A diverse group of international experts met to assess the ability of international institutions to address the sources of insecurity in today's world. June 1995, 40pp.

United Nations-Bretton Woods Collaboration: How Much is Enough?

There is growing consensus that better collaboration and cooperation are needed between the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund, but how can a history of suspicion between them be overcome? February 1995, 32pp.

State of the United Nations: Decline or Regeneration in the Next Fifty Years.

As the United Nations approaches its fiftieth anniversary, participants discussed what is needed to revitalize to meet emerging challenges. June 1994, 44pp.

The UN System and NGOs: New Relationships for a New Era?

Participants discussed developing ways for NGOs to contribute directly to the work of the United Nations. February 1994, 32pp.

Political Symbol or Policy Tool? Making Sanctions Work.

Participants strongly supported the development of the United Nations' ability to support effective application of sanctions, which includes enhancing UN operational capacity. February 1993, 24pp.

New American Global Dialogue

Shaping American Foreign Relations: The Critical Role of the Southwest.

Leaders from the Southwest met to discuss challenges facing their region and to explore the way different regions in the country are becoming more engaged in foreign policy. May 1995, 24pp.

The Changing Face of American Foreign Policy: The New Role of State and Local Actors.

A diverse group of leaders from across the country was brought together to compare notes on regional involvement in world affairs and to analyze the implications for the future of American foreign policy. October 1994, 21pp.

Shaping American Global Policy: The Growing Role of the Pacific Northwest.

More than any other region, the Pacific Northwest seems to realize that its interests are closely tied to international relations and expanding trade. What challenges do its leaders face? September 1994, 16pp.

Latinos, Global Change, and American Foreign Policy.

For the first time Latino leaders from around the country met to exchange ideas and address questions about the future role of Latinos in US foreign relations. October 1994, 20pp.

General Interest

The United States and Cuba: Where Do We Go From Here?

Experts look at changes in Cuba and discuss US policy toward the island nation. October 1995, 24 pp.

Reshaping America: Blurring Boundaries Between Mexico and the United States.

In the post Cold War era Mexico has become a first tier concern for the US. Participants examine the relationship with a neighbor in turmoil. October 1995, 28 pp.

The Future of US Persian Gulf Strategy.

Iran, Iraq, and the gulf states are wary neighbors. The US has important interests in the area. Participants discuss balancing those interests. October 1995, 24 pp.

American Relations With China and India: The Growing Impact of Politics and Society on Foreign Policy.

India and China are the world's most populous nations, and over the past several years societal ties between them and the United States have grown. Participants reflect on the impact on US relations with both countries. October 1995.

Building the Global Community: The Next Step.

Twenty-four persons interested in international education met to clarify goals, develop a mission statement, determine strategies, and plan actions to advance international education in community colleges. November 1994, 32pp.

Nuclear Nonproliferation: First-Tier Priority in US Foreign Policy?

In 1992 candidate Bill Clinton said nuclear proliferation would be a top foreign policy priority. Participants gathered to assess the administration's progress of the issue and to suggest areas that need attention. October 1994, 36pp.

Human Rights and US Foreign Policy: Who Controls the Agenda?

Five years ago the prospects for progress on human rights seemed promising. But human rights advocates say the promise has only been partially realized. October 1994, 32pp.

Shaping a New Relationship: Russia and the US Private Sector.

US private sector involvement in the Russian economy is growing. How can US government policy strengthen and support private initiatives? October 1994, 20pp.

Making Global Connections.

Activities for use with the newspaper, to infuse global perspective into 6-8 grade classes. September 1994, 52pp.

A Conversation with Jimmy Carter

Jimmy Carter, 39th president of the United States, was a guest on the Stanley Foundation's radio program this fall. He talked with Producer Keith Porter about his role in mediating international conflicts from Haiti



KEITH PORTER

to Bosnia to North Korea and Sudan. Below are excerpts of their conversation. The full text is available free of charge or on cassette for a nominal fee. See page 14 for ordering information.

On the War in Sudan
The problem is that although this is one of the worst wars in history...the Western world has practically no knowledge of Sudan. They are not white people. They don't have oil to sell. We have no strategic interest there.... More than a million people have died in Sudan. And although we [at the Carter Center] have very successful programs in immunizing children and eradicating guinea worm and in preventing river blindness in other nations, primarily in Africa, we've not been able to get into the southern part of Sudan. This

past March, we went back to Sudan for maybe the tenth time and induced the rebel groups and the government to have a cease fire...and the cease fire is still going on. And during that integral period, we've been able to go into the south to visit villages that had never been visited to identify guinea worm cases that we had never known about, to distribute tablets that prevent river blindness and to immunize children.

On US-Cuba Relations

We feel that the US-Cuban relationship has been a very unpleasant and perhaps unnecessarily unpleasant event.... I think that what my role should be and what it will be is to listen to as many different voices or opinions about Cuba as possible, including voices from Cuba, from the Castro government leaders, the dissidents in Cuba, the human rights heroes in Cuba, the church leaders-including the Cardinal in Cuba-the different Cuban-American groups-all of whom disagree with each other-and then try to form an opinion in my own mind about a consensus that might exist on what can we do to realize the genuine goals or ambitions or ideals of these people.

One thing that you have to remember about the Carter Center is that we are not intimidated. I'm not looking for votes. None of these Cuban interests are important to us financially. We don't have anything to lose by being aggressive or open.... We'll be very patient over a period of months, maybe even longer. And we try to be students and listeners, more than we are teachers and preachers.

On Negotiating

You can't just talk to one side and expect the other to cooperate. In fact, it alienates them and makes them less willing to cooperate.... There was a threat of a nuclear arsenal in North Korea. The only person that could resolve that crisis was Kim Il-Sung, but no one in our government was permitted to talk to Kim Il-Sung. So we went and talked to him, and he basically agreed with everything that our government needed. The same thing happened in Haiti, when we were poised for war with 30,000 troops off shore. ...because our government would not speak to or even communicate with people in Haiti who could resolve the conflict.... No one in our government was willing to talk to the Bosnian Serbs or go to Pale. We talked to both sides. But in every case when there's a conflict, our purpose is to go in there and reduce the level of violence and death and human rights suffering, even by those who may have caused it in the first place; because they're the ones that have to change their policy.

On His Presidential Legacy

I think it was a bringing to the forefront of the world's consciousness the words "human rights," and the definition of what is a human right. And that one of the most powerful nations on earth and the incumbent in the White House says that a cornerstone of America's foreign policy will be the protection of human rights.... I don't have any doubt that it had an impact in Chile and in Brazil and in Argentina and in Paraguay and in the Philippines and in Korea.

—excerpted by Mary Gray Davidson

The Stanley Foundation
216 Sycamore Street, Suite 500
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