



courier

PROVOKING THOUGHT AND DIALOGUE ABOUT THE WORLD



Eritrea's Dawn

critique



Smaller than Indiana and only four years old, Eritrea proves that nationalism is alive and well in our increasingly globalized world. And, unlike many places in today's headlines, nationalism in

Eritrea is, for the moment, a positive force for unity, development, and the promise of democracy.

Eritreans fought a thirty-year war for independence from Ethiopia and its Soviet sponsor. The war ended in 1991 following the fall of the Soviet empire and the rise of an Ethiopian government agreeable to Eritrean demands.

Now the country is cleaning up the aftermath of war and creating the needed elements for civil society. One of the first of those elements is a constitution.

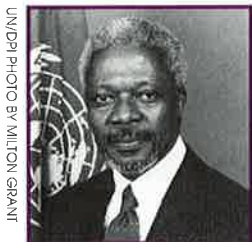
Constitution
The Constitutional Commission, using extensive grass-roots involvement, has prepared a draft document which will go to a national referendum shortly. Musa Naib, a member of the commission said, "For the last thirty years we've been waging not only an armed struggle but we have also been politicizing our people, giving them basic education, trying to build a basic infrastructure for the democratic institutions here."



Reviving Old Connections. Rebuilding the old Italian narrow-gauge railway that connects the sea to the inland is vital to Eritrea's economic development.

PHOTO BY KEITH PORTER

inside



UNDP PHOTO BY MILTON GRANT

Kofi Annan.

UN Reform Accelerates, page 4.

Also: Iran's Evolution

Sustainable Development

Empowering Women

The proposed constitution, on its surface, appears to provide protection for basic human rights. However, some observers say it is weak in protection of political freedoms, slows the development of opposition parties, and gives the legislature too much freedom to suspend certain rights.

Zemhret Yohannes, a spokesman for the ruling political organization said, "As to freedom of speech, also, we have set in the press law certain limits. It says that racist, chauvinistic speech is not allowed in this country. Somebody might come up and say that the Muslims are fanatics and so on and so forth, and we will have a riot in our hands! How

can a society allow such a thing to happen in the name of the freedom of speech? Freedom of speech must be responsible freedom of speech."

"I think Eritrea is at an important turning point in regard to the human rights situation there," said Charles Brown, a human rights expert from Freedom House. "I am concerned that it is already heading down the path of a Singapore-style pseudo-democracy where you have the ruling Eritrean Popular Liberation Front (EPLF) implementing many of the same measures that have been used in Singapore to guarantee that the government maintains control of its people. For example, [there is]

“We are committed toward creating a pluralistic political system, but this takes time.”

Eritrea -continued from page 1

a single party which is dominant but portrays itself as a popular front rather than a political party, a free market economic system but [one] in which the government exerts a great deal of control over who has access to the opportunity to participate in the economy, and the use of private front businesses to maintain government control over the economy.”

Yohannes bristles at such criticism saying, “We are committed toward creating a pluralistic political system, but this takes time. It was not created in one night in the Western world; it took a long time. And we want also to make it sensitive to our situation, to our culture, to our history, to our society.”

“The country faces a special challenge in its efforts to establish a participatory democracy, in that it emerged from thirty years of struggle as a very tightly knit people with a very strong sense of national unity,” according to John Hicks, the US ambassador to Eritrea. “It is that same sense of national identity and national unity which will perhaps present the greatest challenge as this country struggles to establish an open, participatory, pluralistic political disposition.”

Brown agrees. “Well, there’s no doubt that if an election was held there tomorrow that the EPLF or, as it’s better known, the Popular Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ), which is its peacetime name, would win between 90 and 98 percent of the vote in a genuine free and fair election,” said Brown. “And that’s one of the ironies and, I think, potential tragedies of Eritrea. The current regime has genuine popular support. The degree of civic participation is amazing. You see people genuinely wanting to help build their country. But the problem is that the government is not willing to take that next step and let things progress along traditional democratic lines.”

“The Eritreans,” said Ambassador Hicks, “have not ruled out the possibility for multiparty democracy in this country; in fact, the constitution itself does provide for such political parties to emerge. But quite seriously and given the history of the country, it probably will take some time for multipartyism as we know it in the United States and other parts of the world to emerge in Eritrea.

As far as the constitution is concerned, Musa Naib points out that constitutions alone do not protect human rights. “There are so many nations in the world that all of us know that write so many perfect words and clean wording and all that could be said about human rights listed in their constitution, but they are doing atrocities contrary to what they have written there. And so I believe that it’s a long process, you guarantee for your citizens the basic human



PHOTO BY KEITH PORTER

Musa Naib. He helped draft Eritrea’s first constitution which will be voted on in a national referendum.

rights, you build the basic institutions, you give education to the people, you try to have social societies that could tomorrow strengthen the basic democratic principles,” Naib said.

Women

The role of women in Eritrean life underwent enormous changes during the war. Those changes are now helping to shape the new nation. “In the process of the liber-

ation struggle, so many women progressed in skills as technicians, reporters, information people, educators, and managers. So the liberation struggle was an opportunity for women’s emancipation and progress,” said Askalu Menkorios, president of the National Union of Eritrean Women (NUEW). “Our objectives did not change after independence. Our objectives are to raise women’s political consciousness and advocate for their rights, literacy, and leadership training.”

In addition, NUEW runs credit programs based on the Grameen Bank model (microcredit), helps women start small businesses, and provides child care for women who work or attend NUEW classes. “We have the literacy program, then we train them, and then we give them the loan. So they begin very small businesses: small agriculture, animal husbandry, chicken-raising, small shops, small restaurants, and even selling water.” Menkorios said.

“There is a tradition here which really limits women to the kitchen and to the home,” Menkorios continued. “Most of the women have big families. By the end of the day they don’t even have time to participate in the literacy pro-

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grams. The women collect the water and firewood, grind the food by hand, cook, look after the children, and then they have to work in the field. So by the end of the day women are too exhausted to attend classes. So that is why we have care centers, just to encourage them to spend one hour, two hours in a literacy program.”

Disabled

“To be handicapped for freedom is a sign of bravery!” reads a sign in the Maihabar Vocational Training Center for the Disabled. The center gives training to the thousands of Eritreans left permanently wounded by the years of warfare. “Disability does not mean inability,” said Simon Tewald, an instructor at the camp.

Despite these sentiments, the center has not been able to make a difference in the lives of many veterans. Ninety-seven students went through the center’s most recent six-month training program which focuses on carpentry skills and metal work. According to Tewald, only about two percent of the graduates have been able to find work. As Tewald puts it, “The lack of jobs makes them wait more.”

That lack of jobs is a major concern of the government as it looks for ways to spark an economic revitalization. A number of ideas for economic growth center on the Red Sea and the port city of Masawa.

The Red Sea

Along the road from the capital city in the mountains, Asmara, to the coast and Masawa, the signs of past battles are abundant. The roadsides are littered with spent artillery shells, and rusting abandoned tanks are a frequent sight. Buildings along the way, and especially in Masawa, show bullet holes and even more dramatic evidence of war. But the port of Masawa has reopened, and ships from many countries can be seen docked alongside the ancient city.

Moving goods from the port and into the rest of Eritrea, and even deeper into Africa, is vital to rebuilding the economy. So the country has launched an impressive effort to rebuild the old Italian narrow-gauge railway which once connected Asmara and Masawa. Progress is slow, but the government is committed to using local labor and resources—without creating a huge national debt and becoming dependent on foreign aid.

Eritreans are also convinced that their Red Sea coastline will become an important tourist attraction. A new resort has opened outside Masawa. Hopes are high that the sea, its underwater diving areas, and its coral reefs will bring regional and international visitors.

“I have spent fourteen of my twenty-four career years in Africa. This is my sixth African country. Nowhere on the continent does there exist the kind of commitment, the self-reliance, the very strong work ethic, the sense of nationhood, and perhaps more importantly the determination of a people to pull themselves up first and foremost by their own efforts,” said US Ambassador John Hicks. “Not rejecting out-of-hand help from the outside, but realizing that first they must look inward before extending the request for help. This is the kind of view that shapes this country’s vision and strategy for national development.”

Ambassador Hicks concludes, “I like to refer to it as a refreshing view. It is a view that as a nation we fully support. I think that if we can successfully support this nation in achieving its ambitious objectives as it relates to economic development, as it relates to establishing an open pluralistic participatory democracy, we will see development occur here at a pace unparalleled in Africa. And if that happens, the lessons that emerge from such an event will be important not only for Africa but can help inform our economic



Healing War Wounds. Thirty years of fighting for independence maimed thousands of Eritreans. Now, physical rehabilitation and vocational training will provide them a better future—once jobs are available.

assistance strategies and our diplomacy in other parts of Africa and perhaps even the world.”

—Keith Porter

Editor’s Note: Producer Keith Porter recently traveled through East Africa gathering material for Common Ground, the Stanley Foundation’s nationally syndicated radio program on world affairs. Tapes and transcripts of these broadcasts, carried by over 100 public radio stations in the United States and Canada, are available. See page 11 to order a complete series on East Africa, including Eritrea’s Dawn (#9714).

“Nowhere on the continent does there exist... the determination of a people to pull themselves up first and foremost by their own efforts.”

PHOTO BY KEITH PORTER

UN Reform Accelerates



(Editor's Note: Over the years, the Stanley Foundation has been actively involved in and reported on the progress of the UN's

efforts to reform itself. Most recently the foundation held its annual UN Issues Conference on the deterioration of the relationship between the Secretariat and the General Assembly; the foundation commissioned a report on UN reform by the independent Council for Excellence in Government and has brought the issue to the attention of the general public through a series of Common Ground programs, the Stanley Foundation's weekly radio series. The following story includes excerpts and, where attribution is possible, on-the-record quotes from all three of these sources. For more information about Stanley Foundation projects related to the UN and its reform process see pages 10-11.)

“...reform must also resolve a basic, and growing, difference of views among member countries about mission. This is the split....”

“You don't relaunch the image of the UN by reforming the institution.” Rather, said former Assistant Secretary-General Giandomenico Picco during a radio interview, solving the UN's current problems requires “ideas and courage.” Picco, one of Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar's right-hand men during the UN's peak years of the 1980s, was at the center of the UN's role in ending the Iran-Iraq war, the Afghan war, and the release of the Western hostages then being held in Lebanon. Further discounting the importance of reform, Picco questioned who, aside from a small elite, is even aware that the UN has been in a reform process for the past five years.

Picco's views run counter to conventional wisdom in New York City and Washington, DC, where UN reform is watched closely. Indeed, reform is being pursued largely at the behest of the United

States. As the wealthiest member nation, the United States currently provides 25 percent of the UN's overall budget. But while US dues are far more than any other country's, they are actually down from 50 percent just after World War II. Moreover, the current figure amounts to “about one movie ticket per year for every American,” noted Princeton Lyman, Jr., in an interview. Lyman is US Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs. Because of real and perceived problems in UN management, and even possible political bias in some UN organs, the US Congress has withheld a portion of its assessed dues for the past decade. The US debt over these ten years has mounted to more than \$1.3 billion, nearly 40 percent of the debt outstanding to the UN.

This year could be the turning point for the UN, however. It is completing its five-year reform process. Critics seem willing to give new Secretary-General Kofi Annan a grace period to prove his commitment to continued reform; and, congressional battles aside, President Clinton and (more recently) Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms have both proposed plans to pay at least some US arrearages to the UN before the end of the decade. This last measure could be important to maintaining good relations with other member states who have continued to pay their dues and to avoid undermining the reform process the United States has been pushing.

Achievements

At a congressional hearing this past March, Lyman listed the major reforms at the UN so far. These reforms are detailed in the just-released report by The Council for Excellence in Government. In summary, the UN has:

- Adopted a no-growth regular UN budget.
- Created a UN inspector general function.
- Made substantial staff cuts.
- Imposed an informal moratorium on UN global conferences.
- Reduced the number of troops involved in UN peacekeeping operations (from 78,000 to approximately 25,000).
- Taken much more care in reviewing new peacekeeping proposals for their mission size, exit strategy, and appropriateness.

Nearly everyone cited in the council's report made clear that the reform process is nowhere near finished. Several intergovernmental working groups on UN reform are scheduled to offer recommendations this June, and Secretary-General Annan will issue his own reform package in July. Still, much has already been



Negotiator. Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms has been a key figure in negotiations over how much and under what conditions the United States will pay its back dues owed to the United Nations.

accomplished. UN Under-Secretary-General for Management and Administration, Joseph Connor, pointed out that simply in terms of dollars “there will not have been an increase in the budget, either actually or prospectively, between 1994 and 1999.” Other achievements include a 13 percent drop in employment down to the UN’s lowest level ever of 9,100, a freeze on the secretary-general’s salary since 1971, and the establishment of several oversight systems to ensure the UN is working more efficiently.

While this may be good news to those concerned only with the bottom line, Steven Dimoff, executive director of the UN Association’s Washington office, is troubled by the UN’s steadily increasing workload at the UN with fewer human and monetary resources—particularly its voluntary funding—which is as important to the UN’s functioning as the assessed dues. In the council’s report Dimoff says, “It’s not just the United States that is contributing less (in voluntary contributions); it’s most other countries as well.” In the area of refugees alone, the UN has had to contend with an increase from five million refugees in 1992 to 25 million refugees today.

What is the Goal?

Dimoff’s observation cuts to the heart of the UN’s dilemma: What should be the mission of this multicultural, multilingual institution made up of 184 sovereign countries? As the council’s report puts it: “In that process, reform must also resolve a basic, and growing, difference of views among member countries about mission. This is the split between the primary interest of the wealthy developed countries in maintaining peace and security and the focus of developing countries on the UN as a critical vehicle for economic development, social welfare, and the improvement of civil society.”

That point was reiterated when a group of 23 experts met in February for the Stanley Foundation’s UN Issues Conference. The topic of the meeting was relations between member nations and the UN bureaucracy, officially called the Secretariat. Participants agreed that the relationship between member states and the Secretariat is essential to a successful reform process and, ultimately, to an effective UN. However, prior to the Stanley Foundation conference, this critical relationship had been largely overlooked as a key element to successfully reforming the UN.

Over the years, an unfortunate “us versus them” mentality has developed, as has a level of mistrust between the Secretariat and the member nations who sit in the General Assembly. Once seen as the champion of the South, the Secretariat “has been taken over by the North,” according to some participants. They view whatever comes from the Secretariat with suspicion and consider “UN reform” a code for minimizing UN activities more important to the South, especially development. Smaller and less powerful states often feel they receive less attention from the Secretariat and that the larger countries, particularly the United States, are driving the UN agenda unilaterally, especially when it comes to reform.

On the other hand, the Secretariat staff feels frustrated by the lack of clear direction from the General Assembly. That’s because, as the report states, “Too often member states fail to agree on how best to confront global problems.” In fact, most conference participants accepted that all the previously mentioned allegations are “essentially symptoms of more fundamental distress within the organization...and the primary cause of tension is a significant lack of

consensus among member states regarding the core purposes and functions of the UN.”

The true dimensions of the rift over core UN functions may have been effectively masked during the Cold War. Richard Thornburgh, former UN under-secretary-general, sees the UN as practically starting over, “because when the Cold War ended, you had an entirely different set of challenges.” So, while Secretary-General Annan has designated peace and security, economic and social assistance, humanitarian aid, and development as the institution’s four core functions, the UN still needs to decide together where its future priorities lie.

The report from the Stanley Foundation’s meeting concludes: “The world needs an effective UN that promotes all four of its goals.” But right now it requires managerial and budget reform, too. “For this to take place, the Secretariat and member states will have to work together and commit to multilateralism. Unless member states and the Secretariat take concrete steps to improve relations, these may deteriorate further, leaving international organizations damaged and unable to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. The UN can help change the world, but member states and the Secretariat need to work together before things spiral out of control and the UN passes into irrelevance.”

—Mary Gray Davidson

“The United Nations still needs to decide together where its future priorities lie.”

(For the full conference report entitled Making UN Reform Work: Improving Member State-Secretariat Relations see page 10 or see page 11 to order Common Ground cassettes #9711 and #9720.)

Development From the Bottom Up

In its 1987 report, Our Common Future, the Brundtland Commission defined sustainable development as "that which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs...."



EARTH SUMMIT +5

In New York City, *Just Food* is getting locally grown produce to 300 urban families which in turn has helped five regional farms buck the trend toward the demise of small farms. *Just Food* is a creation of the New York City Sustainable Food System Alliance which brings together many groups interested in solving food system problems in the city.

Those problems, like everything else in New York, are large. Consider the fact that more than 900 emergency food providers supply more than three million meals per month. Juxtapose that against the fact that 1,000 farms and 150,000 acres of farmland are lost every year in New York State.

Just Food has responded innovatively by helping create community groups that connect those who are looking for healthful, affordable, and locally grown food with farmers who are producing it.

The organization has also brought into partnership six organizations that together help New York City's urban gardens boost food production in low-income neighborhoods.

In the 1970s the United Nations unsuccessfully tried to negotiate the shape of a comprehensive change in economic relations between nations, aiming to create the New International Economic Order. Today, that plan for a grand bargain among national leaders which would have transferred resources from the developed countries to the developing nations has been largely replaced by a bottom-up pattern of economic development.

Sustainable development places an emphasis on long-term health and vitality in the economic, environmental, cultural, and social spheres of a community or society. The concept began gaining currency in the years leading up to the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and was fully embraced at the parallel intergovernmental and nongovernmental meetings held there. This June the UN General Assembly held a special meeting to observe the fifth anniversary of the Earth Summit.

In the years since Rio, the United Nations has established a Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) to track progress on implementing Agenda 21, the agreement among governments on international environment and development goals. Many national governments have or are still adopting their own agendas. In the United States, the White House established the President's Council on Sustainable Development.

However, much of the energy going into sustainable development is coming not from governments but from people in neighborhoods, villages, and cities. They are not trying to solve world, or even national, problems but are addressing the needs of their own communities.

Since 1990 hundreds of Seattle citizens have identified and enu-

merated indicators of sustainability in their community through an organization called Sustainable Seattle. As the group's 1995 report says, "Indicators are bits of information that highlight what is happening in a large system." Just as the Dow Jones Industrial Average indicates the general health of the stock market, though not including every stock, sustainability indicators help measure the long-term health of the community.

In an ongoing effort, the Seattle citizens have gathered and published data on biodiversity, air quality, and unique regional indicators like wild salmon counts. But they have also measured the health of the community in other ways. Among the forty published indicators are: distribution of personal income, work required for basic needs, adult literacy and high school graduation rates, volunteer involvement in schools, voter participation, library and community center usage, and gardening activity.

The Seattle initiative has inspired similar efforts in other communities, including Milwaukee and Racine, Wisconsin; Southeast Ohio; and Berea, Kentucky.

In the United States in particular, the government has taken a back seat to nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local groups who are trying to make sustainable development real. In other parts of the world, including some European countries, governments have taken more of a leadership role and have also worked closely with NGOs.

The track record of local governments in pursuing sustainable development has been very spotty. Yet, people are working on sustainability issues, sometimes coordinating their efforts and supporting one another with or without government support.



UN PHOTO BY R. MEDA

Rio, 1982. Thousands of individuals convened in Rio de Janeiro to express their views on issues addressed at the UN Conference on Environment and Development. Last month the United Nations held a special meeting to assess progress since then.

In the United Kingdom, the Women's Environmental Network is mapping clusters of breast cancer cases in an effort to correlate them with sources and types of pollution. In the Netherlands, there is a group which is creating a database of health problems suspected of being environmentally related. Those are examples of local groups working on sustainability issues sometimes, but not always, with the support and cooperation of local governments.

A larger group, the Northern Alliance for Sustainability is a consortium of NGOs from 20 countries in Eastern and Western Europe and the United States. At its annual meeting this January in Poland, the countries addressed consumption and production patterns in terms of health and environment, sustainable menus for the next millennium, and clean production.

On a parallel track, several governments in Northern Europe are moving away from environmental pollution control to a more product-oriented, preventative approach. Governments are looking downstream at production and consumption and upstream at product design, material choice, and resource extraction. Health effects of using synthetic chemicals and genetically engineered organisms are being examined.

In the five years since Rio, the Stanley Foundation has maintained an active interest in sustainable development. The foundation maintains a relationship with the Citizen's Network for Sustainable Development—a national association of NGOs. It has tracked and supported the efforts of several communities in the United States. Internationally, the foundation has followed the work of the CSD; been involved with subsequent UN conferences on population, social development, women's issues, and cities



UNIFEM PHOTO BY SHYAM CHITRAKARR

Women help themselves. This woman in Nepal uses ancient painting techniques to improve her standard of living.

where sustainability issues were prominent; and studied the phenomenal growth of the micro-credit movement.

Makgomo is a South African woman. She lives in a remote area where there are few resources, roads are poor, services lacking, and where she cannot always depend on getting supplies from distributors. Several years ago her husband, who worked in a mine far away from their home, fell ill, lost his job, and has not been able to return to work. Makgomo was left to care for her husband and their eight children. The owners of the mine never helped once since her husband was permanently disabled. Self-employment was Makgomo's only option. She earns an income buying chicks, raising them, and selling them when they are fully grown. She began this project with a loan of \$80 from the Small Enterprise Foundation (SEF) and made a profit of \$240. With four more loans her business has been able to grow, she is supporting her family, and all her children are able to stay in school. Her life is not without its difficulties. With eight children and a husband to care for, she spends a lot of time away from the business. But

through the support of other small loan recipients and SEF, she and her family are able to survive.

The ability of women to acquire small loans either individually or through village banking programs has been one of the main factors changing the face of development. Thousands of women have proven their ability as business owners and have created models for future development strategies. Their efforts are some of the best evidence of a shift to a bottom-up approach to development.

—Jeffrey Martin and Mary Steinmaus

Much of the energy going into sustainable development is coming not from governments but from people in neighborhoods, villages, and cities.



AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO

A more moderate Iran?
Newly elected Mohammad Khatami campaigned on a platform of greater political openness and tolerance.

Iran's Political Culture

Will the May election of a more moderate Iranian president, Mohammad Khatami, ease US concerns about Iran? The election result contrasts with the past year's more disturbing developments—a German court verdict finding Iranian

government involvement in the assassination of Kurdish dissidents, suspected Iranian involvement in the 1996 bombing of US military barracks in Saudi Arabia, and conservative victories in the 1996 elections. Over time, the US has taken an increasingly hard-line stance toward Iran, unilaterally applying economic sanctions and pressuring Europe to follow suit. Iran's importance to US policy in the Persian Gulf was evident at a March forum on the region organized for congressional staff by the Stanley Foundation.

Dr. Farhard Kazemi, professor of Politics and Middle East Studies at New York University, helped participants get a better understanding of Iran. He emphasized the cultural and historical background of Iranian society.

Dr. Kazemi noted that culture underpins Iranian politics and social behavior. It is learned and transmitted through several important agents and institutions which deal with three major political traditions emanating from monarchism, nationalism, and Shi'ism. There is also a minor tradition associated with the Left. The three major traditions are best understood through three key individuals who have been their primary proponents in different periods: Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi (1941-79), Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadeq (1951-53), and supreme religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1979-1989). The Iranians' perceptions of the three key leaders and their roles in Iranian politics at critical

historical moments have greatly influenced the relative success of the ideas and institutions that they represent.

The three major traditions have coexisted in an uneasy relationship for generations. Currently, Shi'ism is predominant, but that does not mean the complete demise of the other forces. In the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that the monarchical tradition will reemerge in Iran as a dominant force. The secular, liberal, nationalist tradition (which has as its social base the professional middle class) has a far greater chance to reappear as the dominant political power in the future. This tradition is strong despite being maligned and disgraced under the Islamic republic. The radical leftist tradition, which has no major social base or party but is evident in the Mujahede'en, will continue to be a force in Iranian politics. Its chance of success is limited.

Along with the variety of traditions are several centers of power in Iran. Iran is often seen as the embodiment of single-minded radical Islam. Professor Kazemi insists, however, that it is not. As evidenced by this spring's election campaigns, there are differences among adherents to Shi'ism on most central political issues. Moreover, power does not simply reside only at the top with the clerics. The regime may appear as a hierarchy, but there are several centers of power. These include the revolutionary guards, the intelligence units, the foundations, and other powerful organizations.

Paradoxes

Why has the regime clung to its revolutionary apparatus? Professor Kazemi suggested that it is because the regime has not delivered on its promise of social justice and economic self-sufficiency. The gap between rich and poor is large—with elite, wealthy, and corrupt clerics at the top. The

regime promised to root out corruption; instead, it managed to institutionalize it. Paradoxically then, Iran has an unpopular but deeply institutionalized regime.

Another paradox lies in the differences between the public and private domains in Iranian society. Publicly, Iranians may call the US "the devil" and shun Western clothes or ideas, but privately many read Western magazines and watch television programs such as "Dallas." A certain amount of freedom, albeit constrained, is permitted. However, when any activity is perceived as threatening to the regime, force is immediately used to suppress it.

Coercion is not usually needed to rally people around the flag, however. Iranians share an intense nationalism that is rooted in the mythologies of the Iranian nation. Despite the various centers of power and political traditions, nationalism makes Iranians appear united to the world at large.

Policy Differences

Dr. Kazemi noted that Iranians differ over how to respond to US policy, particularly sanctions. In contrast, the US is adamant about its policy on Iran. The US is alone in imposing strict sanctions, putting it at odds with, among others, European allies. Germany and France, for example, prefer to trade with Iran and engage in what they call a "critical dialogue" with the regime. The difference between European and US policies on sanctions has prompted some to call for better policy coordination.

The Stanley Foundation, in conjunction with the Royal Institute of International Affairs in England, is planning a transatlantic conference on policy toward the Persian Gulf this fall in London. The goal is to foster cooperation and understanding among European and American policymakers on this and other regional issues.

—Corbin Stone

Iran is often seen as...single-minded.... Professor Kazemi insists, however, that it is not.

Monitoring Women's Advancement

In March, Joan Winship, Stanley Foundation Vice President for Outreach, was one of two public members of the US Delegation to the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Here she reflects on her experience.

Tension had grown over the two weeks of meetings of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. The end was near and no consensus could be reached on one of the key issues under discussion—the right of women to inherit and own land and property. The question was of the right to inherit (championed by Muslim nations) vs. the right of inheritance (championed by sub-Saharan African nations).

Islam was one of the first traditions to grant women the right to inherit property—but that could be limited to jewelry, pots, and household items. It may not include land. Also, in Islamic tradition, women do not inherit equally with men. In much of sub-Saharan Africa women do not have the right to inherit at all, so they are left with nothing. Now, many of them want to establish a presumption that property, including land, can pass to them.

Attempts at a compromise suggesting “access” to land did not satisfy the Africans. They explained that they already have access, for women are the primary ones who till the land, plant, and harvest the crops. What they wanted was the right of inheritance.

After many meetings, it was a truly dramatic moment when the standstill ended and a consensus was reached for the following statement: “In the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action, women should be accorded full and equal rights to own

land and other properties, inter alia, through inheritance.”

Being a witness to these discussions and being involved was an honor. This was a unique opportunity to participate and to personally bridge the gap between official federal government representatives and the nongovernmental (NGO) community.

Established in 1947, the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is the key intergovernmental body charged with promoting the rights and advancement of women worldwide and through the United Nations. Currently the CSW is charged with monitoring implementation of the Platform for Action adopted at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, China. For each of the next three years the CSW will focus on four areas of the Platform to promote the empowerment of women.

In addition, the United Nations has adopted a goal of “mainstreaming” a gender perspective throughout its programs, agencies, personnel, and its work. In fact, Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who addressed the opening session, has adopted a goal of gender equality in the UN Secretariat by the year 2000. In the opening meeting, Annan and Under-Secretary-General Nitan Desai challenged the CSW to be the catalyst to advise and monitor that these goals be reached.

Much of the serious discussion and exchange of views are held off the floor of the formal debate. Days are full with informal meetings, briefings at the US Mission to the United Nations, daily briefings our delegation held for NGOs, and luncheons and recep-

Too often Americans fail to realize the important role the United Nations plays in the lives of citizens around the world. Whether it is looking at the value of women's unpaid work, the trafficking of women and girls for sex purposes, the involvement of women in peacemaking and peacekeeping operations, the right of girls to have the same educa-



UN/DPI PHOTO BY EVAN SCNEIDER

tional opportunities as boys, or the consideration of a gender perspective in all areas of life, the United Nations plays a vital role. Women and many men worldwide use the Beijing Platform for Action and international fora such as the CSW to hold the United Nations, national governments, and even NGOs accountable for implementing the Beijing goals.

The joy of the sub-Saharan African women late in the final evening of the CSW meeting brought that home. The struggle for consensus and determination to reach agreement showed the benefits of having such an international forum. With the agreed-upon conclusions on inheritance from the CSW and the cooperation of their Muslim counterparts, these women could go home to try to implement change in their own nations with the support and endorsement of the world community behind them.

Opening session.
UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan addressed the opening meeting of the UN Commission on the Status of Women. Angela King (left) is Special Advisor on Gender Issues and the Advancement of Women.

Publications

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

1319/62 Conference Reports

United Nations

Making UN Reform Work: Improving Member State-Secretariat Relations.

If UN reform has a chance of succeeding, the relationship between member nations and the UN Secretariat will require attention. Experts analyzed the state of those relations and developed recommendations. February 1997, 36pp.

UN Reform and US Financial Support.

The independent Council on Excellence in Government did a report, commissioned by the Stanley Foundation, on the progress of UN reform. May 1997, 74pp.

The United Nations and the Twenty-First Century: The Imperative for Change.

As the UN approaches a new century it is engaged in a major effort at organizational reform. Twenty experts met to assess progress and suggest further action. June 1996, 44pp.

The Role of the United Nations in Eliminating Weapons of Mass Destruction.

Is the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction a feasible goal? Conference participants examined this question and set out concrete, short- and long-term strategies for improving the UN's performance in this area. February 1996, 35pp.

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, 32pp.

New American Global Dialogue

The Impact of Globalization: Shaping the Greater Twin Cities Response.

How well prepared is this metropolitan area to deal with the positive and negative effects of globalization? September 1996

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

Leaders from across the southeastern US met to discuss the region's increasingly global orientation and the impact that has on American foreign policy. April 1996, 24pp.

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 US have grown. Participants reflect on the impact of US relations with both countries. October 1995, 19pp.

General Interest

Post Conflict Justice: The Role of the International Community.

In countries torn apart by war, there is a need for order, justice, and hope for reconciliation. To what extent can and should the international community try to fill those needs? What tools does it have at its

disposal? A panel of experts discussed those issues. April 1997.

Building on Beijing: United States NGOs Shape a Women's National Action Agenda.

This report, published in association with several other organizations, compiles the recommendations of many nongovernmental organizations for implementing the Platform for Action from the Beijing Women's Conference. June 1997.

Human Rights: Bridging the Communities.

Leaders of international human rights groups and US civil rights organizations met to explore common interests. October 1996, 16pp.

The Persian Gulf: Challenges for a New Administration.

Experts met for a fresh assessment of a volatile region in which the US has major interests. October 1996, 16pp.

Rebuilding Russia: The Next Phase.

A straightforward assessment of post-communist Russia's strengths and weaknesses. Participants discussed prospects for Russia's integration with the West. October 1996, 16pp.

Weapons of Mass Destruction: Are the Nonproliferation Regimes Falling Behind?

On the one hand, intergovernmental agreements to limit the use and possession of these weapons have worked well and are getting stronger. On the other hand, the new threat

from these weapons lies with terrorists and rogue regimes. October 1996, 16pp.

Bringing Beijing Back: Local Actions and Global Strategies.

A handbook which sets out strategies for addressing the women's issues identified at the 1995 Beijing world conference on women. The strategies are drawn from the discussions of women who attended a post-Beijing conference. November 1995, 44pp.

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, 24pp.

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, 28pp.

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, 24pp.



Keith Porter, producer of the foundation's nationally syndicated radio program on international affairs, traveled to Uganda to report on the small wars being waged on the country's borders. The following excerpts are from program #9712, "Uganda's Little Wars." Tapes and complete transcripts of Common Ground are available. See page 11 for details.

Porter: *These different groups that are causing these problems, where do they get most of their funding?*

JeJe Odong, Minister of State for Defense Training, Uganda: I wouldn't know where they get most of their funding. All I know for certain is that the groups in the north come from across the border, and one would imagine that that's where they are getting their funding.

Porter: From Sudan, across the Sudanese border is what you mean?

Odong: That's right.

Porter: One more question for you and that is about the group in the north, the LRA, the Lord's Resistance Army. We hear a lot of horror stories about tactics that they use.

War and Peace in Uganda

Odong: Yes, they do very, very horrendous things to the people. You would have to see physical evidence of people who have lost their noses, their eyes, their ears, and other parts of their bodies.

Charles Brown, Director of Training and Program Development, Freedom House: The LRA may be to the '90s what the Shining Path was to the '80s. That is the world's most extremist movement and the one that outsiders have found the hardest to fathom.

Freedom House is concerned that the unfortunately numerous rebel movements in Uganda are going to derail what has been a moderately successful, if not complete, move toward democracy. Uganda is not a multiparty democracy in the conventional sense of the word. The National Resistance Movement still exerts a great deal of control over large sectors of both the government and the economy.

Despite President Museveni's claims, it is not a no-party system but a one-party system. Nonetheless, the press is as free and open as any in Africa, outside of South Africa. The NGO community is diverse, rapidly developing as a grass-roots base. The political system permits open debate.

Meanwhile, the economy is growing faster than any other in Africa. The government has managed to implement a transition to a free market economy, perhaps more successfully than anyone else in Africa. The population is, for the most part (with obvious exceptions in the north), doing better than it has in the past. The insurgencies

directly threaten both the improvement in political conditions in Uganda and the improvement in economic conditions in Uganda.

Father John Mary Waligo, board member, Ugandan Human Rights Commission: Wherever there is war in any piece of land in Uganda, Uganda lacks peace. We must find a peaceable means of ending this war. Okay? War begets war. It is only peace that can bring justice. When you use peace it does not mean that you are a coward.



PHOTO BY KEITH PORTER

Norbert Mao.

Norbert Mao, member, Parliament of Uganda: We are disappointed by the indifference of the international community about this problem in northern Uganda. We know very well how much the Western powers love the government of

President Museveni. But the credibility of this government is being destroyed every day that war continues. Money which would be used to build hospitals and schools is being used to fight that war. It is going to magnify poverty, it is undermining the credibility of this government, and we think the international community should be more concerned.

—*excerpted by Keith Porter*

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