



WORLDVIEWS FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

A Monograph Series

Forging Sustainable Global Peace and Security

A Conversation with
Ambassador Richard Solomon



Presented by
The Global Connections Foundation and the
University of Central Florida's Global Perspectives Office
and Political Science Department.

Fall 2010: Volume 8, Number 4

Forging Sustainable Global Peace and Security

——
A Conversation with
Ambassador Richard Solomon
——

Orlando, Florida, U.S.A.

Worldviews for the 21st Century: A Monograph Series

John C. Bersia, Editor-in-Chief
Gabriela Othon, Business and Research Editor
Mark Freeman, Marketing Editor
Joshua A. Smith, Composition Editor
Jessica Gagnon and Elvira Bouriak, Editorial Assistants

The Global Connections Foundation, which evolved from an international awareness-building program established in 1999, is a non-profit, non-partisan, non-ideological educational partnership. Its initiatives include regional forums, speakers, study/research programs abroad, awards and publications.

The Office of the Special Assistant to the President for Global Perspectives (Global Perspectives Office) at the University of Central Florida was established by President John C. Hitt in 2001 to sharpen the University's international focus. The office helps advance UCF's goal of providing international emphasis in curricula and research. In addition, it endeavors to expand the University's efforts to enlarge Central Florida's awareness and understanding of the interconnectedness of the global community.

The views expressed in this monograph are entirely those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the staff, officers or advisors of the Global Connections Foundation, the University of Central Florida's Global Perspectives Office or UCF's Political Science Department.

Program Offices:

University of Central Florida
Howard Phillips Hall, Room 202
4000 Central Florida Blvd.
P.O. Box 160003
Orlando, Florida 32816-0003
U.S.A.
(407) 823-0935/0688
(407) 823-0716 (fax)
global@mail.ucf.edu

Worldviews for the 21st Century
Volume 8, Number 4

Copyright © 2010 by the Global Connections Foundation

All rights reserved
Printed in the United States of America
First printing, 2010

The *Worldviews for the 21st Century* series, a key part of the Global Connections Foundation's educational networking activities, gratefully acknowledges the support of the Darden Restaurants Foundation.

Forging Sustainable Global Peace and Security

A Conversation with
Ambassador Richard Solomon

Question: In dealing with conflicts, peacemaking and peacebuilding today, why is it vital to have both peace and security?

Ambassador Richard Solomon: First, peace cannot last without security. But, security itself is insufficient. Many repressive regimes often achieve security, but they usually do so via considerable repression. Under such authoritarian rule, there may be little or no overt violence, and there may be the appearance of stability, but there is no freedom and the state oppresses the people through the threat of violence. At the same time, there must be a fundamental element of security to build peace and promote reconciliation among peoples who have been in conflict, who have been at war. Security is a precondition for enduring peace because not only are the people safe from violence but they are also free to pursue the other critical elements necessary to create a sustainable peace: good governance, human rights, rule of law, economic development and social well-being.

Q: How does one know when both have been achieved? Please provide some examples.

A: Obviously, the objective is not the “peace of the graveyard.” Security is achieved when, most prominently, warring parties are separated or reconciled, vulnerable populations are safe, spoilers - those who exploit or profit from violent conflict and work to undermine peace - are isolated, and people can conduct their daily lives without fear. We are always working toward security and maintaining peace with justice. The peace agreement in Northern Ireland was based on security in the following way: the three major paramilitary forces agreed to disarm and, at the same time, the police went through significant reforms, including creating greater openness, respect for human rights and the integration of Catholic police into what had been a constabulary dominated by Protestants. A human rights commission was established, and the British Army began to withdraw as a consequence of the improving security situation. All of these were critical to providing each side with a sense of confidence in their security and that peace would endure.

Q: As you consider ongoing conflicts, where do we find ourselves on the right path toward peace and security? Where do we still have much effort to expend?

A: Peacebuilding is a long-term process. The key is the degree to which societies develop tools to deal with disagreements and conflicts without resort to violence. Efforts at promoting such tools are under way around the globe where countries are working to emerge from war to peace. Even in places where peace has been established, there is an ongoing need to reinforce institutions and processes that can sustain peace - for instance, rule of law, education, dealing with the past, and institution-building (legal institutions and police forces). Efforts to stabilize Northern Ireland and South Africa are examples of the need for years of confidence-building and the development of equitable institutions of law and governance. Even in post-apartheid South Africa, after almost 20 years there remain problems related to economic inequality, high crime, and unequal access to education that can undermine the society’s confidence in a peaceful future. In Northern Ireland, the peace agreement has established both legal equity and real political power sharing. At the same time,

distrust between the two communities remains and the society is in many ways more segregated than before (particularly in poorer neighborhoods and in schools). Nevertheless, sectarian violence has just about been eliminated. In Iraq and Afghanistan, where violence still exists, the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is working to help local civil society organizations develop a capacity to resolve conflicts peacefully. In Iraq, USIP has trained a number of facilitators and mediators who in turn are training hundreds of Iraqis in conflict resolution skills.

Obviously, at the same time, there are ongoing conflicts where much remains to be done. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict seems particularly intractable. Israelis fear for their security; Palestinians seek the right to self-determination and an end to continued military occupation. So, how can the Palestinian desire for a state be squared with Israeli security needs? Neither trusts the other, so it is very difficult to make the necessary compromises to create a real peace that both sides can live with and have an incentive to live up to. This is compounded by the fact that both the Israeli and Palestinian leaders are quite weak politically, dependent on more extreme elements in their societies for staying in office and retaining power.

Q: We seem to hear more about security today than ever - national security, environmental security, economic security, food security, human security, climate security, etc. Are such problems worsening, or are we simply more aware of them?

A: It is hard to say that they are not getting worse. With a breakdown or weakening of global leadership, international institutions are ill-equipped to deal with the many serious global challenges we face today. The effectiveness of institutions and regimes such as the United Nations, the World Bank, the G-8, or conventions to address climate change or nuclear non-proliferation, depends upon strong leadership from the major powers, including the United States, but also China, Russia and the European Union. Unfortunately, there is little consensus among these countries and little will to work together and make shared sacrifices to address such challenges as global

warming, food security, arms control, potential health pandemics, transnational crime, structural inequalities and increased poverty.

Technological advances have had a complex impact on peace and security. We have more tools and technologies for dealing with threats to peace. We have the capacity to respond to humanitarian crises more quickly and provide aid in a more timely and substantial manner. Advances in communications technology contribute to that, as do logistical capabilities. At the same time, advances in communication have made more people aware of the disparity between haves and have-nots in the world. The resulting upward push for change from the grass roots can help generate reform but also instability, since most technologies can be used to promote violence as well as positive programs. Terrorist organizations now use the Internet to advance their causes, and the technologies behind weapons of mass destruction are proliferating.

Q: How much does economic strength contribute to a nation in terms of peace and security? For example, does a rising power such as China pose less of a risk because it is increasingly interdependent with the world? Or can economic strength tempt one into more military spending, perhaps in an attempt to protect its new-found status?

A: When a nation improves economically, it may become more active regionally or globally, seeking to expand trade, markets, investments and access to resources. Deng Xiaoping once remarked that “to get rich is glorious,” and China’s dramatic economic growth has given the country a greater stake in international stability; yet, because China desires to sustain this new-found prosperity, the prospects for conflict may increase. That may seem counterintuitive, but economic strength gives societies greater resources, and those resources may be used in ways that threaten peace. As the world witnessed prior to World War I, economic interdependence is no guarantee of greater peace. Many drivers of conflict such as pride, power, nationalism, or manipulation of public attitudes can override economic self-interest and undermine security.

In China, forces of nationalism are rising. A new generation of leaders empowered by China's rapid economic growth is more jingoistic and nationalistic. So there is a growing question as to whether China's rise in power will be stabilizing or lead to greater tensions if not conflict. Combined with China's growing need for more economic resources for its rapidly expanding economy, such nationalist forces are worrisome, particularly at a time when global political and economic leadership is weak.

Q: Some lament what they label the absence of visionary global leadership on peace and security issues in our era. Do you agree? If so, what can be done about the problem? Further, does this situation expand the relative importance of mid-level and grassroots peacebuilding efforts? If not, where do you perceive such leadership?

A: Visionary global leadership is crucial, as is leadership among parties engaged in conflict. While grassroots organizations can often fill a vacuum of leadership, they are not a substitute for political leadership. But the contributions to peacebuilding of individuals and civil society groups can be substantial by bringing relief to victims of humanitarian crises, bearing witness against or reporting on human rights abuses and crimes of war, by working to alleviate the structural roots of conflict such as poverty and unequal access to legal institutions, and by helping to provide education opportunities or health care. That is why USIP partners with many such individuals and organizations in conflict zones that are working in their societies to prevent violent conflict, build sustainable peace or address the tragic consequences of ongoing violence. We train practitioners on how to create institutions and processes to resolve local conflicts. We develop programs of religious pluralism and education curricula that promote human rights and tolerance in places like Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Iraq, Sudan and Colombia. We work with local mediators to develop facilitation, negotiation and mediation skills, as well as with local religious leaders and educators to promote rights and tolerance, all of which can contribute to building peace. In

other words, visionary leadership “from the top” needs the support of grassroots efforts to promote reconciliation and stability.

Q: Will increasing global access to the Internet lead to more internecine conflict as cultural differences and socioeconomic inequalities become increasingly apparent? Or will it help advance the cause of peace and security through increased communication and opportunities for education?

A: All technologies, as noted earlier, cut both ways—the Internet and other communications technologies provide potential for enhancing peace as well as fostering conflict. We see how the Internet can be a tool for “conflict entrepreneurs” to incite violence, promote hate and recruit potential foot-soldiers to a particular violent cause. However, there are those who have harnessed the Internet as powerful tools for peacebuilding. As an example, USIP’s “Media, Conflict and Peacebuilding” program is currently working with Iraqi media and youth leaders to design and produce a multi-media peacebuilding program and curriculum for Iraq. The first two products have been a television special focused on peacebuilding as well as a social networking site. We recently launched a partnership with an organization called Ushahidi to help train students and activists in countries such as Sudan, Iraq and Colombia to use an information collection and mapping platform that played a remarkable role in the response to the earthquake disasters in Haiti and Chile. Student volunteers created a live crisis map of the needs in both countries that provided comprehensive and up-to-date information to the humanitarian community. This was done with what is called “crowdsourcing” to document crisis information using the Web, SMS, Facebook, Blogs, Twitter and smartphone applications. This is such an important issue that our Board of Directors just selected “The Impact of New Media on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management” as next year’s topic for our high school peace essay topic.

Q: As you contemplate the prospects for peace and security during the remainder of the 21st century, are you optimistic?

A: It is hard to remain optimistic in the face of the many challenges the world faces today. Nuclear proliferation is out of control, and the world remains awash in small arms and light weapons. International organizations are ineffectual in providing peace and security. In addition, other global challenges such as climate change, rising energy consumption, resource scarcity, demographic pressures, unmet economic expectations as well as unmet political and national aspirations all combine to make conflict more rather than less likely. And these things are often linked. United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon and others have claimed that the Darfur conflict was initially an ecological crisis that arose in part from climate change because of the rising demands by pastoralists and farmers for diminishing fertile land and water resources. Iran, as well as those countries that are not signatories to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, now challenge the assumption that the international community can prevent proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. As a result, the prospects for nuclear confrontation continue to rise.

Q: In that vein, how does USIP fit into the hopes you have for peacebuilding and security, including the enhanced possibilities offered by your new facility in Washington, D.C.?

A: Part of our mission is to provide conflict management and peacebuilding tools; another part of our mission is to provide ideas and hope. We view our mission as developing ideas and visions for managing conflict without resorting to violence: for policymakers, grassroots organizations, outside parties working to mediate conflicts or provide humanitarian assistance, and the many others who work to build peace. To that end, we try to identify best practices and create innovative peacebuilding tools such as a toolkit for promoting the rule of law in fragile states, and guidelines for civilian and military interaction in hostile environments.

Our new headquarters building in Washington will enhance our role as a national center for advancing the study and practice of conflict management and peacebuilding. We will have the capacity to run

more programs as well as to increase the education and training we do. Just as important, the new building will serve as a symbol of an American commitment to peace. As part of the responsibility that goes with such a symbolic presence, we will strengthen our dedication to greater public understanding—especially among students and teachers—of international conflicts and nonviolent approaches that can be used to manage or resolve them.

Q: Finally, could you explain why reaching out to educational institutions, including the potential of your new partnership with the University of Central Florida (UCF), is an important part of USIP’s mission?

A: Part of our chartered mission from Congress is to develop new generations of professionals who will understand the concepts and have the tools of conflict management in order to promote peace. But we also want to inspire new generations to take up the mantle of peacebuilding and help students and educators understand that there are now many career paths that can contribute to our national and global capacity to prevent violent conflict and build durable peace. As we continue to develop cutting-edge ideas and policy analysis that contribute to understanding and managing conflict and building peace, a partnership with schools like UCF enables us to make many of the ideas and peacebuilding tools we develop both accessible and relevant for students, teachers and scholars. We are pleased to support in whatever ways we can the growing emphasis on global awareness and peace studies at educational institutions such as UCF. The original congressional mandate that established USIP called on the Institute to “increase conflict management capacity, tools, and intellectual capital worldwide.” Many of your students, we trust, will be important contributors to that capacity and intellectual capital.

Richard H. Solomon has been president of the United States Institute of Peace since 1993, and has overseen its growth into a center of international conflict management analysis and applied programs. Prior to this assignment, Solomon was assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs from 1989 to 1992. He negotiated the Cambodia peace treaty, the first United Nations “Permanent Five” peacemaking agreement; had a leading role in the dialogue on nuclear issues between the United States and South and North Korea; helped establish the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation initiative; and led U.S. negotiations with Japan, Mongolia and Vietnam on important bilateral matters. In 1992-93, Solomon served as U.S. ambassador to the Philippines. He coordinated the closure of the U.S. naval bases, and developed a new framework for bilateral and regional security cooperation. Solomon previously served as director of policy planning at the Department of State and as a senior staff member of the National Security Council. In 1995, Solomon was awarded the State Department’s Foreign Affairs Award for Public Service, and he has received awards for policy initiatives from the governments of Korea and Thailand. In 2005, he received the American Political Science Association’s Hubert H. Humphrey career award for “notable public service by a political scientist.” Solomon began his career as professor of political science at the University of Michigan, and also served as head of the Political Science Department at the RAND Corporation. Solomon holds a Ph.D. in political science, with a specialization in Chinese politics, from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.