

CARNEGIE COUNCIL *for Ethics in International Affairs*

Recent Advances in the Prevention of Mass Violence

U.S. Global Engagement

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Transcript

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Introduction

DAVID SPEEDIE: I will eschew any elaborate introduction. I will merely say that David Hamburg is or has been a physician; a philanthropist; a multifaceted scholar; a prolific author, often with Dr. [Betty Hamburg](#), who is also with us this evening; an advisor to presidents, to secretaries of State and Defense, to UN secretary-generals—and for all this and more he was a recipient of the [Presidential Medal of Freedom](#), the highest civilian award.

I know David, of course, personally in his role as a philanthropist, in which he was once rash enough to hire me, and it set in motion five of the most productive years of my life.

What makes David in my opinion one of the great philanthropists is what makes any great philanthropist, and that is the power of the big idea, to have the great idea that sees philanthropy as an agent of change. Clearly, one of the virtues that David brought to the philanthropic field was of course this matter of prevention.

The film [shown before the presentation] says so much about this that I won't go into it—it may come up in the question-and-answer period or in your presentation, David—but [Bill Perry](#)'s comment about [Nunn-Lugar](#), the [Cooperative Threat Reduction Act](#), the most significant piece of legislation of its type since the end of the Cold War, really found its genesis in David and in the Carnegie Corporation.

So once again, sir, it is a real pleasure and privilege to have you here. I ask you to talk to us more about the film and the work, the book [Preventing Genocide](#), that deals with these necessary and unpleasant topics.

Remarks

DAVID HAMBURG: David, thank you very much.

It was enormously helpful to have you working with me during those years at Carnegie when you were my good right arm and left arm and made it possible to implement many of the farfetched ideas that I and others had.

The book on which the film is based, *Preventing Genocide: Practical Steps Toward Early Detection and Effective Action*, laid the historical, analytical, and future-oriented basis for actually three documentaries, which we now have—we hadn't planned this—an abridged version, the full version I mentioned earlier, and now we are almost done with an intermediate version, which is about 85-90 minutes. We find that for different audiences in colleges and universities, in civic organizations, religious organizations, that there are different preferences for the length. And also, it's not just the length, but it's different content. So this is a very interesting experience of how in a visually-oriented culture one can combine, to me, the enormous impact of these interviews with people like [Kofi Annan](#), [Desmond Tutu](#), and so on, with the substantive content of what actually went on, and some of this in a very short period of time.

In a couple of years, through 2009, we conducted a set of 28 film interviews, one hour each, with the leading figures in preventing mass violence, with whom I have worked closely over many years. We missed some due to illness, for example the great [Morton Deutsch](#), who is here tonight, a marvelous leader in education and the theory of research of conflict resolution. We missed some for other reasons. So I am not saying these 28—it's actually 27, but my son was adamant that I had to be interviewed by him as the 28th. Anyway, I would have been happier to have more like 40 or 50.

It is true that I was able to play an active agitating role, first in academic life and then in the National Academy of Sciences and in the Foundation, in stirring things up, in getting people going, identifying terrific people, and then eventually being able to put my money where my mouth was.

One of the important things I thought was, as one developed information and ideas that seemed promising with respect to diminishing the awful risk of destruction, that one ought to try to get institutional innovations that could make it possible to test out these ideas to some extent—what would work for whom, and so on.

I am very happy that [Ed Mortimer](#) is here tonight, who was one of the closest people to Kofi Annan. Kofi Annan was, arguably, the first world figure, with Ed right at his side, to see the significance of the [Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict](#), which was co-chaired by the beloved [Cyrus Vance](#) and myself. That Commission in the 1990s had all kinds of ramifications in the UN, in the European Union, and a number of major democracies.

We were very lucky, not only in the Commission itself, but in generating some 70 publications, 20 books and 50 other publications, that began to get around the contours, and many international meetings, so that we could at least stir up interest, get people thinking, get them worried, and give them a sense it might be possible to take ideas from the field, from the research and from the practice, and put them to use and modify institutions in a way that Kofi Annan modified at the UN for this purpose.

Independently, the interviews comprise a reflection of historic significance, with figures like Desmond

Tutu, Kofi Annan, [Amartya Sen](#), [Sam Nunn](#), Bill Perry, [Javier Solana](#), [Herant Katchadourian](#) and others.

One of the points that is repeated in referencing genocide is that there were in fact highly responsible and respected people who clearly recognized the oncoming danger and made appropriate early warnings. This leads to farsighted observations about what might have been done at that time, but bearing in mind that, let's say, in the time of the [Armenian-Turkish thing](#), that the tools available were very limited. Over these decades we have gradually increased knowledge and institutional strength and best practices and extended international cooperation that was really not possible before. And we have many more democracies than we had then, which are really essential to get anything done in this field.

So one can't be too critical of the millennium of genocides in which the opportunities for prevention were missed. But it is true, as we found the hard way in our Commission over its five-year duration, that very few people thought in terms of prevention. It was very difficult, very difficult.

Outstanding people said, over and over again, "It's hard to think in terms of prevention. We just haven't thought of it. What would you do?" and so on.

So at least we had the opportunity to stimulate excellent people to begin to think more about how, if at all, you could prevent these disasters, but also highlighting the additional intellectual, technical, and institutional reserves that are now available for prevention that were absent or minimal in earlier genocides.

So the emphasis is on growing opportunities for prevention, who can do what to avert mass violence, and arrive at just solutions.

Now, I want to say a word about the Holocaust, because we largely skipped that in the abridged version. It has a more extensive treatment, as you could imagine, in the hour-and-three-quarters full version.

The [Holocaust](#) was an immense crime against humanity. It is the quintessential genocide—not the only genocide. A number of Israeli and other scholars at one time were maintaining there was no other genocide but the Holocaust. That is certainly not true. [Ben Kiernan's](#) book, published two or three years ago, called *Blood and Soil*, documents to a remarkable extent a millennium of genocides. But it was the extra-special super genocide, no question.

It was not, as some of the people pointed out here, just improvised. These genocides were not improvised, suddenly an outburst of madness. They are carefully prepared over an extended period of time. Deliberate policy decision of a powerful state mobilizing its resources to destroy an entire people.

The Nazis' worldview formulated Jews as the source of all evils, especially internationalism, pacifism, democracy, and Marxism. As if that weren't enough, you could think of others.

Before [Hitler](#) there was plenty of prejudice in Germany, and, as you know, there has been an argument about whether the prejudice itself was enough to account for the genocide or whether it took more than that.

Hitler made his universal scapegoat dogma in his charismatic way and carried out an incendiary program that was built more and more on animosity toward Jews and the belief that Jews were responsible for the world's troubles.

Now, it is often said in this and in other genocides that you can never know until the last minute. Nonsense. That is not true in any case of genocide that has been studied.

The warning that something dreadful is going to happen—not necessarily genocide, but some mass atrocity, some terrible killing—if you don't like mass murder, you won't like what's coming.

Hitler published *Mein Kampf* in 1924. He made a number of unbelievably fiery and effective speeches in the early 1920s that were rather widely covered in the German press and to some extent elsewhere in Europe—horrifying speeches. But he was not taken very seriously. He was viewed as an extremist who caused a commotion but would not amount to much.

Now, his rise to power probably could not have happened without some contextual factors. One was the unexpected and humiliating loss of World War I, embodied in the [Treaty of Versailles](#). Then the economic crisis of the postwar period that badly affected the fragile emerging Germany democracy.

There are a lot of lessons to be learned from that. I urge you—most of you probably have, but I urge you if you have not—to study the [Weimar Republic](#). The history of the Weimar Republic was a fascinating, creative, highly promising, emerging democracy that was smashed, and smashed in some part not just by Hitler but by the failure of the few existing democracies to cooperate. Indeed, very heavy pressure, economic and otherwise, was put on the republic. So it was not only the emerging dictator but other influences that ruined this very promising democracy.

If we had only known, if we could have anticipated what was coming, if we had had the sense to anticipate it, we certainly would have made every conceivable effort to preserve it. But we didn't.

So there was a context of great fear and desperation. When Hitler came to power, he made anti-Semitism and hyper-nationalism the official state ideology of the Third Reich, and reinforced this brilliantly with insistent virulent propaganda, dramatic theatrical rallies, and pervasive anti-Jewish laws.

That is very similar to other genocides. We know more about the Holocaust, but very similar events. [Dallaire](#) touched on some similar things in Rwanda.

Now, it is also important to realize that there is a regional setting and regional influences. In the Holocaust case, it was not just a German phenomenon, but many European countries participated, building on the anti-Semitism that existed widely through Europe, and cleverly playing on that and exacerbating it. Many of the countries ducked the worst responsibility by not killing very many Jews themselves but by very efficiently sending them off to death camps where the Germans and Poles and a few others would do the killing. But the cooperation of regional countries or countries with similar attitudes is an important part in many genocides.

So what are the clues from the 1920s and 1930s about prevention of genocide before we move on to some more recent ones? What are some lessons of the Holocaust?

One is that human rights violations within a country are associated with a higher risk of mass violence both inside and outside the country.

Another is that deeply ingrained intolerance, prejudice, and ethnocentrism, depreciation of one or more out groups, especially when associated with hyper-nationalistic and other fanatic orientations, such as religious and ethnic fanaticism, these make for sharp dichotomies—us against them, true believer or infidel. That kind of orientation can spread like a viral infection through a population and across national boundaries. Once released, these hateful viruses are very hard to contain. That is a lesson for the world.

It is awful for the world to say, as we have so often, "Well, it's a shame that it's happening in that country. Too bad. We're very sorry about it. But it doesn't affect us. It's sort of long ago and far away."

Not so. Less so now than ever. There is a very high risk that it will affect us, many of us. It can affect us all.

It used to mean only the neighboring countries and the outpouring of refugees and the triggering of regional wars. It still means that. But now, with the kinds of weapons we have, the spread of highly lethal weapons throughout the world, both weapons of mass destruction and others, and with the capacity to incite violence through modern communications, which have many advantages—as Betty [Hamburg] pointed out wisely, the advantages of modern techniques and education. But there is a dark side to the Internet, and that is, for example, that you could find out how to make any weapon there is now, including nuclear weapons. I'm not quite sure about hydrogen bombs, but everything up to that you can learn how to make on the Internet.

So this isn't just the nearby countries we're talking about, but the capacity for incitement of hatred and violence and the ready availability of extremely destructive weapons of many kinds. So it's really everybody everywhere now. I think it's absolutely fair to say nobody is really safe.

Now, let me say a further word, which you got from Katchadourian in this film, about the Turks. Even the very good academic analyses say that the genocide was 1915-1917. It wasn't. He's talking about 1894. There were massive killings. And that's the pattern: small killings, medium killings, big killings, goddamn killings.

That's the pattern over a period of decades.

President Clinton once said to me that there was no way that he could have known more than a few weeks beforehand about Rwanda. It happened, by chance, that I had a research unit near the Burundi border in 1972. So I had to say to him, "Honestly, Mr. President you're speaking about 1993. I saw it firsthand in 1972. That was Burundi, not Rwanda, but it was the same Hutu-Tutsi kind of problem."

That's over and over again. I mean leaders like Clinton genuinely believe that you can't know. Many of them believe that. But you can know, and you do know. And you don't need to have a lot of spies and you don't need to have satellites. The warnings are quite gross—increasing hate speech, increasing killings from small to medium and on up, and so on.

So it doesn't tell you, and I think we will never know, although there has been some very interesting

academic work, that a genocide would occur at 11 o'clock on Thursday in such-and-such a year. That's not the issue. You will know we're sliding down a slippery slope towards something really terrible, and it is very important to do whatever we can to stop that sliding into the slope of catastrophe.

Now, you find in the study of the earlier genocides heartbreaking evidence of a lack of international cooperation that might have had the capacity to stop it at an early stage, before it became a genocide. But, on the other hand, there weren't very good mechanisms for international cooperation. We never really got a League of Nations that amounted to anything. There weren't very many democracies, and this on the whole depends on democracies cooperating. So the heartbreaking lack of international cooperation is something that we have to focus on now, because we have so many more possibilities.

Kofi Annan broke his heart in some cases, for example, to get the African delegations to cooperate in recognizing the significance of the Rwanda genocide and doing something about it.

But we do have the capacity, the institutional capacity, and a lot of knowledge, a lot of skill, that we didn't have, and we can provide a great deal of capability, whether it be political, economic, psychological, or military, that can lead international cooperation for genocide prevention in institutions like the UN and the European Union and major democracies.

Betty worked with me on a committee for the European Union in which we reported to Javier Solana, a marvelous man, who felt that the European Union not only could do a great deal in strengthening cooperation among what is now 27 cooperating nations in the European Union—it has its faults and so on, but think of it, 27 cooperating democracies—but, in addition, reaching out to Africa, particularly, and to other countries. So institutions like the UN and the European Union have enormous capacity.

In the UN, if you're asking the question, "Who can do what?" which I've gotten into now, "Who can do what at an early stage, early prevention?" there is much too much attention to the Security Council and the General Assembly. These are the power bodies in the UN. But they are full of dictatorships still—not as many as there used to be—full of autocratic states, full of exquisite concern about impingement on their capacity to run their own governments.

So when Kofi Annan talked about humanitarian intervention, they said, "No, no, no, no. That's a way of just the rich and powerful countries taking us over and smashing us." When Amartya Sen and [Sadako Ogata](#) wrote about human security, the same thing: "No, no, no, no." We are seeing that kind of thing now with the so-called [R2P](#) [Responsibility to Protect].

You know, over a long period of time, norms can change, and they do change. All I'm saying is that there is a lot of opposition to humane and compassionate and democratic efforts to intervene early to help.

There is warning. There is early warning. The question is what you do with it. It helps a lot, in my judgment, if you have a capacity to act promptly when you recognize the dangers, and for that you need a focal point in institutions like the UN and the European Union. You may need multiple focal points.

Take the UN. There's a great deal that can be done, and has been done, by UNICEF, WHO [World

Health Organization] and UNDP [United Nations Development Programme], the various departments and agencies that are very deeply concerned about the places where they work. Most of the people who work for these agencies and departments could make more money and have more prestige doing something else. But they really would like to make the world a little better if they could. Their cooperation can be elicited. So there is more progress to be made, so to say, below the radar than in the Security Assembly or the General Assembly, where, for a variety of reasons, they are likely to be largely blocked.

Now, there are examples of improvised prevention of genocide. I was deeply engaged in the time of the apartheid regime in South Africa—Carnegie had a major program there—and they could easily have had a genocide. They had hundreds of thousands of people packed into forced resettlement camps, concentration camps, where you could barely survive anyway. It would have been very easy to kill hundreds of thousands, or even millions. Moreover, at that time they had weapons of mass destruction they could have used. They later changed their mind about that.

But there were extraordinary leaders, nonviolent democratic leaders, like Desmond Tutu and [Nelson Mandela](#) and others, who eventually played an important role in convincing the apartheid regime that one could deal with them.

So too the international community played an important part. They played an important part in the financial entities that made it more and more difficult to have a prosperous society. They made it possible by shaming the regime throughout the world. And there was a concern in that regime about being a pariah. Some regimes don't give a damn about being a pariah. I don't think that Sudan cares much about that, and Hitler didn't. But many, many regimes are concerned about avoiding pariah status.

You had people from outside, like Cyrus Vance, coming repeatedly to work with the democratic reformers and the emerging humane leaders in South Africa. So that was an improvised, a very brilliantly improvised, prevention of genocide.

But as Desmond Tutu pointed out, not in this piece of the documentary but in another piece, they drew upon [Gandhi](#). They had principles that helped them very much. It wasn't all improvised. It was improvised on top of principles. It was improvised with deeply knowledgeable and highly principled individuals, like Mandela.

But improvisation is not enough. You need to have a concentration and a focal point in the UN or in the European Union or in major democracies. We should have one in the United States, but we don't—maybe we will in a few years. Some of the major democracies do. That is where you bring together people from different disciplines and different countries, working together, who get around the contours of prevention, who in principle—let me exaggerate—know everything there is to know about prevention and know the world's experience in prevention, what has worked and what has not worked, but especially what has worked and what looks promising. So they are available to apply that knowledge and action to the early warning.

Now, in the UN, thanks in large part to Kofi Annan and Mortimer and others of that kind, and more recently to [Ban Ki-moon](#) and Gábor and others like that, we were able to create—and I had the great privilege of participating actively in the creation—a unit, now headed by [Francis Deng](#)—many of you know Francis, a brilliant man, a world figure, well known, highly respected, who has been able, with difficulty, to build a staff that has great knowledge about prevention.

Now, they can't go into many countries and themselves stop the trouble at an early stage—they can do some of that—but what they can do is be catalysts. They can stimulate UNICEF, UNDP and WHO and so on, they can stimulate thousands of excellent people throughout the world, or at least hundreds if you want to be conservative, who can do things where they are at an early stage. Early prevention is extremely important.

Proactive help: one facet of proactive help is preventive diplomacy. You saw that with Kofi Annan in Kenya a couple of years ago. It's important to bear in mind that he was not only putting out a fire but he was already planning with other African leaders longer-term interventions to diminish the likelihood of a recurrence in Kenya, and is regularly meeting with those leaders and the Kenyan leaders.

And you saw that he made an effort to mobilize the business community. We had a terrible time with the business community in the Commission. People like [John Whitehead](#) tried very, very hard with distinguished businessmen to mobilize the business community, to use their influence. They said, "We don't do that. We have to keep out of that. We only do economic and financial things, not political things."

So we would ask, "Well, aren't you interested in making money in emerging countries, emerging economies?"

"Yes."

"Well, aren't those emerging economies often in rough neighborhoods?"

"Yes."

"Well, in that case, wouldn't it be helpful to use your influence to try to diminish the risk of explosions before they occur so you can actually make some real money, instead of making some and then losing it, along with precipitating much death and human suffering?"

So, as you saw, Kofi Annan in Kenya tried to help the Kenyan leaders to see both what they could gain by a peaceful route and what they would lose terribly by going down the violent route. That is one of the general principles of preventive diplomacy, and the earlier it is done, the better.

Now, you heard several people talking about democracy, and I won't repeat it. But it is enormously important. It is a more general thing. It's democracy and development tied together. It's really equitable—and I emphasize equitable—not 1 percent who are very wealthy and the rest who are very poor.

Equitable democratic development. Much has been learned—partly by brilliant scholars like Amartya Sen and [Larry Diamond](#), partly by terrific practitioners, some of whom are here tonight—much has been learned about building equitable democratic development. If you do that, one of the powerful advantages, as Larry Diamond points out, is that there may be lots of trouble and then there may be regression, as we have had in the United States, as [Shirley Williams](#) pointed out, but on the whole democracies protect human rights much better than non-democracies.

They have the capacity to deal with conflicts. They have conflicts, but they have the capacity to stop

most conflicts below the threshold of mass violence. That's the point, below the threshold of mass violence. It's not a romantic view, that democracies are perfect or avoid conflict, but they have mechanisms and ideas and people and norms and institutions that can, with considerable probability, keep conflicts below the threshold of mass violence.

You heard a little bit about education. Betty had a terrific statement there. I've mentioned my pride that Morton Deutsch is here tonight, a great pioneer in the theory of research in conflict resolution and the application of those concepts to practice, as in the schools. Both Betty and Morton have done wonderful work in the schools.

I was very active in my Carnegie years, and even before in my Academy years, in pushing hard to improve education in math, science, and technology.

Wonderful. You need that for a prosperous economy. You need that for the intellectual stimulation and the many gains that come from math, science, and technology.

But we have neglected very seriously, you might say, the other half—that is education in conflict resolution, violence prevention, and mutual accommodation. If you can't have that kind of education well absorbed, you are likely to blow sky high sooner or later. Whether we will get out of this century depends on whether we really have a depth of education—not just in schools but throughout the cultures, starting, of course, mainly with the democratic cultures—that we are able to know about and to do conflict resolution and violence prevention and mutual accommodation and learn how to compromise.

Elections aren't worth much if there hasn't been experience with learning compromise. If you plunge into an election without preparation, you are likely to have the bad guys win and to have terrible things happen. You need a lot of learning about give and take, mutual accommodation, compromise, to have elections really work out well. So, too, elections at the point of a gun are not worth very much.

These developments take time and skill and international cooperation. They are hard to do.

With respect to education, Betty touched on a concept that I personally think is enormously important, and that is the fact that you must learn mutual aid for mutual benefit. You must learn that there are many things you need and want, that humanity needs and wants, that cannot be obtained without a high level of cooperation.

They just can't. It's not a practical proposition. It's not some sentimental attitude.

What am I talking about? Betty mentioned examples in the schools, where kids can learn that everybody can contribute something. But in the larger scale of things, that kind of cooperation is necessary for dealing with environmental problems, dealing with climate change, dealing with serious agricultural problems, with water, the distribution of water in the world, and, perhaps above all, with avoiding nuclear war.

There is no way to avoid nuclear war without a high degree of international cooperation. That's why there is a revival now. [Sid Drell](#) and Bill Perry touched on it. There's a revival of extremely difficult efforts to move toward the elimination of nuclear weapons, or at least getting them to far lower levels and with many more safeguards than we have today, because if we don't have the kind of

cooperation necessary for that, we probably will have nuclear war in this century.

And of course, when you are talking about that, you are not just talking about genocide, you're talking about humanicide.

We had a debate in the scientific community that we sponsored in my time at the Academy on whether a nuclear war at that time, some decades ago, would have only destroyed the Northern Hemisphere, which it certainly would have, and left the Southern Hemisphere intact, like the apartheid regime [South Africa], or whether it would have destroyed all of humanity. It's a hell of a debate to have. But you're talking about weapons of incredible destruction.

And don't forget the euphemism about small arms and light weapons. It's a euphemism. It's AK-47s which cover the world wall to wall. It's mortars of various kinds. It's all kinds of automatic weapons that can kill thousands in a very short time, and do and have in the past decade.

So to get a handle on restraints on weaponry, there are some interesting ideas emerging. But so far there hasn't been a lot of progress with that.

There is an interesting proposition, and I'll wind up with that in a moment, in which I've been involved with Sam Nunn and Sid Drell and [George Shultz](#) and Bill Perry and others, where we went back what's now 22-23 years to the [Reykjavik Summit](#), where we now know—we knew then, but we now know better from a lot of documents that were kept secret for too damn long—that both [Reagan](#) and [Gorbachev](#) were deeply afraid of nuclear weapons.

As Sid Drell often said, they were nuclear abolitionists. We didn't know it then. Many of us in this country didn't believe it about Reagan. I knew them both and got education that they were in fact nuclear abolitionists, that they couldn't see any political purpose that would be justified by a nuclear war, that it was sort of crazy.

But what to do about it? They both said at that time, we now know from the transcriptions of their discussions, their walks in the woods—they said, "We could probably do it in the next few years. In ten years it will be much harder. In 20 years it may be impossible." Maybe it's impossible now.

But what is being done is, first, to build a technical consensus, first through American meetings, then a European meeting, then an Asian meeting, in which technical experts of various fields have considered how you might do it.

There is a very important theme; there is an exclusive consideration of the obstacles in two ways:

One, the technical obstacles, like the famous one: "What if somebody hides a few nuclear weapons in a cave after you have destroyed most of them?"

And the political obstacles, which are equally great—the pride many cultures take in having weapons, or the insecurity they feel they're protected against by having nuclear weapons.

A variety of political and technical obstacles are being considered at a depth of analysis that they never have been before. It may not be enough, but at least it is serious. And it is developing a worldwide consensus, a technical consensus, politically and technically, on the subject.

Now the next phase is to move to a much broader consensus.

Can you engage the world? There was a time when we had a million people in Central Park on the nuclear freeze. It has been a long time ago. And maybe that's not the way you need to do it.

But in some fashion you need to build a very broad constituency for prevention, in all of prevention. Democratic leaders don't get very far without a strong constituency. They need to know that millions of people would back them were they to take preventive action.

But in this field the next phase, over I'd say the next five-to-ten years, is to build a strong consensus among reasonably educated people who are not technical but who come to understand the danger is still with us.

For example, many people now don't realize that the vast majority of the nuclear weapons from the Cold War are still on hair-trigger alert. It's amazing. Who is the enemy? What is the danger? But we have to understand that. Things like that have to be very widely understood.

If it means stirring up a lot of fear, so be it. There was a time when we all thought that the fear of nuclear weapons would put an end to war. That didn't happen. But maybe it's not too late.

In any case, some of the major democracies are working on this problem very hard, and a number of the American universities are making important contributions, some NGOs.

I regret to say that up until now the U.S. government has not been a major contributor in this field for a long time. It once was, but it hasn't been for some years. I have been hoping and have been personally engaged in trying to persuade some of our current leaders at least to think about the problem. Obviously, they inherited such a dreadful set of problems they have a lot else to think about—the crisis of the week, the crisis of the month—and to think thematically or strategically is very, very hard. But I am hoping that, maybe in the next three to five to ten years, the United States will make an important contribution, the way that, say, Sweden has.

Now, these things come up and down. Sweden is not contributing as much today as it did five to ten years ago. But, in general, a number of the major democracies.

You know how Germany has turned around, with its experience of the Holocaust, and the many, many remarkably good things that Germany has done. If you had told me that 50 years ago, I would have said "You're crazy." But Germany is a vibrant, peaceful democracy. They don't want to fight in Afghanistan. They are willing to do some training, but they don't want to kill people in Afghanistan. We are trying to persuade them to do more killing there.

Anyway, the European experience, as we've said, is probably the most dramatic experience. I do very much hope—I think it is possible—that the United States will gradually join other democracies.

Canada and Japan, by the way, are important contributors in this field. It isn't just the European countries.

To close, fundamentally modern humanity is a single, interdependent, crowded, worldwide, heavily armed species, and as such must learn to live together with minimal hatred and violence. Today

violence is more lethal and pervasive than ever before. For some, killing has become a way of life, and hatred is taught to young and old as an organizing principle for society. Too little has been done to educate children and adults about constructive, humane, and peaceful ways to live together.

Modern technology has made us affluent and interdependent and has offered immense hopeful prospects, but has also made us a jostling and heavily armed species. Survival now depends on learning to live together as a single human in groups, with a common identification in spite of diverse cultures and historical antagonisms. This must become one of the central pillars of modern education, diplomacy, and development.

I was very pleased a couple of weeks ago that [Hillary Clinton](#) almost said that. She came very close to saying it in a speech at Georgetown. I think that's what she was fundamentally driving at.

To diminish the likelihood of massive violence, it is crucial to enhance orientations of caring, concern, empathy, and social responsibility from childhood on, even to some extent from infancy on, ultimately mutual aid for mutual benefit within and between groups. To do so we must prepare young people to live together in peaceful society during their years of growth and development.

Moreover, political, scientific, business, and religious leaders must focus on prevention of hatred, violence, and power-hungry orientations, or we will all pay a terrible, devastating price. That is essentially what Kofi Annan did and is doing in Kenya. It is very difficult to do, to mobilize political, scientific, business, and religious leaders to meet their responsibilities in this field.

It is time for people everywhere to seriously address prejudice, ethnocentrism, and oppression, as well as the greatly enhanced danger of these ancient orientations in the 21st century. Only by so doing in the context of nonviolent problem-solving can we nurture a common humanity and at last establish decent, mutually beneficial human relations.

Thanks very much for your patience. I appreciate it.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION:

David, leaving out North Korea and Iran, which countries now strike you as teetering on the slippery slope? Which warning signals are we not paying enough attention to right now, in which places?

DAVID HAMBURG: There are still quite a few. Certainly, Burma and Zimbabwe and Sudan and Congo, a number of lesser-known ones.

You bring up Iran. I want to mention something. They are clearly going for atomic weapons, and doing so successfully, and it seems to me unlikely that they will be prevented from doing so. I hope I'm wrong about that, but it seems likely.

Now, that raises a very interesting question, because there are well-meaning people and sophisticated ex-diplomats who talk about, "We can contain them the way we contained the Soviets."

Can we? Not just Iran, but any culture that has an idea about paradise—you know, you attack, and maybe you get away with it, or maybe there's a retaliation and you are destroyed, but then there is paradise. I don't know whether that's just talk, whether it's a small proportion. If you have absolute concentration of power in the hands of these paradise-inclined people, I don't know about that. But that makes Iran to me more dangerous than any other country I know at the moment.

QUESTION: You mention in genocide that to be genocide it has to be planned. You mentioned the Germans eradicating the Jewish. In the Turkish-Armenian thing, was that planned or did that happen because the Turkish government was falling apart and the Russians were attacking them and there were Armenians between the two? I just wonder if they didn't have the qualification of a genocide, of preplanning? Isn't it too bad that it's disserving so many countries today, our country and countries all around? Isn't it possible we could sort of drop it and say, "It happened, it was very bad, but it wasn't genocide"? I mean that word seems to be very difficult.

DAVID HAMBURG: Well, it was a genocide. It was planned to a large extent. Of course, as with the Nazis, there were a number of situations that came up that were conducive to it and aided the planning. Hitler probably never would have gotten to power if the Weimar Republic had been strengthened and so on.

There was a whole series of things, bad events for Turkey and things that scared them and made them feel vulnerable, which, in turn, led some very bright people to think, "Well, let's blame this on somebody. Let's blame this on the Armenians primarily and go after them."

So that yes, it was to some extent loosey-goosey, but it was also to a very large extent planned, and especially as they went along. As Katchadourian brought out, as they saw they could get away with it, blaming the bad guys and killing the bad guys and getting away with it, they began to have the notion that their strength and their stature in the world would be strengthened.

They were also influenced by others. I regret to say the Germans played a nasty role in that. We and the French played a nasty role in Rwanda, I'm sorry to say. You know, there are so many factors involved, it's never simple.

But the question of planning and deliberate action by the government toward a vulnerable group is there.

But your point about couldn't we handle it better—in my very first meeting with Javier Solana, which was some years ago, I took the liberty—really, you talk about chutzpah—of suggesting to him that he take the position—he was for ten years essentially the foreign minister of the European Union; he has just left that post now. I'm happy to say he is going to be spending some time in the United States and advising our administration. Bravo!

I said to him, "My personal belief is that Turkey should not be admitted to the European Union unless they come to terms with the Armenian genocide. That doesn't mean they have to do what Germany has done, but there are lots of ways they could say, in effect, 'Look, terrible things happened. It was an awful period. There was a tremendous amount of bad things happening. In the midst of all of this the genocide emerged. We regret it terribly. None of us alive now had a hand in it. If we could have said something, we would have opposed it.' There are lots of things they could say, which are more or less true, which would get them off the hook."

He said to me, "Would you write that down?"

I did, and he passed it to whoever it was, one of the Turkish officials.

The Turks are, little by little, trying to work on this. They made some steps. There was a clever thing about a year or two ago. For the first time ever, an academic conference was planned on the genocide, and it was planned in a public university in Turkey. Then there arose a to-do, so they shifted it to a private university and went ahead and held it, the same meeting.

So some people there are really trying to do their best to get around this issue, and I think they can and they really should.

I also believe in pure learning, which I learned from Betty, at the adolescent level. For example, Carnegie convened the Northern Ireland people, as they made progress, with people in some other countries that were getting into trouble like Northern Ireland had had for so long. I have done what I could to encourage the Turks to meet with some others who have dealt with similar problems and come out on the other side.

QUESTION: I wonder if you studied cultural genocide, as opposed to the genocide that involves killing. What are the factors that are conducive to cultural genocide that are present or not present in the killing form of genocide?

DAVID HAMBURG: I haven't. I guess I'm sufficiently morbid that I've concentrated on the mass murder. I have a phobia about mass murder.

But the cultural genocide is an important issue, and also as a precursor to physical genocide.

You know, didn't we have a kind of cultural genocide in this country? We had it with slavery, as did many other countries, of course. But then there is a particularly poignant thing. After the Civil War and the horrible losses of the Civil War, with the magnificent leadership of [Abraham Lincoln](#) and [U.S. Grant](#) and a few others, we slid back into a kind of cultural genocide in which there was a very high degree of oppression. It took us a long time to get out of that. It's fascinating to think of how long and how difficult and how complex.

I never knew [Lyndon Johnson](#), but I spent some formative years in Chicago and I knew [Everett Dirksen](#). The way in which Johnson got Dirksen to help him in a way that I can't imagine any Democrat getting any Republican to cooperate, with the possible exception of [Dick Lugar](#) today. But in any case, they really thought of it as a kind of cultural genocide.

You know, you don't think of Johnson and Dirksen as highly sophisticated intellectuals. But they were really horrified by it and were extremely clever in trying to figure out the politics of it so we could move beyond and pass the Civil Rights Act and the Voting Rights Act and so on.

So it is a very important issue. I don't know that it has been adequately treated in scholarship. But I'm glad you raised it.

DAVID SPEEDIE: David Hamburg, this is, after all, the Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs. There is no more profound ethical question than looking at the roots and dire consequences of the subject of genocide, and there is no one who has brought more to this in a very practical way,

not only chronicling genocide but actually how we are going to address genocide, how we can prevent genocide, who can do it. It's the most practical guide to the topic, and for that it's an absolutely invaluable addition to our literature.

We thank you immensely.

Audio

How can we prevent mass violence? Drawing on insights from leaders in the field, David Hamburg identifies the clear warnings that always appear long before genocide erupts and the critical points of entry for early help to countries with troubled intergroup relations.

The Carnegie Council's U.S. Global Engagement program gratefully acknowledges the support for its work from the following: Alfred and Jane Ross Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, U.S. Army War College, Rockefeller Family & Associates, and Donald M. Kendall.

Video

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