

The Terrible Burden of Power: Leadership

“Good evening ... This is, as you know, our last session. Our purpose tonight will be for you, as a group, to show the results of bringing together substance and process. Throughout the past week you have applied the process of the dispassionate dialogue, hopefully, becoming informed about the issues that you will present this evening.

“I provided you with a question to guide your presentation tonight: if you were the leaders of this nation, what foreign affairs issues do you think are the most pressing ones requiring immediate attention, and what possible solutions would you offer that could lead to a safer, more secure, and compassionate world?

“Any initial views your collected wisdom would want to share at this time?... Yes, Mr. Hunt.”

“We did address your question, sir, and, we started off by concluding that the question would be largely irrelevant if, somehow, we as a nation could manage to isolate ourselves from the rest of the world and simply deal with our own issues.

“The problem is that, regardless of whether it’s good or bad or whether we like it or not, technology, communications, and market forces have dramatically shrunk Planet Earth to the point where our nation has become like a state or province within a vastly large international community being conditioned, more and more, by forces beyond our control.

“For example, we only have to notice how quickly we can transport ourselves from one end of the world to the other; how easily we become technological spectators at the Olympics or the World Soccer Cup; how rapidly we learn of tragedies afflicting other parts of the world; and how profoundly personal these tragedies touch our lives ... whether it’s war, diseases, economic crises, or the price of oil.

“Further, we think that only fools ... the human version of ostriches ... and irresponsible politicians could ignore this ongoing phenomenon... Although isolationism and neo-isolationism became unsafe and outmoded decades ago,

even before 9/11, political awareness and vision have continued to lag as we pretend in effect, that such reality is not real.”

“Thank you, Mr. Hunt, yes, Captain!” I called out.

“I’d like to add to what Mr. Hunt has said. One would think that the closer we’ve come to live to each other, the more careful and considerate we’d have to be of each other and of the world we live in, if only to prevent our neighbors’ problems from seriously affecting our way of life. A progressive interdependence would seem to require strong leadership on the part of our elected officials ... a leadership with a vision that transcends narrow or ideologically-based national interests; a vision, that encompasses as well the needs and desires of other nations and their citizens.”

“The military mind bringing in compassion into the equation; not surprising, but interesting,” I remarked.

“Well, hold on,” he replied. “Such vision might be confused with magnanimity and altruism. Indeed, the vision is high-minded, but the irony is that world interdependence, particularly in its latest stage—globalization—has made altruism a matter of self-interest. The well being and survival of other peoples and nations may very well determine our own.”

“Oh, don’t expect me to disagree with that view; it is well taken,” I replied. “Anyhow, such is your task here, tonight: to come up with two or three very critical issues demanding strong and energetic leadership. The type of leadership required, we must admit, is demanding as it is intricate, particularly in a world in which needs, values, and desires are so diverse, and where heads of state either fail to lead or are led by events that they themselves are unwilling to confront.

“We do need, however, a workable definition of leadership ... something simple that will allow us to place the group’s presentation in its proper perspective ... How about it, Mr. Edson?”

“Well, we discussed some attributes of leadership last week, so I’ll skip those. I guess that in simple terms, a leader is someone who yells charge! then looks back and sees a bunch of people following him... To me there’s no such thing as failed leadership or failed leaders, only people who fail at providing leadership... A leader is someone who leads, and if he can’t, then he’s no leader.”

“I hear a bit of Yogi Berra in what you just said, Mr. Edson, but I’ll say this, your definition makes sense ... What you’re saying is that, when it comes to leadership, the proof is in the pudding... I’ll accept it; it’s quite empirical ... if you lead, results will show, and that’s what counts. If there’re no results, there’s only failed leadership, as you say... Any other thoughts on what constitutes leadership?”

“Mine!” exclaimed Ms. Vanhurst, “the term is so elusive... I think that those who have spent time studying it, whether they are psychologists, political scientists or historians, still cannot isolate and correlate the necessary conditions and attributes that account for its effectiveness.

“Some, for example, define leadership as a uni-dimensional skill that can be

learned through training. Others believe that it's an innately acquired trait that a person cultivates and develops through time. Others think that leadership might require personal attributes such as integrity, intelligence, moral values, or compassion, and yet, empirical reality and history would easily dissuade us of this view."

"So, in the end, what makes people follow a leader?" I asked... "Yes, Ms. Lewis."

"Okay ... we do know that leadership entails more than personal attributes; generally speaking, leadership, I think, is about messaging; what is said, how clearly it is said, to whom, by whom, and under what circumstances (timing and existing conditions). We might safely say that the less burdensome the task and the less the sacrifice, the easier it is to lead. We also know that, all things equal, it's easier to lead thirsty people to water than if they aren't! This means that fears or strong desires or needs among the population ... whether real or not, whether tangible or otherworldly ... constitute fertile grounds for demagogic leadership.

"Moreover, followers likely will acquiesce more readily to a leader who himself sets the example and paves the way than to one who doesn't. As to the greatest challenge to a leader, in my view, it's persuading people to act against their own dispositions and to make personal sacrifices to attain a specified objective. You do that and you're one great leader. But, no matter what, I think it's exceedingly difficult today to become a national or world leader."

"Why is that?" I asked.

"A leader simply can't yell *charge!* and expect people to follow, unless, as I said, the objectives being sought are desirable and easily attainable," she began to say. "The leader needs to explain to his or her followers, not only the reasons but the implications involved in the call to *charge*. And, despite the fact that we live in the age of communications, such explanations cannot be effectively delivered through TV or radio sound-bites; they require time and sound articulation, normally what citizens tend to see in the State of the Union address that, unfortunately, has become nothing more than a rhetorical, make-me-feel-good type of speech."

"You don't believe there's a key ingredient that makes a politician an effective leader?" I asked Ms. Lewis, again.

"Oh no! I do believe there's a "one-two" magic, although at times lethal combination that will bypass all these requirements for effective leadership: charisma and trust," she said. "Charisma is one of those truly intangible elements that radiate leadership without necessarily there being any basis for it. It has to do with how individuals project themselves to others as well as how others perceive these individuals. Somehow, their personalities convey admiration, knowledge, and often fear, all at the same time. And, people happen to like and to trust these kind of politicians."

"Why would this quality be lethal, Ms. Lewis?"

“Charisma acts like the sun when it hits one’s eyes; it doesn’t allow you to see beyond it or into it. So, charisma easily allows political leaders to win the people’s trust, and when you win their trust you can do wonders. The problem is that the charismatic leader can be sincere yet quite naïve or he can be evil, but as long as the people trust them, they will follow these leaders almost blindly. This is why trust is mostly easily attained by demagogues; they are very skilled at leading because they know how to push the right buttons once they recognize the electorate’s fears, needs, and desires.”

“But I’m sure you realize that charismatic leaders don’t abound in democracies; the nature of these systems don’t easily allow for their long existence.”

“I agree,” she replied. “Western democracies are not set up to provide political leaders with much respect, which is why it’s so difficult for politicians to become true leaders in a system like ours....”

“What about indications of failed leadership?” I asked. “Any come to mind?”

“Other than the one Michael talked about ... you know ... looking back and noticing that no one is following you, I would say that when coercion and deception become the only tools at the leader’s disposal, we pretty much can say that leadership fails,” replied Ms.Lewis.

“Okay! ... Let’s begin with your presentation. I trust that there’s consensus on the agenda that you will all discuss, so, fire away! ... Ms. Vanhurst, I understand that you will go first.”

“Yes. I will make the initial introduction and others will deliver their respective presentations... I have to say that, while we tried, we were not able to achieve consensus on everything that is being presented here this evening. Although several of us objected to various aspects of the presentations, no one expressed fundamental opposition to the topics in general; and only three of us did express strong reservations to one of our recommendations.

“We, of course, developed criteria to determine which issues are the most pressing ones. In doing so, we realized that the absence of world leadership is probably the greatest hurdle the international community faces to solve these problems. If heads of states fail to acknowledge such realization, it is doubtful that they can even assess the significance of the issues themselves.

“Our group recognizes that ... other than heads of states ... there are numerous agents of change operating in the world today, from governmental and non-governmental organizations to private corporations, from technology-driven processes to masses-inspired action, from peaceful to warring groups. These entities do not always work in unison; their aims are not only different at times they even operate at cross-purposes. Thus, we selected one entity as the primary agent of change, the Government of the United States. We did so out of practical and idealistic considerations.

“From a practical viewpoint, it’s certainly easier to attempt to address one’s own heads of government than those of the international community. It’s also

less complicated to formulate an agenda through one group than to attempt consensus among many. And, we believe that it's quite realistic that we select an agent of change that is, potentially, the single most influential one in the world community today, even when it is less than well respected by many members of this community.

"By the way, having chosen our government as a primary entity of change in the world comes at a very opportune time. I'm sure you all must have read the *2008 National Leadership Index*, a survey on American views on leadership in this country. According to this survey, eighty percent believed there was a leadership crisis in this country, up from 77% in 2007 and 65% in 2006. This crisis extends across the board and includes business, the Executive Branch, Congress, religious, educational, the Supreme Court, and state government! Something to ponder, I think.

"Now, idealistically speaking, we chose the United States, not out of ethnocentric or nationalistic considerations—which we do not regard highly as guiding principles—but because of the values and ethos that we find in the history of our country and in the political documents that created our form of government and our way of life.

"Saying this doesn't imply forcing our political experiment upon other nations, but rather presenting it as an example to others by allowing these values and ethos to become the guiding principles and the interlocutor of our policies and our behavior in the world. In other words, if we believe in our nation's values and ethos, our political agenda should reflect these.

"We briefly departed from the seriousness of our task to borrow our guiding principle from an odd source ... indeed: *With great power comes great responsibility.*² Some may find it ironic that comic book mentality could generate such a profound sentiment, one that in our estimation underlines the concept of leadership ... what should we do with so much power in our hands?

"The answer, we thought, depends on the values guiding such power. Too often in world affairs and in national politics, great power has been used in greatly irresponsible ways. All too often, too, great power has not been used at all or has been used timidly, and that, in our view, is the portrait of shameful heads of government. Failing to act forcefully on behalf of truth and justice, failing to combat evil, failing to assist the weak and those who are most in need, and doing so realistically and ethically, if I may add.

"We sustain that political power, with all its attributes and elements—including diplomacy, economic wealth, technology, military force and others ... applied judiciously but daringly, are the vehicle of leadership; our values and ethos are the drivers of that vehicle.

"So back to our question, with so much power in our hands, what can we do as a state that would reflect who we are as a nation? ... We took into account that an appropriate and realistic exercise of power should follow a triage approach. We define this term in a twofold manner: prioritizing the use of political power according to the urgency of the situation in order to maximize the rate of success

or the number of survivors; or on the basis of where funds and resources are most likely to achieve success.³

“While the primary purpose of governmental power, one with our values and ethos, would be to look after the well-being of people—at the same time as individuals look after themselves, we recognize that our nation lacks the necessary means to tackle all the major problems in need of solution. The need for a triage approach indicates that significant issues likely would go unresolved due to the insufficiency of human and/or material resources while attention to others would be delayed for the same reason. Also, we define the term *well-being* as relatively ensuring the physical and emotional security of people, safeguarding their freedom, and generating the means that allow citizens to utilize their talents, meet their needs, and fulfill their personal desires all of which makes individual and social life on earth meaningful.

“Along these lines, we have categorized the issues in accordance with the timeliness that would be required to successfully deal with them. This doesn’t mean that action on *long-term* issues can be delayed simply because the consequences of these problems will not become evident in the short run. Timeliness here means providing the necessary leadership and implementing the proper policies today in order to avert a worst possible outcome years or decades from now .

“With this framework in mind, I will lend my stage to Mr. Hunt who will address the first issue.”

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Mr. Hunt walked to the front of the class as he said, “as we all know the world is now just beginning to emerge from a financial and economic crisis whose primary effect—from the standpoint of our discussion—would be to delay or limit the attention we can devote to the problems we will outline. Nonetheless, the problems are so critical that, unless an even worse crisis suddenly arises, one involving our own mortal existence, we will not be able to turn our heads away from their imminent solutions.

“Having made this caveat, we concluded that terrorism in its global form is among the most imminent issues that require the government’s attention. That terrorism has affected our national psyche and the national treasury is beyond dispute. The possibility, the worry, of being hit by an act of terror has placed demanding internal and external obligations upon the government, which is entrusted with ensuring the well-being of its citizens. This means that the way in which we deal with terrorism is likely to impact, not only on our way of life and on much of the government’s domestic agenda; it will affect as well the way in which we and our allies

address—or not—many of the most pressing problems the world itself faces.

“In addition to being barbaric, terrorism is also quite distressful because it is neither necessary nor required for the development of human life. As a society, we need health care, education, jobs, housing, food, clothing, water, and air along with sensible guidelines that would allow us to gather from nature all that we need to sustain life. We also need to protect ourselves from natural disasters as well as to solve those problems that we ourselves have brought about such as poverty, disease, pollution, and others.

“Terrorism, however, brings us much grimness and no added social value; instead, it is a distraction ... a very offensive and costly social, political, and economic distraction. It robs our country and the world community of attention to significant social problems while diverting vital resources that could be employed in areas and issues that are essential to human living.

“That terrorism adds no value to society should be considered an oxymoron. Nonetheless, part of the problem in dealing with the issue is that, inadvertently ... simply because it is an everyday concern ... terrorism is being presented to us as a persistent reality that has been embedded into our society; as something that will not go away. The government, media, and events themselves are conditioning us into accepting this phenomenon as an unavoidable part of our lives, similar to having to deal with traffic congestion and health problems.

“From having to get used to electronic surveillance to the color-coded terror-meter; from highway signs that remind us to call xxx-TIPS if we notice suspicious activity to being screened at major public events and airports ... from having to abstain from what once were jokes to becoming terror-sensitive citizens; from being taxed dollars for terrorist programs that could instead be returned to the taxpayers or be used for social programs ... to being reminded that our sons and daughters are being sent out to foreign lands to fight the war on terror ... all these are daily reminders that terrorism has successfully altered our way of life and that we have to adapt to this new reality.

“At first sight, it would seem that if the purpose of terrorists is to attack us, the logical response would be to defend ourselves; and that, we have done. We are in the process of building Fortress America, both within and outside our borders, in an attempt to safeguard our way of life. Since that way of life has changed and continues to change significantly, we are now told that the objectives of our defensive strategies need to be geared to protecting something more vital than our way of life ... our very lives.

“Expecting terrorism to be a long-term conflict, our government is going through a process of adapting to this reality in order to defend against it better. But here lies another aspect of the problem... We are fighting this phenomenon, almost exclusively, from a defensive posture which, not surprisingly, leads us to rely almost exclusively on military and defensive means.”

“Excuse me, Mr. Hunt ... what's so wrong or illogical about fighting back

against terror?" I asked. "Or are you suggesting that terrorists would want to sit down and chat with us?"

"There's nothing illogical about fighting back, sir; it's quite reasonable to defend ourselves militarily and through law enforcement surveillance or any other constitutional means. What I'm trying to say is that we have to identify other less reactive and more proactive methods and strategies to go along with military force; otherwise, we don't think... as a matter of fact, we're sure... that we won't defeat terrorism.

"We concluded that from a military standpoint there will be no winners in the war against terror. Terrorists will continue to score political points and create chaos abroad, and possibly, at home, too; they will make life somewhat more miserable and uncertain for us. Terrorism, however, will never be able to win militarily because it does not have the capability to do so... But then, we believe, just as strongly, that we will not be able to defeat terrorists by continuing to rely on a defensive strategy and by simply taking the war to them.

"As far as we can tell, this conflict will only lead to a political and military stalemate; one in which violence will continue to prevail, on both sides. We cannot foresee any scenario in which terrorists ... whether groups or states, even with possession of nuclear weapons ... or the Western world, could possibly emerge victorious from this conflict. The only possible outcome we envision is the perverse gratification that terrorists might enjoy in pursuing a nihilistic strategy alongside pyrrhic sentiments on the part of the Western world for denying victory to terrorists."

"Fair enough," I said. "How did you all come to this conclusion?"

"We concluded that the United States Government's war on terror could not be successfully waged through a militarily defensive strategy alone because our government is facing *significantly adverse non-military conditions* that are not conducive to a successful outcome. Under these circumstances, the likely outcomes the United States may expect through a defensive current strategy are increased radicalization of Arab and Muslim populations, a protracted military conflict lasting possibly decades more along with the possibility of a more destructive and deadlier war, with or without nuclear weapons."

"I'm assuming that you all believe that our government is not aware of this view?" I asked.

"Well, there has been a notable change following the 2008 presidential elections," replied Mr. Hunt. "Despite some criticism, mainly from his political opponents, President Obama has attempted to open a diplomatic dialogue with the Arab and Muslim world that might reverse, to some extent, these adverse conditions I spoke about.

"It is interesting to observe that a global survey taken in mid 2009, following President Obama's Cairo speech to the Muslim world, indicates a stunning reversal in how the United States is viewed abroad. With the exception of Israel, Pakistan, Turkey, and Palestinians, our image in the rest of the world, particularly

in many predominantly Muslim countries, has considerably increased.

“So, while the previous administration was, indeed, aware of these possible outcomes, but didn't know how to confront them, today there are reasons to become somewhat more optimistic. Going forward it remains to be seen if such slight optimism leads to increased innovative non-military means that could reverse the radicalization of attitudes and behavior of large sectors of Muslims and Arabs well beyond the Middle East itself.”

“Do you all think that our political leaders have identified the roots of the problem?”

“As best as we can assess, and quite a few observers have said the same thing, the causes of terrorism are not rooted in an Arab/Muslim-West conflict. The causes are to be found primarily in religious, cultural, and political differences in the conception of the world between a segment of the Muslim and Arab population—not the entire Muslim and Arab population—and Western nations.”

“Again, you think our government is overlooking such fine distinction, it seems,” I claimed.

“While the Obama administration has a better understanding of the situation, as I said, the issue is not that our government, and our people, ignores these differences ... just that we don't seem to understand them well, so we minimize their significance to the point that we consider them almost irrelevant in our policy making. For example, we believe that our leaders have underestimated—and continue to underestimate—the necessity of promoting religious and cultural dialogues and exchanges that needed to have taken place at the national and international levels and throughout all public and private sectors ... yesterday. We also think our leaders don't quite appreciate the extent to which economic conditions within Arab nations exacerbate these differences without realizing that the military response ... as vital as it may be ... by itself, worsens the situation even more!”

“Understood,” I said, reflecting a pensive mood. “Let me ask you about those religious, cultural, and political differences you mentioned, are they the only root cause of the U.S. war on terror?”

“The role those differences play, in our view, is quite significant, far more than what our leaders think, but they're not the only cause. We think that there's an underlying aspect that will condition, even more, the war against terror: the continued U.S. Government's inability to move beyond a persisting military stalemate in the region and toward creating conditions that will ensure, Israel's security. U.S. failure to deal with this issue accentuates ... conditions, and enhances those distinctive differences which in turn radicalize Muslim and Arab behavior.”

“Can you be more specific?” I asked.

“Yes. We see the solution to the Israeli security question as being the preeminent issue in the Middle East without which we will not do well in our war against terror or in securing a more successful political outcome in Iraq, in

Afghanistan, and in Pakistan... Allow me.

“There are those in the Middle East and around the world who are opposed to Israel’s continued existence under any circumstances; there are those who oppose Israel on account of land Israel has seized from Arabs as a buffer zone to protect itself from its enemies; there are those who oppose Israel’s stand on the creation of a Palestinian state, Jerusalem, and the Right of Return issue; and, there are those who are bent on avenging Israel’s past treatment of the Palestinians.

“It is all too obvious, that from a geo-strategic military standpoint, it is politically and militarily impossible for Israel to deal with these issues by itself. It is also all too obvious that Arab and Muslim aggression, whether the Intifada-type, launching rockets and missiles, military incursions or outright war, has not been able to force Israel to alter its stand, and that Israel’s disproportionate tit-for-tat policies have failed to convince its opponents to cease and desist. This is the deadlock that needs to be broken, and we don’t foresee that traditional diplomatic negotiations will break this deadlock; bolder and more imaginative solutions will be required.”

“Not even President Obama’s initiative through the assistance of former Senator Mitchell? I asked.

“Needless to say, we wish and pray for Senator Mitchell’s success. We think, however, that even Senator Mitchell himself has realized that there are vast differences between attaining peace in a localized conflict between two parties and successfully negotiating peace in an international conflict in which the participants include several regional and international actors. This is why we think that traditional diplomacy is likely to slow down the process.”

“Do you all believe that the 2007 Israeli-Hezbollah war taught us anything?” I asked.

“Not only the 2007 conflict but the 2008-2009 attack against the Palestinians, too. It showed us that peace in the Middle East goes beyond solving the Israeli-Palestinian question. Further, it showed us what we just said, that Israel will not be able to attain permanent victory in its conflict with its enemies or be defeated by them. All that Israel can do—short of completely exterminating its enemies or be destroyed by them—is to prolong the conflict indefinitely, while attempting to survive attacks from those whose sole purpose in life is to deny Israel’s right to exist. This scenario suggests that the Israeli security question cannot be resolved by regional participants alone, much less by the Israeli people and its government, without the active and creative involvement on the part of the United States.

“From our standpoint, the United States Government bears a great deal of responsibility for the situation; not only the Bush administration, but previous ones, too. Again, we rely on the view that a nation endowed with great power assumes the formidable, taxing, and thankless burden of acting above and beyond what is normally considered to be responsible ... as irrevocably high-

minded ... compassionate ... sacrificing ... generous ... and self-interested that assumption is.”

“Why are you holding the U.S. responsible for conditions in the Middle East when all we have done is to assist our ally?”

“Because throughout decades, the U.S. has allocated more funds and resources toward the military protection of Israel than toward brokering a final and peaceful solution to the conflict. That’s a fact... The U.S. has stood for arming Israel so it could defend itself from its enemies... However, opting more for a highly precarious military than for an enduring political approach to stability, the U.S. has adopted timid policies and behaved indecisively to the point of seriously faltering in its moral obligation to do as much as possible to permanently settle the issue.

“While the Middle East conflict was perceived as a limited threat to the instability of the region, the U.S. believed ... and was apparently satisfied ... by limiting the conflict to skirmishes or low-scale regional wars while supporting a defensively conceived balance of power by Israel as the only measure that would ensure its survival.

“Once it became evident that Israel’s neighbors were becoming more radicalized and that the conflict could escalate beyond the region, the U.S. has lacked the political imagination to go beyond the conventional diplomatic approach of bringing the opponents to the table of negotiations. Preferring to depend on mirages of peace that periods of military stalemate and the absence of war provided during the past twenty-something years, the U.S. has alternated between military support of Israel and political disengagement from the conflict.

“Further, we remember that the Bush II administration once opted to play the role of a stern father toward Israel only to abandon it soon thereafter and allow Israel to roam the region with little supervision. But everyone is aware that Israel can only defend itself through limited military means. Not being a major power, Israel does not have the wherewithal to successfully conduct and reach a final diplomatic settlement with its opponents.

“It is most interesting to observe that U.S. policy toward Israel has been very similar to the stereotypical views held by many American parents in middle schools across the U.S. ‘Don’t let yourself be bullied around by others,’ parents tell their kids, because self-assertion and courage are, no doubt, virtues that children need to learn, and the school provides an adequate setting for these virtues to be implemented. Accordingly, the U.S. has supported Israel’s quest to defend itself.

“The situation is complicated when all parties realize that, there being only one school—only one Middle East region—the issue of transferring the child or expelling the bullies is not realistic. The U.S. response has been to send their now grown-up foster child to school armed with guns believing that such behavior is moral and responsible, and likely the only possible alternative.”

“Hold on Mr. Hunt,” I said. “Let me try to follow you ... are you suggesting

that the U.S. should not have provided Israel with weapons to defend itself?”

“No, of course not! There’s no way that the U.S. was not going to stand by Israel. What we’re saying is that there’s no possibility of a permanent solution to the conflict without the U.S. physically guaranteeing Israel’s security. Israel cannot afford to return Arab lands without putting itself at risk; it needs the physical protection of the U.S. within its borders. At the same time, the U.S. has the responsibility to broker the peace and to prevent the type of escalation that brought about so much destruction in Lebanon.

“But frankly, the U.S. doesn’t have a great deal of credibility as a broker ... the more so following its support of Israel’s incursion into Lebanon, which turned out to be a mistake and recently on account of its disproportionate use of military firepower in the Palestinian territory.”

“Why a mistake?” I asked.

“Because it was unnecessary; this is why it was not a Just War. In Israel’s incursion into Lebanon, the Bush administration actively and enthusiastically supported a proxy war of its own, claiming as its rationale the desire to protect Israel’s security through its hope that Israel would forever destroy Hezbollah. Months later, we were allocating hundreds of millions of dollars toward the reconstruction of Beirut whose destruction we had supported. This was some kind of perverse logic, and in our view, these actions were downright morally and politically irresponsible. Hezbollah was not defeated and has armed itself again.

“In the December 2008 conflict with Hamas, there is no doubt that Israel was seeking to defend itself against the continued terrorist practice of launching rockets against civilian populations. The problem lies with the Israeli military strategy. In both conflicts, the disproportion of casualties and physical destruction has been so overwhelming that it is playing against Israel and the United States.

“The issue is not whether Israel has the right to defend its territory and its people; that’s beyond dispute. It is its failure to abide by that ancient rule, ‘an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth,’ that is so embedded in Jewish ethics. Israel’s disproportioned treatment of Palestinian civilians as a means of retribution against Palestinian terrorists places it, in the eyes of the world, in the same category as those it wishes to punish. And, with what results? All Israel can hope for is to survive and prepare itself for the next round.

“Israel’s insistence that ‘the Palestinians brought this unto themselves,’ does little to change the attitude of its enemies while it further increases its isolation in international circles. This trench and retribution mentality colors its military and political strategies. But, again, what has been the outcome if not an awful public relations image before the world. I repeat, Israel will not be able to solve this problem by itself., and the United States is enabling Israel’s attitude.”

“How do you all suggest we break this deadlock, Mr. Hunt?”

“First of all, we have to recognize that our inability—and Israel’s—to

successfully deal with Israel's security has unnecessarily increased the number of U.S. and Israeli policy-created enemies and opponents. We need to reduce those numbers! We need to take steps that will begin to clear the political and the military field."

"The United States ... needs ... to clear the field," I said pensively. "Interesting concept, but I'm afraid that you may have to elaborate further."

"The way we see it, sir, both Israel and the United States are in dire need of good will from the rest of the world. When almost the entire world, including our European allies, votes against Israel in the United Nations, when we see staunch defenders of Israel in the American media having to defend Israeli actions, because apparently the world needs to be reminded that Israel is worth defending, well, we begin to realize that something is not entirely kosher.

"It seems that neither the United States nor Israel have any credibility! Their policies and actions find little acceptance in the rest of the world. A worldwide opinion poll released in January, 2007, for example, indicates that world opinion of U.S. foreign policy had declined considerably.⁵ I think people were becoming aware of how our policies and our lack of credibility in the region along with failure to successfully address the Israeli security question have become related to our stalemate in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"To regain its badly needed credibility and good will, the U.S. needs to take the initiative by internationalizing the Israeli issue in a most energetic manner. This would entail leading major political, military, and economic powers toward a specific mission: ensuring Israel's security, if necessary by means of the physical presence of a multinational military force. Such military presence would be followed by Israeli return of all seized territories in question to the Palestinians, to Syria, and to Lebanon. Israel and the U.S. would then recognize a Palestinian state and would contribute to its creation and its support.

"We have to stop pushing legitimate grievances by the opposition into the background. There are Arab and Muslim issues that merit attention; and if the U.S. Government, along with its European allies and friends in the region, cannot broker a settlement over these issues ... one that involves all governments in the Middle East ... chances for a lasting peace will dwindle and, if that happens, we will not be able to create many of the propitious conditions that will be required to successfully wage the war on terror.

"To the extent that we're successful in implementing these steps, Israel would feel more secure and willing to resolve its differences with its neighbors; and the U.S. will gain the necessary credibility to reach out and transform much of those Arab and Muslim sectors that are currently fertile grounds for radical elements. Moreover, the U.S. will likely gain increased support from moderate Arab and Muslim peoples—not only governments, but their peoples—and, just as important, if not more, we may regain the support of our "old" European allies to contribute to a lasting settlement."

"But, what would that take?" I insisted.

“Whatever it takes, sir; whatever it takes ... unless we can foresee, and bet, that whatever the outcome in the Middle East, it will not be as lethal and threatening to the interests of the United States and its allies in the region and the rest of the world.

“We asked ourselves whether the Middle East conflict has gone beyond a point in which the only solution now lies in a global military conflagration, and we couldn’t answer that; no one in Washington can possibly guarantee that such a horrific scenario will not take place. We do believe that the longer the conflict persists the more difficult it will be to find an acceptably peaceful settlement or at least one requiring a low-intensity military response.”

“What you’re saying is that, regardless of whether the U.S. can successfully broker a peaceful settlement in the region while ensuring Israel’s security, we might still have to confront the possibility of a major conflict?”

“Well, we need to take the initiative by triggering a high degree of dissonance at the international level; we have to engage in radical and innovative policy-making that will politically and diplomatically disarm the opposition!”

“How do you go about doing that?” I pressed on.

“By appreciably, extensively, sincerely, and consistently reaching out to the Arab/Muslim world through practical and meaningful reconciliatory actions that will create high levels of understanding among antagonist groups, while Israel simultaneously returns seized lands to its opponents and allows for the creation of a Palestinian state. We need to do this without demanding anything in return in order to remove many of the reasons that cause international ill will against Israel and the United States.

“If we’re successful in implementing the above steps we think that the possibility of a major conflict may diminish; terrorism may diminish, too, insofar as the radicalization of Muslim and Arab lessens, thereby substantially reducing the pool of potential terrorists. In the end, the probability of war likely will continue to exist, depending on how intransigent the remaining opposition will continue to be. But then, once the playing field clears out significantly, the U.S. will face far more propitious conditions. This means that the real enemy will be easier to identify, and there would likely be increasing cooperation from our allies and other nations, including Arab and Muslim governments, in the war against terror.

“Actually, President Obama has taken the first step, quite a bold move in diplomacy, if I may add, by publicly addressing the Arab and Muslim world.”

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“Mr. Hunt, let me ask about our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan ... and I supposed that in Pakistan, too,... even Iran. We went into Afghanistan to pursue

terrorists, in a war that you all consider to be *Just*. We then declared war against Iraq as part of the war against terror; although this was a war that most observers and critics have said was a war of choice, not a war of necessity as Afghanistan seems to have been... Our involvement in Pakistan, we know, relates to the war in Afghanistan... So, do you all see a linkage between the war on terror, these wars, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict?"

"Yes, we do. We're facing a vicious cycle in the region that affects the war on terror. Terrorist threats lead to, mandate! ... that we become defensive in order to protect ourselves. Thus, we engage terrorists through military action and other means in Iraq, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world. Meanwhile, our military action in the Middle East and the unresolved Israeli security question fuel Arab and Muslim resentment that in turn lead to increased terrorist activity which then heightens our defensive posture."

"Hmm.... It sounds like the description of a quagmire," I replied.

"Actually, we face several quagmires, various military ones overseas and a political one at home," he replied.

"Yes, we're all aware of that. But let me jump to our involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan. If a successful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian question is tied to somewhat successful outcomes in these countries, what about newly emerging desires to withdraw from Afghanistan, our commitment to leave Iraq, how will these domestic pressures affect our ability to fight terrorism?"

"Quite difficult to foresee, sir."

"Would withdrawing from Iraq and Afghanistan be the end of the world," I inquired rhetorically.

"Sir, a prudent rule to follow when we engage in a war is to have a reasonable idea of what we seek and what we want the outcome to be. Well, when pulling out, the same rule applies; we need to have some sort of scenario of what the risks will be to our security and our interests. The danger of pulling back from any of these two unresolved conflicts, sir, is that the conflicts might worsen, which could force us to go back at a later day under far more difficult conditions.

"Take Afghanistan ...Any of the options are not pleasant. To continue to stabilize Afghanistan likely will take additional troops given that the political and military situation has deteriorated. Further, it will be the practical and ethical thing to do if we consider that, all things equal, a preponderance of military power may lead to a shorter and more effective campaign, rather than having to fight a war of attrition while hoping that the Taliban will cave in.

"Now, this decision will require the support of the American people. Such support will set the example to the citizens of the NATO nations involved in the conflict. And, this support, as we know, is not strong. So, once our allies notice that our will begins to waver, a domino effect in popular support is likely to follow.

"On the other hand, if the American people withdraw their support from this war or if we are militarily defeated, having lost any control over the situation in

Afghanistan we simply would have to hope for the best. Potential scenarios, however, are not pleasant either.

“For one, we could expect a very bloody civil war between the Taliban and the government. The social, economic, political, and military progress that so far has been attained will go to waste. And, of course, if the Taliban wins its abuses upon the population will return. Moreover, although not a certainty, it is quite possible that Al-Qaeda will return to seek sanctuary in Afghanistan.

“That is not the end of the world, but our military situation vis-à-vis terrorism would weaken. We have to consider that while Al-Qaeda’s terrorist plans currently take place while on the run and hiding in the mountains, a victorious Taliban implies that we will have to confront a terrorist state with all the military, political, and economic advantages that statehood provides.

“Such a possibility leads to a worst case scenario: a Taliban-led government in Afghanistan lending assistance to its religious followers in Pakistan, a nuclear state that is politically, socially, and militarily unstable.”

“What if we cannot dictate possible outcomes? We can’t possibly attempt to control the Afghan leadership, eradicate the poppy fields that provide economic support to the Taliban, develop Afghan institutions, defend the people, and train the soldiers at the same time we fight the enemy! Two years ago, no one would have believed that Afghanistan would become a second Iraq, Mr. Hunt. This is why I asked whether withdrawing from Afghanistan would be the end of the world.”

“I understand, sir... If I may, I can think of a practical way to formulate our policy both in Afghanistan and in Iraq. We must reverse the questions; instead of asking ourselves what we should do, what our objectives should be, we should ask ourselves what the various outcomes might be should we withdraw; the extent to which each outcome would hurt or not our security interests, and whether we can live with each outcome. When we reverse the questions, we begin to see the problem in a very different light. The next set of questions would likely be, how much are we willing to give,... how much are we willing to sacrifice in order to prevent *x outcomes* from taking place.

“Needless to say, if we are prematurely asked to leave, then such *x outcomes* will be handed down to us and we would have no other choice but to face them quite differently.”

“How about Iraq? Would we face similar conditions if we withdraw prematurely? I asked.

“Slightly different, but yes, quite similar otherwise. Not only that, but both conflicts are beginning to show traces of our Vietnam experience; we’re not losing any of these wars, but we must remember that winning is defined as being able to stabilize both regimes and then leave. The crucial point is that military success has not been easily attained while the American people are being reminded of the casualties we take every day. The difference? We now have a president who promised he was going to withdraw from Iraq sooner

rather than later if elected.

“In Iraq, there are three potentially realistic scenarios: the first one, a violent but internally-contained conflict, basically an escalation of ethnic and sectarian strife resulting in thousands of civilian casualties; second, a similar scenario but one in which heaven knows how many other nations and ethnic and terrorist groups will join in, resulting in a true Middle East conflagration the likes of which we've never seen before; and third, a low-key conflict that might be easily put down by the respective governments without attracting outsiders from around the region.

“The question we ought to be asking is, should there be a withdrawal in the absence of relative certainty that the third scenario will take place or that the second one will not?”

“Withdrawing our troops without giving ourselves a responsible answer to this question would be like playing Russian roulette. Can we afford to take such a gamble?”

“What about the first scenario?” I asked. “Would the first scenario demand anything from us?”

“As to the first scenario, that one would present a dilemma. In the case of Iraq, we might think that we're morally called to prevent such killings strictly on humanitarian grounds; no small obligation given that we were the ones who started it all. On the other hand, we could redeploy our forces so as not to become directly involved in a civil war in order to take fewer casualties and still be able to fight terrorists. But, will we be able to contain both Sunni and Shiite nations from intervening when they see their compatriots being slaughtered by the opposition? Won't we face incredible pressure from the international community for standing by while we watch every night in the media Muslims killing each other? How would Muslim governments react to this? Even worse, how would Muslims around the world react to a scenario in which they perceive Westerners, i.e., Christians, cynically enjoying the numbers of Muslims being reduced through attrition?”

“Altogether, we need to consider these possible scenarios and ask ourselves if we want to withdraw from Iraq regardless of whether we attain our objectives or not. If the answer is, Yes, then we should withdraw immediately to reduce the number of casualties and bear the consequences.

“I would be on the lookout for our government's most ardent supporter—and most formidable opponent—the American people. If we fall prey to even greater feelings of frustration and disillusionment, the new president and emissary-type representatives taking their pulse from the voters may very well decide to prematurely withdraw our troops from the region.

“Remember that second scenario I spoke about? Well, it is not difficult to sketch how it might play itself out. Given the extent of fanaticism, hatred, fear, and uncertainty that prevails in the region, along with the stakes—it's a

zero-sum outcome—it's not farfetched to presume that regional governments will not come to the support of their ethnic, political, and religious friends and allies. It's not farfetched to suppose that all splintered terrorist groups would not join in the battle. It's not farfetched to imagine that, whether accidentally or purposefully, Israel won't insert itself or be dragged into the conflict, pushing the U.S. into war if necessary, either to defend Israel or to use the conflict as an opportunity to eliminate groups their policies initially helped to radicalize. It's not farfetched to think that in such a major war, our government will not be able to prevent the destruction of major oil supplies and their pipelines. A sort of "we-will-drag-you-into-Hell-with" us mentality, characteristic of extremists with a suicidal bent would make our task quite challenging.

"The implications seem clear, now. Consider our involvement in a major war in the region when less than propitious conditions prevail. Deaths and injuries to our troops would multiply. As to the outcome in the region ... we know that what ties the world economies—the large ones and the small ones—together is their dependence on oil. There need not be a nuclear conflagration to affect oil supplies; a conventional war—given the presence of elements I just outlined— can do it and in more ways than one. Distribution of our oil reserves—for those countries that have them—would be insignificant in preventing major economic disruptions in many countries. Hysteria, fanaticism, and hatred would now set in, except that it would take place in the Western world. What happens next is anybody's guess."

"And I suppose that you think that we would not be able to cope with this scenario," I asked.

"Sir, I'd like to think I'm a bit more realistic; if we are currently having difficulties chewing up on a chunk of beef, I don't see how we will be able to swallow an entire cow later on."

"I get the point, Mr. Hunt... and I agree. I don't think we should underestimate the American people, I said. "We would have never become militarily involved in the region without the support of the American people. And, I believe the American people are capable of taking us out of the region even to their own detriment."

"No doubt about it, sir. When we analyze public opinion polls, we need to realize that the collective seldom thinks, seldom sorts things out reasonably. The collective is not the best instrument to formulate policy; elected officials and the bureaucracy are entrusted with this responsibility, not the public. The collective feels, senses, and reacts to external stimuli. This means that in the absence of strong leadership, if politicians fail to lead, the collective will do it by default."

“While we’re considering possible scenarios, did you all entertain the possibility that Shiite elements within Iraq could be intentionally dragging their feet in implementing reforms in order to force the American people to put pressure upon the administration to pull its troops out?”

“Yes, we did ... Miscalculations often happen because, while we may see this scenario as farfetched, the other side is contemplating it as a viable possibility for a myriad of reasons. And, of course, if this were to happen, the U.S. would be playing into our ally now-turned-opponent’s hands. Shiites being in the majority would think they could defeat Sunnis and establish an authoritarian regime allied with Iran.”

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“Well, I see another problem,” I added. “Your suggestions to facilitate a successful outcome to this vicious cycle will require a considerable increase in troops, and for a long time, too, but we know that such a substantial increase cannot be accomplished in a short period of time. We just don’t have the troops.”

“Yes, I agree, which is why we think that, we have to come up with very radical recommendations. The first one is that, if conditions call for a sizeable increase in troops—the equivalent of attaining military preponderance—the only way to do so is to internationalize even more the Middle East problem.”

“Why would our allies want to become involved in this mess to begin with?” I asked. “Surely, deep inside I don’t think they’re lamenting the imbroglio we’re involved in, particularly when we proceeded without their blessings.”

“One would hope that if they share with us the bleak outcome that may take place if conditions in the Middle East worsen, they will make the calculation that the cost of their non-involvement will be much higher than the price they will incur through their commitment to become part of the solution. If they waver, if they show indecisiveness, or unwillingness to help to lead, then all of us will have to live with the consequences.

“We’re talking about the possibility of having to create multinational forces to crush down the spiral of violence inside Iraq and Afghanistan as well as to ensure Israel’s security in order to allow Israel to return all Arab lands. The United States and its allies will have to spearhead this effort and substantially contribute to it.”

“Seeking a major increase in our troops might be political suicide for this president, don’t you think,” I asked.

“Not really. If the issue becomes one of ensuring the security of the State of

Israel, you'd be surprised at how many people would join!

"And, what about China and Russia... we're going to need their help, too," I asserted."

"It will be somewhat more difficult without their help than if they cooperate," replied Mr. Hunt, "but as long as they stay on the sideline, it would still be doable. The alternative to continuing to evade the hard choices on these two questions might be to have to live with a disastrous outcome, one that will threaten U.S. and its allies' interests to the point where a larger war might be inevitable. Now, should both China and Russia desire to emerge stronger than the U.S. in the short run—I'm sure both would want that—nothing will accomplish it sooner than finding ourselves in a war that will dwarf what we have going on in the Middle East. This is yet another reason why the stakes are so great in the region."

"I think you have stated your point quite eloquently, Mr. Hunt," I said. Musing over your views, however, I'm tempted to say that our elected officials now see Iraq and Afghanistan from a domestic perspective which, as you indicated, prevents them from analyzing the situation from the standpoint of a potential foreign policy threat to our domestic security and that of our allies. So, I'm asking you, how do you think the military strategy will work out in Iraq and Afghanistan?"

"That remains to be seen... So far, we can tell the military surge seems to be working in Iraq, although I don't know whether it's the surge itself or the possibility that opposing groups are simply waiting for the U.S. to leave. We also know that we have not reached the upper hand in either one of the two conflicts while Pakistan and Iran loom nervously in the horizon.

"In these circumstances, all I can say is that we cannot afford to fight wars of attrition; they are neither ethical nor politically wise. Ever since Vietnam, the United States had concluded that future wars would require not only the support of the American people. Far more relevant to military success was the concept of having a preponderance of military force under the assumption that fighting long wars of attrition would be politically defeating because it could prolong the conflict militarily, and that would be morally reprehensible, as you may well understand.

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"Mr. Hunt, I distinctively remember that among the criteria of a *Just War*, planning for a reasonable outcome was a must. In other words, the government needs to prevent a war from lingering on. That bring us to those timetables and benchmarks that some members of Congress demand. How

useful are these?"

"I don't see a problem with demanding benchmarks, sir." He replied. "That needs to be part of a military and a political strategy, and these benchmarks have been articulated. The problem lies not with the benchmarks but with demanding timetables.... What happens if the Iraqis or the Afghans fail to do their part? Do we blow the whistle and yell, 'time's up?... And then, what?"

"Timetables make sense ... in a different type of environment. This concept is a superb American creation for the efficient implementation of assignments and objectives, largely within laboratory conditions. At some point in time, however, we have to realize that Microsoft Project is hardly a suitable means to conduct wars.

"If we are going to pursue an earlier than necessary withdrawal in either country because of domestic pressure at home, we need to consider whether this path might not create conditions that could lead to an even more difficult and deadlier war in the future. We need to consider as well if we can live with whatever situation arises in the region that might threaten our most vital interests and or our security and that of our allies. If no one can give us relative assurances of the outcome following our departure, would it be militarily and politically prudent—ethically prudent—to withdraw? For, once we leave, it will be far more difficult to go back."

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"Something else, Mr. Hunt, Should our involvement in Iraq continue, assuming conditions deteriorate, how should we view this phase of the war? If the initial causes, motives, and circumstances that led us into a military conflict in Iraq were not ethical, as you pointed out last week, wouldn't such continuation of the conflict amount to a new war? And if so, wouldn't we need to re-examine our *Just War* criteria in light of changing circumstances?"

"Changing circumstances signify that the war in Iraq has now evolved into a new stage, sir; this stage being our responsibility for restoring peace and stability within Iraq and helping to rebuild the country whose destruction we initiated under conditions that did not meet the criteria of a *Just War*. I referred to this latest stage as the Good Samaritan approach.

"In our view, the Good Samaritan approach with the objective of righting a wrong that we were responsible for, would most definitely meet the *Just War* criteria. We have no doubt about it.

"It is our estimation that, initially, many within the Congress accepted such rationale for the temporary continuation of hostilities. Nonetheless, following the 2006 congressional elections, and perhaps as a reflection of the current mood on the part of a sizable majority of the American people, there has been what amounts to a moral reassessment to continue with the military conflict.

That is, strong opposition to the war in Iraq has emerged, as best as we can tell, because of valid moral and political considerations that are mostly domestic in nature.

“Given the difficulties we have encountered in trying to stabilize the internal situation within Iraq, it is possible that the Good Samaritan approach soon may no longer be a valid motive to continue our military involvement because internal and external difficulties are hindering the victim’s recovery.

“On the other hand, what if President Obama is told that our withdrawal would lead to a much larger conflict? A conflict that could ultimately threaten our security and that of our allies, not to mention war among nations situated in a most vital economic region, one that makes possible the livelihood of millions of people around the world?”

“At the beginning of this session I indicated how dramatically Planet Earth has shrunk. I believe it was Captain Francis who argued that, because we have become so interdependent, the well-being and survival of other peoples and nations very well might determine our own... Well, this is the situation the United States finds itself in today.

“So, let us ask, would this new phase of the war be *just* or would it amount to more of the same unethical reasons that got us involved in 2003?”

“We’re no longer talking about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. On the other hand, we’re fighting against al-Qaeda terrorists—although some were drawn into the conflict and others we “created” on account of our decision to invade Iraq; so we brought that upon ourselves. Hence, what practical moral cause or motive would lead us to remain involved, if any?”

“Attempting to prevent conditions from deteriorating to the point where the conflict could threaten a much larger regional or global war; preventing much higher levels of killing and destruction; preventing major world instability that in turn would bring about much more grief than what we are experiencing now—those, in our view, are the major moral reasons for remaining engaged. Do these causes and motives meet the just war criteria? Frankly, if they don’t, I don’t know what other elements would.”

“Even though many people are yelling that this is not our war?” I asked. “Is it still our war, Mr. Hunt?”

“Metaphorically speaking, sir, and in a much smaller scale, think about the Environmental Protection Agency deciding to clean a large tract of land that the government polluted, that if left intact would result in serious health problems for the surrounding population, the region, and possibly other parts of the country.... We created a mess in Iraq; that was our responsibility. But what happens if we fail to clean it up and the mess comes back to haunt us? What if such a mess would threaten our security, would we still think it’s not our mess? Could we simply walk away regardless of the consequences?”

“Wait a second,” called out Mr. Edson, “you have just described the elements

of a preventive war! You're talking about preventing something that may or may not happen; conditions that depend on probabilistic assumptions, perceptions, you name it. Aren't you, in fact, now suggesting that the lord should leave his castle and attack in order to prevent his enemy from destroying him?"

"Your assessment of what I just described is not totally incorrect, Michael," replied Mr. Hunt. "There are several considerations, however, that may impinge on your reasoning. The lord is not planning to leave his castle; he already did, some time ago and inappropriately, I may add, and he's still out there. Moreover, we are not talking about starting a war. The conflict started years ago and hasn't stopped; the nature of the conflict has evolved. The situation has become aggravated and could become even worse.

"Meanwhile, your statement suggests that we should bear the consequences of our actions; after all, this is what we teach our youngsters, accountability. At the same time, accepting one's own destruction without the possibility of making things better is nihilistic. In my view, this is not a moral decision, particularly because there are many people in the region, in the world, and in our country that were opposed to the initial Iraqi war and who now may be called to accept the consequences of the previous administration's actions. I can understand having to withdraw following our inability to do all we can to right the wrong we caused, but allowing our self-destruction or permitting self-inflicted wounds upon people is not morally responsible."

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"Okay, anything else?" I inquired.

"Yes, we wanted to say something about U.S. diplomacy that is closely related to what we have indicated; something without which our diplomatic efforts might not succeed. We are of the view that our government is not ... and has not been ... too adept at world diplomacy. Many of our policies dealing with friends and adversaries often reflect self-centeredness, arrogance, and condescendence... We agree that if our intentions were to intensify disagreements, increase tension or transform disputes into serious conflict because somehow we conclude that it is in our best interest to do so ... then we may find much satisfaction in the success of such behavior. Otherwise, it would be prudent to assimilate a new approach to diplomacy."

"And, I'm sure that you're going to tell us how," I said.

"Actually, this was a combined effort... First, we strongly recommend that we treat every nation and all heads of state, including our adversaries, with respect ... unless, again, it is in our interest to create conflict or to intensify existing ones.

"Governments, and their peoples, behave—react—in accordance with how we

communicate with them. We need to learn how much more successful our diplomatic efforts would be if we abstain from insulting, threatening, putting down or ridiculing our enemies—and our allies—and from exhibiting paternalistic behavior in our public comments toward other heads of states and their governments... By the way, if politicians find this approach too faint-hearted for the rough world of international politics, we strongly advise that they speak to their respective local football coach and to their litigation attorney, both of whom might be able to render sound advice along these lines.”

“You’re speaking in codes again. Am I supposed to decipher this idea of yours, Mr. Hunt?”

“Sir, it’s pretty obvious, once you think about it,” he replied. And, of course, it was... I had to grin.

“Another point... many governments, including ourselves, seek to disguise their self-interest actions, even their less than honorable-intentioned policies, in terms of good-will, hoping that nations will “buy” into our pretensions of kindness and generosity. The underlying rationale for this approach is that good-will enjoys worldwide appeal; people seem to look well upon kindness, benevolence, and generosity, so in order not to reveal our narrowly defined interests, we try to mask our policies with a mantle of altruism and kindness.

“Nonetheless, governments and nations have detected the pretense surrounding many of our actions; they acutely perceive our hidden agenda. In other words, because of increased skepticism and cynicism on the part of foreign populations and governments due to an erosion of credibility in U.S. foreign policy, some of the often-referred to as *Machiavellian* ethos and values no longer seem to work as well as they used to. All we need is confirmation from social psychologists in this field to convince us of this reality.

“This means that we would be far more effective in our diplomatic endeavors if we begin to practice old-fashioned good-will diplomacy, but not from a naively-conceived idealism; we need to do so from a practical and realistic standpoint that tells us that a good-will approach can work in the end. The biggest obstacle our government faces in this regard, I think, lies in our low level of empathy in understanding the negative and positive ramifications of this approach, likely the result of traditionally narrow interpretations of the national self-interest. Nonetheless, we think that the sooner we embark on a new approach the more successful our foreign policy is likely to be in the end.

“Also, and very important, politicians must be mindful not to cater to voters when they make public comments on foreign policy.”

“Why is that?” I asked.

“Because addressing our enemies with the intention of impressing our domestic audiences tends to distort the foreign message. To get elected or seek support, weak politicians ... the emissary type ... appeal to their constituencies’ passions and most basic instincts while arguing policy. When policy is then formulated, it is already transfigured, conditioned by domestic rhetoric. The

outcome splits the intention of the policy away from its ultimate goal.”

“Good point, it makes sense. Go on.” I said.

“Finally, throughout domestic political debates on foreign policy, differences in policies should be noted, but without having to rely on contemptuous words that denigrate one’s opponents and impede rational argumentation.

“For example, referring to those who opt for a diplomatic approach to conflict as appeasers or those who call for withdrawal as cowards—cut and run—is as inane as labeling those who insist in not quitting as warmongers. Again, if it were to be found that such labeling contributes positively to the formulation of policy and to cooperative partisanship, we would support it. Somehow, we believe that such behavior is more childish than anything else.

“And that’s all I have to say on this topic. Ms. Lewis ... your turn”

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“Thank you, our next priority is Black Africa.

“As a group, we are of the view that if there is a situation in the world today that demands a most high-minded and principled behavior for no purpose or end ... other than to validate our nation’s values and ethos and to confirm our humanity ... the crises in Black Africa are it.

“As applied to the region, a triage approach would be as imminently humanitarian as the one employed during medical emergencies. The goal is to save as many lives as possible by concentrating efforts on those whose physical conditions indicate that medical treatment can lead to recovery and away from those whose conditions convey the opposite prognosis.

“Relying on this approach, why then, have the inhuman atrocities that have been perpetrated upon innocent populations failed to awaken our national conscience and that of our elected officials? These atrocities have taken place and continue to take place against the backdrop of our callous and cowardly indifference toward the Rwandan genocides, the child-soldiers wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia and other Black African countries.

“A snap shot of various countries in the region will speak for itself,” Ms. Lewis added as she continued with her presentation:

- “Let me quote from Amnesty International: *Persistent and serious human rights violations, combined with the failure to introduce reform of the police, army and security forces, or address impunity and the lack of clear commitment on some parts of the government are real obstacles that need to be confronted by the top leadership of Zimbabwe.*⁶

- “There is continued fighting in the Republic of Congo between government and rebel forces, where more than five million people have been killed since 1998. Civilians in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are continuing to suffer at the hands of a notorious Ugandan rebel group, whose attacks have forced at least 125,000

people in Orientale province to flee their homes in the last three weeks alone, the United Nations refugee agency reported. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a "staggering" 540,000 Congolese have been uprooted in Orientale province by deadly attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) since last September. Further, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, during her trip throughout seven African countries in 2009, denounced the more than 200,000 acts of sexual violence the United Nations has recorded in the country as, "one of mankind's greatest atrocities."⁷

- "Also, according to Amnesty International, *for nearly two decades, Northern Uganda has been ravaged by conflict. Thousands of civilians have been subject to brutal attacks, rape, torture, extra-judicial execution and destruction of homes and communities. The vast majority of abuses in Northern Uganda have been committed by what amounts to an army of children. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a rebel group fighting since 1986, has systematically abducted children for use as soldiers. An estimated 20,000 were abducted between 1999 and 2004 alone. Up to eighty percent of the group's entire military force is now made up of child soldiers. The Ugandan Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) have also inflicted abuses and are reported to have used child soldiers themselves. In the last several years, there has been some movement toward justice, including the opening of investigations at the International Criminal Court, but the progress has been slow and marred by continued violence.*⁸

- "As many as 270,000 Somali refugees in Kenya face water shortages and worse than slum-like living conditions.⁹

- "Corruption in Nigeria accounts for over \$300 billion having been lost, according to a World Bank report.¹⁰

"And then, we have Darfur, a most recent human tragedy taking place in Sudan.

"We agreed that it was important to understand first the complexity of the Darfur conflict, lest we would be accused of stupidly attempting to dive into an empty swimming pool. Toward this end, we prepared a brief longitudinal presentation of events that not only would describe the essence of the conflict but would also serve to illustrate the insensitive passivity of our inactions.¹¹

"The conflict in Darfur began in early 2003 after two black African rebel groups attacked government forces to protest what they called discrimination by Sudan's mostly Arab leaders. According to numerous U.N. reports, the Sudanese government armed and supported militiamen, called the Janjaweed, to act as a proxy force to fight the rebels. Estimates of victims from the violence are in the hundreds of thousands, with millions more being displaced from their homes and forced to live out in open areas.

"In September 2004, the Bush administration stated that action undertaken by the Sudanese Government and the government-supported militia constituted genocide. In 2005, the United Nations authorized the African Union to send troops to the region but with no clear mandate to protect the civilian population. This responsibility, according to the U.N., lies with the Sudanese Government. On March 4, 2009, the newly instituted International Criminal Court indicted Sudan's president, Omar Al-Bashir, on charges of crimes against humanity and war atrocities. That same day, the Sudanese

government expelled 13 humanitarian aid organizations, thereby depriving millions of civilians from receiving international aid.

"It is worth recalling that President Bush had promised on several occasions to aggressively take action against the Sudanese regime. Well, in April 2007, no less than at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC, he declared that, *the brutal treatment of innocent civilians in Darfur is unacceptable*.¹² And yet, he and a reluctant Congress did very little to stop genocide.

"So, as you may judge for yourself, there has been a lot of buck-passing and empty threats going on"

"What is the prognosis, Ms. Lewis," I asked.

"We concluded that our tepid approach in Darfur is the result of a national refusal to acknowledge a subconscious belief that *we're not allowing people to die who wouldn't be dead otherwise*,¹³ she replied filled with anger. We understand that it would not look well on our international resume ... in addition to being very painful to admit publicly ... that in Darfur, as in other parts of Africa, the living are already condemned to die because neither we as a nation, nor the international community, see any value in them as human beings.

"Nonetheless, I think, that we're not likely to intervene any time soon. Our nation seems to have what it considers more pressing economic and political problems at home in addition to the wars we're fighting, so naturally, the loss of less significant human lives usually takes a back seat."

"What does our attitude say from the perspective of international leadership?" I asked.

"In the short run, we have lost a valuable opportunity to affirm our nation's values throughout the world." replied Ms. Lewis. "After all, if we were capable of invading other nations to instill fear among those who threaten us, we should be able to use our military power, in some capacity, to assist those in need. Although much of the world reacted negatively to our invasion of Iraq, it is doubtful that a small military presence in Darfur—since not much would have been required--would have elicited similar sentiments.

"Now, in the long run, who knows? The conflict may develop into a regional crisis as civilians cross into other nations seeking survival while the pursuing militias violate other countries' borders. The crisis may create internal political struggles ... a civil war, or it may present neighboring countries with the opportunity to exploit the conflict for their own interests...

"Not too many politicians ... if any ... had thought that U.S. disengagement from our noble yet feeble and ill-planned attempt to intervene in Somalia in 1993 could, years later, have resulted in our government backing anarchical guerrilla forces to do battle against potentially terrorist-friendly forces. And we know what happened there; for decades, the Somali people have had to

endure living in the most anarchical society on the face of the earth.”

“I agree,” I said. “But sadly, our foreign policy has never been characterized by its foresight; usually, it reacts to crises that have evolved over time because of our neglect.”

“Sir, Darfur is no exception. But what makes our behavior so blatantly timid is that we took the daring step of calling international attention to the plight of the people in Darfur by accusing the government of Sudan of genocide, only to follow up with talk, lots of it... I for one thought that President Bush was going to act differently than President Clinton... Talk about chutzpah, we were urging other nations to become militarily involved while indicating that we would neither lead nor follow with military involvement. All we were willing to do was to continue to contribute with humanitarian assistance, which, along with keeping the conflict going, it allowed us to claim ethicality.”

“A final assessment?” I asked.

“Two points, if we may. The first one ... today we ... and by we I mean the United States and the international community ... face, perhaps, the greatest moral test of the Twenty-First Century, one that will challenge our nation’s humanitarian and religious beliefs and values...”

“The world community has become smaller. We have attained a level of interdependence with the rest of the international community that was neither sought nor wanted, but one that we cannot turn our backs on even if we should desire to do so. Under these circumstances, we have to provide the world with answers to crucial humanitarian questions: What shall we do when irresponsible, cruel, and unethical individuals subject their populations to atrocities as a result of regional struggles for power, corruption, or civil wars?”

“Being the most powerful nation in the world, what can we do, what should we do, when on account of an usually small minority, hundreds of thousands... millions of people are killed, tortured, and displaced from their homes?”

“The answer to these questions will help shape our foreign policy in the years to come. Do we remain on the sideline as spectators? Do we continue to abide by the principle that the concept of national sovereignty is more important than the lives that together make up the concept itself? Shall we continue to allow the concept of national sovereignty to become a cover for bad governance, corruption, anarchy, and mass murders?”

“Mind you, we are very much aware of the U.N.-approved document giving international recognition to the need to intervene in these instances ... regardless of whether the victimizing government likes it or not... Still, what does the United States, the most powerful, and supposedly, moral force on earth, do to assist these victims other than to emit empty threats?”

“Granted, we are not guilty of committing these acts; other governments are. The question still remains, should we do more than just denounce these acts? ...”

“Perhaps, no... We might want to think of mass victimization in these countries as an effective neo-Malthusian method of population control or

explain its inevitability in terms of an aberrant form of Darwinism in which the strong and most capable survive through a process of natural selection.

“If we think about it, mass victimization is a somewhat effective method of population control that brings with it some economies of scale. Having 250,000 dead here, 3 million there helps the governments’ finances as well as the world’s economic situation. The dead are no longer a burden on the state; the international community will have to spend fewer resources on feeding and caring for those who in a very short period will perish anyways... So, perhaps we shouldn’t do anything; just let nature take its course.”

“Forgive me for interrupting, Ms. Lewis,” I said. “I recall that what you just stated is very much the way things work today and has for decades. This is not planned policy, of course, but it’s not entirely unintentional; nothing that lasts for decades is completely fortuitous... It’s a political approach to mitigating crises in parts of the developing world.

“I remember detecting this taking-the-dying-for-granted approach after spending one year at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Our policy was quite typical; our government, and others, would refuse to become militarily engaged in a crisis, while giving gobs of humanitarian assistance in response to situations created by the lack of adequate and timely military intervention.

“These crises led to costly outlays of emergency relief, transition, and development programs to help rebuild previously attained and now destroyed levels of development. In the case of Sierra Leone, where I was involved, I concluded that the levels of humanitarian assistance by the end of the conflict ... in the millions ... had been two or three times as much as would have been needed had the crisis been contained at an earlier stage. I observed the same cycle in various countries in West and Central Africa: we respond late to events ... so we end up feeding the hungry, healing the injured, burying the dead, only to start rebuilding what we allowed to be destroyed; the waste of resources and lives is simply enormous.”

“Did you find it frustrating?” asked Ms Lewis.

“Very much so... Now, I do have a question; do you have any suggestions regarding what to do?”

“We think that there are only three possible responses: either we let these conflicts go unabated and allow these societies to consume themselves into extinction through warfare and disease ... which will save us a great deal of relief funds in the short run; or we continue with the approach you have described ... diplomacy, humanitarian assistance, rebuilding, destruction, more diplomacy ... which, frankly, is extremely costly and accomplishes very little; or we truly regain our humanity and share it with those who are less fortunate, whose only fault lies in their not being born in a country like ours.

“We discussed the concept of a small yet vigorous international military force that would intervene at the first sign of conflict in order to prevent a situation

from getting out of hand; this is the small town marshal's approach. This alternative would operate in conjunction with the need to recreate some forms of international trusteeships as a means of ensuring that development will take roots and that the population will be protected, and implemented ... as this expert on Africa proposes ... in a manner that dispels disreputable colonialist practices."¹⁴

"Very well, thank you... I believe you said you had two points," I prompted.

"Yes, our second point," she continued. "Nothing reflects the current sentiments of the U.S. and the international community toward Darfur better than the words of former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State and now president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, who unwittingly remarked, *Frankly, I don't think foreign forces want to get in the middle of a tribal war of Sudanese.*¹⁵ His words validate, all too well, the view that we're simply allowing people to die who would be dead otherwise. I guess that our elected officials must thank their lucky stars that the American people don't give much of a damn for the people in Darfur, otherwise we would have to become involved in yet another crisis."

"I see ... so you all believe that we're fortunate that we're not as ethical and humane as we thought we were?" I asked.

"Cynically speaking, yes. Nonetheless, we thought that we weren't going to let our highest elected officials off the hook so easily. That we, as the most powerful and, once again, supposedly moral political system in the world have allowed numerous acts of genocides, civil wars, and ethnic cleansing to have happened with callous disregard while dedicating so little of our effort to stop them is truly revolting and morally despicable.

"Such unworthy actions are not at all commensurate with our tradition, with our ethos ... with what we are as a people... And, let's face it, that's all we have that would set us apart from other nations. The fact that we might be richer or militarily more powerful is not worth a sack of beans unless we use that power for the purposes for which this nation was created.

"We realize that there are other peoples and governments within the international community who are honorable and who would likely take it upon themselves to lead on this issue if only they had our resources... Irony of ironies, we have the resources but we lack the will to leave our comfortable domestic cocoon ... our soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan excepted ... to help peoples who are being slaughtered by their leaders.

"Therefore, most of us agreed that we are going to put our collective efforts into soliciting the means to create a permanent public exhibition on this issue. It will serve as a reminder to the public conscience of what our misguided leadership ... or more to the point ... the absence of leadership can bring about.

"Inasmuch as the galleries of photos, statues, and monuments of our patriotic and elected public officials throughout our nation's capital constitute our own American Political Hall of Fame, we will work toward instituting the American Political Hall of Shame with the purpose in mind of gathering,

recording and exhibiting material related to domestic and world incidents that we have allowed or have led to a great deal of harm to human beings. It will be our own version of a holocaust museum.”

“I’m sorry ... you’re going to create what?” I asked.

“An American Political Hall of Shame... Is there a problem?” she asked.

“Go on, please,” I replied.

“This American Political Hall of Shame will be solemn... a silent and thoughtful remembrance of those whom we have failed. It will not be partisan, because failing humanity does not constitute an ideological failure; it is above all a collective failure of our humanity.

“We concluded that, on grounds of condoning atrocities through omissions of moral leadership in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, Rwanda, Congo, Uganda, and Darfur, our first inductees would be Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush.”

“I see... You’re all serious about this, aren’t you?” I asked.

“There you go. I knew this idea was ridiculous!” mumbled Captain Francis.

“Well, actually we couldn’t attain consensus on this idea, sir,” replied Ms. Lewis. “As I said, several of us had serious reservations; however, we all agreed that working to institute a Political Hall of Shame, as long as it remains nonpartisan and we try not to politicize it, might go a long way in instilling a sense of humanity into our political process.”

“Captain, suppose you tell us about your reservations to this idea,” I urged him.

“Sir, I’ll be the first one to agree that genocide is awful and that our sin may have been one of omission; however, we cannot be expected to play the role of God in preventing savagery from happening all over the world!”

An altered Ms. Lewis jumped in. “We all agreed with you, Captain, and Ms. Vanhurst explained it all too clearly as she suggested a triage approach to the most pressing problems. But we’re not talking about playing God or eradicating disease from the entire world all at once. We’re talking about doing more than just taking a political stance in instances when, by doing what at the time was doable, we could have prevented hundreds of thousands of lives from being butchered.

“There may have been times when perhaps it would have been more difficult to prevent these acts of genocide; I’m thinking Cambodia during the years of the Cold War. But Rwanda and Darfur were very... and I mean very, preventable events.”

“I agree, Ms. Lewis, that we could have prevented or greatly reduced the level of atrocities in these areas,” I suggested. “Now, as to an American Political Hall of Shame... u h, let me ask you, would it be fair to do such thing? After all, presidents do a great deal of good. Former President Clinton has been a major force behind the tsunami relief fund and the AIDS prevention programs, speaking up on global warming, setting up the Haitian Relief

Fund, you name it. President Bush also has pushed forth AIDS and malaria prevention programs in Africa. I mean, don't these things count?"

"I'm sure they count, although for something else, perhaps," answered Ms. Lewis. "You can be the best person in the world, sir, but you know very well that if you cause injury or death to someone else, rob millions from shareholders, or commit pederasty, you end up in jail, even if you had been a saint all along. Since these individuals broke no laws, they can't be prosecuted; the world, it seems, only prosecutes acts of commission, not of omission. The rationale behind our idea is that what our leaders allowed to happen in these countries brings nothing but indignation and shame to our country. We thought that this is one way of doing something about it."

"I think I understand," I said, somberly.

"At the same time," interjected Ms. Vanhurst, "it occurred to us that we could use this institution to try to bring about change in political behavior as well. In other words, why not induct those politicians that conduct themselves in a manner that brings shame to our political process as we all discussed last week? And guess what? No one was opposed!"

"That's quite a task that you all have imposed on yourselves," I said. "I wish you the very best."

"Sir, I never thought that we would find consensus on this issue so quickly among all of us."

"And, who's the brainchild behind this ... museum?"

"Mr. Hunt, sir; he felt that strong about it, and we all supported his suggestion," remarked Ms. Lewis.

"Hmm ... okay. What do we have next?" I asked.

"Next, Mr. Edson will make a presentation on our next priority, global warming," said Ms. Vanhurst.

"Oh? ... And to what do you owe such honor, Mr. Edson?" I asked.

"I guess that I was far more intransigent than anyone else about this issue," he remarked.

"Very well, let's hear about your intransigence, Mr. Edson," I replied.

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"Thank you," he responded as he held up a large collage that he began to explain:

"Similar to what Ms. Lewis did on Darfur, we thought that we would mount a collage of news stories appearing in the media in the last year or so about global warming on the basis of which I will make a few observations. Naturally, we had to cut and paste a lot, but we feel that we have kept the gist of each story.¹⁶

"Let me summarize them at this point:

“Icebergs melt; deserts creep into populated areas; old diseases reappear; and just when we thought that we were doing a good thing by getting rid of air pollution, some study tells us that doing so could accelerate global warming.

“Little cute frogs will perish along with other wildlife; the Amazon is drying up, and that’s a lot of river drying up! ... The oceans are going to die; the earth’s temperature may increase by 10.4 degrees by the year 2100, which is why the Arctic and glaciers are melting, which happens to be one side of global warming; the other one?... This environmental nightmare is likely to become the Twenty-First Century’s version of the Gold Rush, as some are looking forward to profit from this problem.

“While President Bush touted his own environmental policy, he was being told by former Republican heads of EPA that he was not doing enough about global warming. So, to prove them wrong, he orders a study of how global warming is affecting his favorite pets, polar bears, while trying, unsuccessfully, thank God, to circumvent the Clean Air Act’s emission rules.

“But, do not fear, although the earth’s temperature will rise significantly, it will be less than expected ... that is, unless other studies’ predictions that the problem has been underestimated end up being more accurate.

“Former British Prime Minister Blair, relying on Britain’s Meteorological Office ...kind of like our NOAA ... says that global warming is much worse than it was thought, and a new report indicates world-wide devastation if we fail to deal with this issue.

“On the other hand, the former chairman of the Senate’s Committee on the Environment, the good Senator from Oklahoma James Inhofe ... you know, the one who thinks that the Abu Ghraib prisoner abuse was not a big deal ... well, we’re told that the senator believes that global warming is a hoax perpetrated by Nazi-minded environmentalists...”

“That’s a ... well summarized ... summary, Mr. Edson,” I said. “I presume that you wanted to emphasize a bit of the discrepancy that exists over the issue.”

“Actually, it reminded me a great deal about our discussion on gay marriage. This is one much politicized issue with science being used by both sides to support their contentions.”

“What exactly is it that you see as being politicized, Mr. Edson?” I asked.

“Well, it’s intriguing that all these studies warning us about global warming have come out in the past two years or so... I mean, there’s been a deluge of studies, most of them ... about ninety-five percent ... indicating that global warming is happening and that it portends bad things for people like me, who intend to be around quite a few more years than you will, sir... And, I don’t mind saying that I am kind of, looking forward to it, but your generation, it seems, is bent on trying to spoil it.”

“I agree with you, Mr. Edson. My generation is not conscientiously prepared to take the necessary steps that will afford you, and my own children, a much better planet than we have today, particularly, since it’s been our generation

and the previous ones that are guilty of being careless, wasteful, and irresponsible with mother nature...

“But now, tell me, you were saying that this scientific blitzkrieg is showing that global warming is happening... So, if global warming is real, as most of these studies indicate, wouldn't it just be a matter of beginning to do something about it? What's the problem now?” I asked.

“A solution to the problem has slightly improved now that President Obama is in office. This issue is being addressed in a very serious manner for the first time. But there are lingering questions that need to be addressed both by the private sector and by the government.”

“What are some of these questions, Mr. Edson?”

“Well, for example, how do we tackle the issue? To what extent is the damage irreversible? Do we limit emissions from automobiles and coal plants? Do we invest in technology to save us from doomsday? Do we trim back our consumption habits? Who should take the lead and set the example? How will the developing world stand to be affected by new policies? All these questions are up in the air.

“And then, of course, we all realize that there's a lot of money floating on the outcome, and I mean a lot! And as we all know, where there's money there are interests involved.”

“Who stands to win and who would lose, Mr. Edson?” I continued asking.

“I was getting to this... One would have thought that given what most scientific studies are telling us—assuming that this is not a greenie conspiracy to take us back to a modern version of a Jeffersonian agrarian society—once you have results indicating that something possibly wrong is happening to our planet, that humans are partially at fault, and that the results would be so catastrophic ... well, we would have expected citizens and government to gather together and resolve the issue.

“But there are a bunch of obstacles, we all believe, that keep this from happening. The most formidable one is dealing with our procrastinating attitude; global warming is a long-term, slow evolving issue. This is not like NOAA telling us that another Katrina will strike two months from today. Instead, we will not see the full impact of global warming—again, assuming that this is not a hoax--all at once but rather slowly and over very long periods.

“But the real problem we face is that we have this reluctance to deal with adversity unless we see the problem before our very eyes. Look at how we continue to ignore Social Security and our dependence on oil. Our minds are not set up to deal with the unknown, especially an unknown that will not begin to happen while in your generation. And, your generation, while seemingly sensitive to the issue, is subconsciously saying to itself, “Let others deal with the problem.” But we all know that to fix the problem, we may have to take radical steps now, not twenty years from now.

“So, the national mind-set is a big problem. It's like being told, ‘if you keep

smoking you'll get lung cancer,' but you don't see the cancer happening, so you keep on smoking until twenty years down the road, when you're in the prime of your life; then the cancer appears... Well, all you can do then is to hurry and buy a cemetery plot before prices go up.

"Another obstacle is the economic price that we may have to pay... In principle, former President Bush was partially correct ... as much as I hate admitting so ... in wanting to take into account economic factors. I would think that to the extent he did, it was because ... in accordance with Republican tradition ... he was trying to protect business interests more than the environment.

"In reality his concerns included workers, too. He perceived the problem in terms of whether to prevent potential economic hardship in the short run or impinging on our current standard of living habits in order to face a potentially calamity, that of saving this planet for us and for our children.

"The argument resembles that oil filter advertising that ran several years back on TV, 'You either pay me now (for just an oil filter) or you pay me later (to replace your engine).' Although this is the thinking mode that should be guiding our government's decision, we sense that short-term fears are preventing decision makers ... and citizens ... from developing a robust long-term strategy...

"How do I put it? We're simply too dumb to realize that the social, economic, and human costs of the long term tsunami could be a thousand times higher than whatever sacrifices we may need to assume now. The only difference is that it would be up to us the younger generations to bear the impact since you old folks would be long gone, and that would be shameful, don't you think?"

"Yes, I do." I said. "But going back to the oil filter or the engine dilemma, how should we tackle the problem?"

"We think that global warming will require a multi-disciplinary, multi-policy, multi-sector, and multi-global approach, and ... someone to lead the effort, so it's not like if one thing alone will do it.

"What disheartens us along with many in the international community is the lack of credibility on the part of the United States along with its inability ... or unwillingness ... to lead. Already, we have lost precious time, if only to begin to answer the questions I outlined. To his credit, President Obama has begun to reverse Mr. Bush's anti-environment policies, so this guy really has come out with a bang!"

"Let me ask you, Mr. Edson, did you all consider if there could be a win-win situation on this issue?" I asked.

"A win-win outcome means several things. First, whether science could provide a more precise answer as to what is causing global warming. Suppose that only five percent is man-made ... would it pay to embark on costly projects that might not effectively address the problem and which might detract from dealing with Mother Nature in a different fashion?

"Second, we all have to realize that, depending on the severity of the problem,

Planet Earth has to come first. In other words, we cannot think short run. If life on Earth for millions becomes untenable, then no policies in the world will put Humpty Dumpty back together... I don't think this realization has set in among elected officials...

"Once we have accepted that the goal is to save the planet, not our immediate livelihood, we have to realize that we're not saving it for itself but for the continuity of human life on Earth.

"It is then when we will need to identify all potential groups or categories of human related endeavors that stand to be affected in order to balance the impact on each one.

"In other words, who stands to carry the burden and to what degree? What are we willing to sacrifice, assuming that sacrifices will be required? Much higher prices for alternative fuels? Smaller vehicles? ... Higher cost for burning cleaner coal? More nuclear plants? Ugly-looking windmills off the coast of Cape Cod? ...

"And what about the developing countries? Should the strategy be regressive or progressive for these countries, and should it be related to one's current standard of living or not? In other words, shouldn't the richest and most comfortable nations be more willing to reduce their standards of living as opposed to asking those who can barely make it to maintain theirs?

"Once we come up with the answers, will there be enough testosterone, and estrogen, among heads of states around the world to lead this effort? The emissary-type representative that we spoke about in class won't do.

"One smart commentator conceded that these hormone-driven individuals may not exist. Seeking to validate a prediction he made in 1997, Robert Samuelson writes ten years later that, *No government will adopt the draconian restrictions on economic growth and personal freedom (limits on electricity usage, driving and travel) that might curb global warming.*¹⁷ Translation: politicians will stand by, acting more like children looking at their parents ... (the citizens) ... hoping that these parents, who are ignorant about the issue and lead self-absorbed lives, will tell them what they are willing to accept in terms of sacrifices.

"Right now, I don't think the oil industry sees the writing on the wall; it still feels pretty secure, which is why management is taking unimaginative pot shots at persuading the population that nothing but good things come from carbon dioxide... You know, sometimes I wonder how the children of the CEOs and board members of these major companies will judge their parents for disregarding the only world habitat we have... I for one, would feel very ashamed of my parents."

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“Let me ask you, do you all believe that science is being misused for political purposes by one or both sides?” I asked.

“Three things are possible: someone may be politicizing science or questioning it, either because they are reluctant to trust the latest scientific results—the non-scientific mind-set—or because someone stands to lose a great deal—wealth, positions of power, prestige—or it could very well be that some are truly in denial and believe that the problem either does not exist or will go away without much sacrifice on our part.”

“Wait a second, what about the latest report released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2007? What did it conclude?”

“Let’s see,... according to the media, the panel, made up of hundreds of scientists, indicated that *there is an overwhelming probability that human activities are warming the planet at a dangerous rate, with consequences that take decades or centuries to reverse*. These scientists indicate that, it is 90 percent certain that human-generated greenhouses account for most of the global rise in temperatures over the past half-century.”¹⁸

“This sounds pretty conclusive to me,” I said.

“I agree,” replied Mr. Edson. “It appears to be, by far, the most compelling and comprehensive scientific results ever to be published on this topic; far more than the IPCC’s earlier report in 2001. However, it was not compelling enough to have moved the Bush White House much beyond saying that it welcomed the report. President Obama, as I said, means business, although we have to see the extent to which the economic recession might dampen his willingness to tackle the issue.

“If I were the president, given how potentially threatening this issue seems to be, and given how much scientific evidence there is now out there, I would start working with Congress on formulating a coherent global warming policy ... not just relying on a piecemeal approach as we are now doing... Now, that’s me who’s interested in making this a better place for my future since I intend one day to get married and have children, and want to leave something to them that would make me proud as a parent.”

“Ms. Vanhurst, what do you think?” I asked.

“I think he’s redeemable, after all,” she said with a grin and slightly glancing at Mr. Edson.

“I do, too,” I replied.

“Thanks, both... But wait, I haven’t finished,” added Mr. Edson. “I still think that this issue needs to be further scrutinized because of the various obstacles that I have outlined. The problem is that, as citizens, we’re not expert climatologists and we’re not the primary policy makers. As voters, we’re only secondary policy makers, or I should say policy pushers ... we push our politicians into doing those things that we feel need to be done... But on this question we need clear, concise, unbiased information.

“As much as I’m in favor of saving Planet Earth, I realize that this is a

passionate issue, and as you all keep reminding me, passion sometimes may obfuscate ... is that the correct word?... Yeah, I think it is ... may obfuscate reason and process. Even with the best intentions in mind, in their attempt to press onto us the need to take urgent action, environmentalists, too, may fall prey to sensationalism, to skipping steps or to twisting the numbers.

“And then, of course, there are detractors of global warming, some armed with supposedly scientific information. So we have one group pressing its views one way, the other one pressing in a different direction,... well, it leaves citizens ... at least us here ... with somewhat of a disconcerted frame of mind.

“What drove us even more into confusion was when we began to review two documents revealing an interesting split on this issue among Evangelical Christians.”

“Evangelical Christians involved in global warming?” I questioned. “What on earth?” I asked...

“I know!” exclaimed Mr. Edson. “But let’s face it, Evangelical Christians are a social and political force to reckon with. And, they supported much of President George W. Bush’s political agenda... So, we were very surprised to see a respectful yet deep break within this group, one side coming out against the former president’s lethargic attitude on the issue, and the other one contesting the premises and conclusions of the former. We decided to focus on these two documents because it offers yet another example of the rift that exists between religion and science, this time over an issue that we think is enormously important to humankind. Further, this split is representative of the deep-seated divisions that exist within the population over global warming.

“May I?”

“By all means,” I said. “I’m quite intrigued!”

“The initial dispute arose over the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s (IPCC) Third Assessment Report published in 2001. Neither group has issued responses to the 2007 document.

“The first shot was fired through a neatly presented document, *The Evangelical Climate Initiative*, put out by a group of Evangelical Christians, mostly presidents of colleges and universities, church pastors, heads of mission-based institutions, and one or two climate-related scientists.¹⁹ They adopted the conclusions generated by the U.N.-established IPCC, an international entity that indirectly validates conclusions of scientific studies through its reviews of the scientific literature on the issue of global warming.

“Going through the list of names one can only be impressed with these individuals’ backgrounds, the more so because of the position they take. I would have never associated Evangelical Christians with progressive stands on social issues because traditionally they have ignored these matters despite their Christian roots, and because I realize that if they were to support these issues they would find themselves torn between having to vote Republican or

Democratic, ... but let me tell you, these people don't pull punches. They seem to be quite committed to the poor and to the environment.

"Their report makes four substantial points: First, it accepts the conclusions of the IPCC that human-induced climate change is real. Second, it acknowledges that the consequences of change will be significant and will hit on the poor the hardest on account of flooding, famine, violent conflicts, and general instability brought about by an increasing refugee population. Third, the problem, it says, demands a Christian response. The report characterizes climate change as a human failure *to exercise stewardship over the earth and its creatures and bases its response on the principle that this is God's world, and any damage that we do to God's world is an offense against God Himself.* And fourth, it urges all major institutions ... government, businesses, and churches ... and individuals to find ways to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the burning of fossil fuels, including advocating government *legislation requiring sufficiently economy-wide reductions in carbon dioxide emissions through cost-effective, market-based mechanisms such as a cap-and-trade programs.*

"The counter point, *A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming*, was issued by the Interfaith Stewardship Alliance, who since then have been reorganized under the Cornwall Alliance. This group of Evangelical Christians also insists that they, too, *share the same Biblical worldview, theology and ethics ... and are motivated by the same deep and genuine concern [the Evangelical Climate Initiative group] expresses for the poor not only of our nation but of the world.*²⁰

"Since we're talking about two entities that share identical moral concerns and principles, their discrepancies in terms how each interprets the initial IPCC's scientific conclusions is what calls attention to the split; it's over science and its use ... and likely, over politics and ideology.

"The Alliance identifies four major assumptions made by the Evangelical Climate Initiative group:

- human emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases are the main cause of global warming;
- global warming (which the Alliance doesn't contest) is almost certainly going to be catastrophic, particularly to the poor;
- reducing carbon dioxide emissions would significantly reduce its harmful effects;
- the effects of national legislation to reduce carbon dioxide emissions as a means to reduce global warming would be more beneficial than harmful to humanity and the rest of the world.

"It then goes on to say *all of these assumptions ... are false, probably false, or exaggerated*, alleging a misreading of the body of the IPCC and a biased attitude on the part of those who prepared the IPCC's Executive Summary. The report proceeds to argue on scientific terms how each of these four assumptions are misguided and could actually have the opposite effects on the poor! It even contends that *the idea of scientific consensus on anthropogenic ...* I think it

means humanly caused, or something like that ... *global warming is an illusion...* I mean, these guys are no shrinking violets either.

“The conclusions of the Alliance’s report dovetails, rather closely, with the views of the administration of former President Bush, particularly its opposition to mandatory caps on carbon dioxide emissions on jobs and the economy ... which as I said, are real concerns...”

“Now, such dovetailing with an administration that was not known for being aggressive on the issue, alone, would turn me into a doubting Thomas... I mean, it would lead me to question their intentions. The problem, however, is that I would incur into a “guilty by association” flaw in logic, which means that we have no choice but to pay attention to the Alliance’s scientific argumentation independent of its conclusions’ close relationship with the Bush White House.

“Naturally, this is not something that anyone of us is prepared to do. The most we all know about climate is that if we get wet when we step outside, we can safely assume that it’s raining; that’s it.”

“Well, if I may, Mr. Edson, what’s the cause of the group’s concern other than it attempts to debunk the Climate Initiative’s assumptions?” I asked.

“Oh no, it goes further than that,” he replied. “The Alliance’s assertions would stop in its track the process of attempting to reverse global warming!”

“That extreme?” I inquired.

“Well, listen to their conclusions:

- global warming will only have moderate, not catastrophic effects on humanity or the poor;

- the majority of global warming is natural, not man-made; what we have done to the environment is insignificant. [This is the opposite of what most studies seem to point out.]

- reductions of carbon dioxide emissions would hardly have any impact on its harmful effects, and *would cause greater harm than good to humanity.*

- and slam-dunking the essence of their conclusions they say, *the most prudent response is not to try to prevent or reduce whatever slight warming might really occur!*” (emphasis added)

“So, what do they propose we do?” I asked.

“Again, since what’s coming is not going to be that bad—according to them—they recommend that we simply adapt to whatever happens by creating conditions to protect ourselves and the poor from any minor negative consequences natural global warming will bring us... Given the incredible amount of scientific information coming out in the last two years indicating man-made global warming, the Alliance’s conclusions are as radical as the pessimism that the Climate Initiative outlook seeks to convey if we don’t act now.”

“Could we be talking about some sort of “paid ideologically-biased scientific announcement” being put out by the Alliance?” I asked.

"It would seem so at first sight," replied Mr. Edson. "The problem lies in those who signed this document. You may remember that mostly religious ministers, presidents of universities, and missionaries, signed the first document. Well, the list of names of those who signed this second document reads like a 'Who's Who' in science, many of them renowned experts in the area of climate change... Interestingly enough, although this group is made up of Evangelical Christians, there are no names of religious leaders, pastors or missionaries that I could recall. Maybe they all are Evangelical Christians, but the signatories identified themselves primarily through their professional backgrounds, and they're all scientists!"

"If I could use a metaphor to illustrate the point, the Alliance is like the counterpart to the proponents of Intelligent Design... I mean, if the views of the Alliance were to prevail, they would make Senator Inhofe and the late Rev. Jerry Falwell sound like prophets!"

"Is that what alarms you, Mr. Edson?" I asked.

"No, it isn't... Well, personally yes, but that's not the point... The point is that both groups cannot be right; they're simply too far apart. Someone is misusing or misinterpreting science... We just don't know who... And this is serious, because of the individuals involved and the gravity of the issue."

"Thank you, Mr. Edson, frankly, I'm impressed ... not surprised ... but impressed," I said... "Very well, what's next?"

"Wait! shouted Mr. Edson, "Not so fast. If I may, let me add to the confusion a bit more."

"Okay, if you must," I replied.

"This is what we citizens face regarding this issue. In two weeks, the following stories appeared in the media, which should be enough to drive the average citizen nuts. In late August 2009 ... the National Space Science and Technology Center reported that the Earth's climate had cooled a bit. Of course, skeptics of global warming immediately jumped at the news insisting—as they have before--that global warming is sheer nonsense.²¹

"The next day, The National Climatic Data Center, an entity of the U.S. government that records world weather temperatures, indicated that the world is witnessing ocean temperature records. Such increase in water temperature, says the media report, *is more ominous as a sign of global warming than breaking temperature marks on land, because water takes longer to heat up and does not cool as easily as land.*²²

"And one week later, another story pops up, this time in *Science* magazine, about a study reconstructing the temperature record of the past 2,000 years. The study showed that the Arctic cooling trend of the last 1,900 years has been reversed in recent decades, indicating that the Arctic, indeed, is warming faster than the rest of the planet.²³" There you have it!

"Well, in that case what are we supposed to believe?" asked a skeptical Ms. Williamson.

“Ms. Williamson, I realize that we are being treated like ping-pong balls,” I said. “and that’s not a good feeling. However, my suggestion to all of you is not to go with your fears or with what your feelings tell you that you want to hear. We are being told by a whole array of scientists, private and governmental, and international organizations that climate change ... that global warming is real. On the other hand, a group of skeptics who appear to be well based in science, too, is indicating the opposite. Without discarding entirely what this group of skeptics is saying, reason tells me that, unless ninety-something percent of the world scientists are completely off base or that this is, as Mr. Edson alluded, a greenie conspiracy of immense proportions, man-made global warming is happening and it does not bode well for humankind... Sure! it’s possible that all these scientists could be wrong, but on what basis should we take the word of the opposition and do nothing but adjust to the consequences of global warming,...on the basis of faith, ideology, politics? ... I think that this is one issue where, if God were here, He would tell us, ‘I’ve given you a great deal of intelligence, use it! You have stewardship of this planet; you take care of it.’”

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“Now, let’s turn the page. Is there anything else?” I asked.

“One last but very important point that we all agreed needed to be presented,” replied Mr. Hunt. “To some extent, while the political decision is made to tackle global warming, searching for alternative sources of energy that may result in cleaner emissions is critical for several reasons, but none is more vital in the short run than the relationship between our national security and oil dependency.

“Both global warming and oil dependency evoke the same lethargic attitude to do something ... someday. The difference is that while the expected catastrophic effects of global warming may not be anticipated for several decades, the crippling consequences of a sudden and substantial oil reduction to our economy and our way of life ... and the political pressures such incident would create on our foreign policy could be,... well, quite serious.

“If our economy stalls on account of disruptions in the distribution of oil, so will the remora-type economies that depend on ours for progress and survival, not to mention those in Europe... We’re not talking about slowly emerging problems but about a precipitous chain-like event that would throw the world in turmoil.

“When it comes to our oil dependency, our elected officials share a common attitude; ‘yes,’ they say, ‘it’s a problem; yes, we need to act decisively; but we don’t know what to do or how soon.’ Again, we feel that the emissary-type of

representation, coupled with the public's indifference and its in-denial attitude, are likely responsible for political inaction on this issue. Unfortunately, we may have to wait for a real crisis ... a nationwide oil Katrina ... for both the politicians and the nation to awaken to the need of solving the problem, now."

"Suppose you explain to us, Mr. Hunt, how does our oil dependency affect the nation's foreign policy?"

"Sir, we know that oil dependency exerts at least two types of negative effects on the U.S. I mentioned that our way of life, our political and economic systems is *unnecessarily and precariously* vulnerable to a serious oil crisis... Well, just as important, such vulnerability has imposed extraordinary limits on the character of our foreign policy and on our ability to wield power abroad.

"Take, for example the human rights approach we have incorporated into our foreign policy since the days of President Jimmy Carter... For several decades, this policy has lacked credibility, in part because of our oil dependency. Our ability to persuade governments into respecting international human and political rights and laws is being curtailed because of our concerns for oil disruptions that could severely affect our country. We allow human rights violations abroad and we enter into questionable political friendships because of our concern for oil... Our oil dependency has created moral contradictions in our policies.

"We must realize that other nations don't fail to notice that as much as our democratic and human principles and values are part and parcel of our national character, continued access to oil becomes far more important than good governance, civil society, and respect for human rights abroad.

"Thus, instead of leading others into accepting those values and principles that we believe enjoy universal validity, we support policies and governments that we would never tolerate among ourselves... Such moral dissonance ... or what could rightfully be called governmental *hypocrisy* ... is likely to continue until we decide to create conditions and technologies that will allow us greater energy independence.

"As a government, I don't think we're much aware of the extent to which international politics borrows from social and individual psychology. Despite differences in cultures, human beings have common behavioral denominators; people notice others' behavior and take their cues from them... What I'm trying to say is that our behavior as a nation influences or conditions others' behavior. We can only imagine the example that we are setting for the rest of the world."

"Mr. Hunt, would you consider that President Obama represents a change from past policies on this issue?"

"In terms of what we found out while he was campaigning, yes, there are notable differences, and I like to think that for the better. Nonetheless, much remains to be done, so we shall see how seriously the Obama administration considers this issue to be.

“Thank you, Mr. Hunt! ... Anything else?” I said.

“Yes, as a matter of fact,” added Mr. Hunt. “It would be negligent on our part if we didn’t specifically address the issue of nuclear proliferation, which I will do briefly. Would that be okay with you, sir?”

“Frankly, I think the group would have been remiss had it not mentioned this issue as a priority, so please, go ahead.”

“We have several concerns regarding this issue. The first one is that we notice that our foreign policy is slowly moving away from a position of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons to one of nuclear weapons containment. That is, our inability to create the conditions that would foster and advance non-proliferation is leaving us with no options other than to accept the increasing inevitability of the proliferation of these weapons.

“Whether we’re dealing with friends or foes, given that we have no legitimate authority over other governments, we face two choices: either we persuade or entice governments to favor non-proliferation by addressing their security concerns and/or other issues present, whether bilaterally or in a multilateral fashion, or we oppose them through sanctions or military intervention. But we must bear in mind that if these approaches fail, our only hope would lie in containing the actions of the new members of the nuclear club, particularly if they are not our friends.

“Economic and political sanctions create enormous social disruptions and wreak havoc to international relations while generating increased polarization among nations. Reaction to these policies often fuel a new arms race, in which case we would have to coexist with more nations capable of triggering nuclear holocausts.

“Nonetheless, as I had mentioned earlier, our government is not particularly adept at conducting diplomacy, largely because our leaders continue to fail to take into account the psychological dimension of foreign policy. The fact that we deal with human beings with whom we share similar traits and who respond to similar emotional stimuli as we do, should make us sensitive to the possibility that it might be prudent for our leaders to take a primer on human relations before we venture out into a world literally riddled by different cultures, languages, and historical backgrounds, as well as common fears, ambitions, and needs.

“Somehow, and for some distinctive reason that is embedded, perhaps, in our character, we tend to antagonize our opponents and to humiliate them publicly instead of initially attempting to draw them to us... While we mentioned that the essence of political leadership lies not in coercing others but in persuading them, we sure have kept an Old West way of treating others. We tend to forget the level of enmity and stubborn pride such measures bring about among government leaders and peoples that, more often than not, create unnecessary obstacles to potential negotiations.

“I have spent time trying to learn what benefits are derived from pretending

that we own the world and that we can order others to comply with our will. I concluded that our leaders behave in such a manner to seek domestic political support under the assumption that by intimidating or seeking to coerce our enemies we project courage... Or, we believe that unless we display a bully attitude, our enemies will not take us seriously. Either way, such an emotionally challenged diplomatic approach becomes a non-starter, particularly in the world of power politics, since foreign leaders normally do not take pleasure in yielding to enemy pressure in front of their own citizens. This is something we don't quite realize yet.

"We can only hope that our leaders may get to understand the negative consequences of their own behavior when they confound bravado with courage, diplomatic negotiations with timidity, and debate with argumentation...The future of non-proliferation may rest on our own attitudes.

"I think that's all we have to say."

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"Thank you... I agree that the issues you all chose deserve immediate attention, yet I couldn't help but to notice that you left what I consider to be an extremely urgent topic, and that is AIDS. I'm sure that you all must have discussed the merits of including AIDS among the problems requiring leadership."

"Without doubt, sir," replied Ms. Bynum. "Actually, the first and foremost problem we discussed during our private sessions last week was not the global war on terror, but the lack of high-minded and energetic leadership throughout the world. If the issues that we have discussed have become critical nowadays, it is largely due to the absence of this type of leadership among world governments. Having said this, Yes, we were concerned that we were leaving the AIDS issue out of our discussion.

"We believe that AIDS is right up there with the issues we have presented. AIDS not only kills millions of people every year, but people continue to become infected with the virus at alarming rates. We need to find effective educational tools, preventive medication, and cure for AIDS. However, we thought that despite the fact that we're lagging in all of these aspects, at least there's immense awareness among all governments regarding these obstacles. A great deal of effort is being made, most of it, we think, in the right direction; and certainly, there's a lot of funding, both from the public and the private sectors seeking remedies to this great challenge that AIDS has become. So, the reason we chose to focus on the other topics was not because they are more important than AIDS, but because we don't think that our nation—both government and people—is heading in the right direction in any of them."

“Very well... I understand what you all did much better now...

“I must say that it’s been a learning experience, I hope for you all as it was for me,” I said. “I thank each of you for your contributions but, above all, for the discipline that you showed when I asked you to argue against your own views and be willing to defend oppositional ones... I wish that each of you may become productive, relevant political actors and conscientious citizens... Have a good evening and a pleasant summer ... or what’s left of it.”

Endnotes

¹ National Leadership Index 2008, Center for Public Leadership, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

² Uncle Ben to Peter Parker, alias Spiderman, in the film Spiderman.

³ Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary.

⁴ Global Views of U.S. Helped by Obama, Survey Says, *The New York Times*, July 23, 2009.

⁵ Views on U.S. Drop Sharply In Worldwide Opinion Poll, *The Washington Post*, January 23, 2007.

⁶ Zimbabwe: Social Economic Conditions Remain Desperate Say Amnesty, *allAfrica.com*, June 18, 2009.

⁷ Congo-Kinshasa: Thousands Still Fleeing Ugandan Rebel Attacks in East -UN Agency. *UN News Service*, August 28, 2009; Clinton pledges aid to stem abuses, *The Miami Herald*, August 12, 2009.

⁸ Uganda: Years of Conflict Threaten progress Toward Justice, *Amnesty International USA*, Alert July 2005.

⁹ Aid group deplors conditions at Kenya camp for Somali refugees, *VOANews.com*, May 18, 2009.

¹⁰ Clinton urges political reform, *The Miami Herald*, August 13, 2009.

¹¹ **July 30, 2005: U.N. Charges Sudan Ignores Rapes in Darfur by Military and Police (NYT) November 11, 2005: U.S. Official Tours Damage in Darfur** U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Robert B. Zoellick toured a hauntingly empty stretch of Sudan’s war-torn Darfur region Thursday, seeing firsthand the violent devastation that continues here nearly three years after conflict broke out. (WP) **November 16, 2005: U.N.’S Rwanda Commander Sees Darfur**

African Union forces in the Darfur region need a stronger mandate and more resources to avoid losing credibility as a peacekeeping force, former U.N. force commander Romeo Dallaire said. (WP)

November 21, 2005: Peace Force in Darfur Faces Major Challenges

A House committee voted to eliminate the \$50 million that lawmakers had supported to fund the mission, including ammunition, fuel, helicopters and other supplies that African Union officers say are essential to monitoring the violence in a vast, mountainous desert. (WP)

December 29, 2005: Atrocities continue in Sudan’s Darfur region

Despite a consistent and forceful Security Council response to the crisis in Sudan’s western

Darfur region, reports from there confirm a marked deterioration since September, including an increase in ethnic clashes, destabilizing elements crossing in from Chad and continuing banditry. (UN News Report)

January 28, 2006: Plan to End Darfur Violence Is Failing, Officials Say

The broad strategy for ending the carnage in Darfur, Sudan, devised over the last two years by the United States, the United Nations and the European Union, is collapsing United Nations and Bush administration officials say. The United States and Europe have both declined to provide further financial support for the effort. The Bush administration continues to push Congress to provide more money, but Congress has twice rejected the request in recent months during budget debates. (NYT)

February 4, 2006: U.N. Seeks Plan for Peace Force in Sudan

The U.N. Security Council asked Secretary General Kofi Annan on Friday to prepare contingency plans to authorize a peacekeeping force to halt the violence against civilians in the Darfur region of Sudan. The move was part of a push by the Bush administration to use its month-long presidency of the 15-nation council to reinvigorate peace efforts in Darfur by authorizing a U.N. peacekeeping mission that would be able to stop the killings. (WP)

February 28, 2006: Refugee Crisis Grows as Darfur War Crosses a Border

The chaos in Darfur, the war-ravaged region in Sudan where more than 200,000 civilians have been killed, has spread across the border into Chad, deepening one of the world's worst refugee crises. Arab gunmen from Darfur have pushed across the desert and entered Chad, stealing cattle, burning crops and killing anyone who resists. (NYT)

March 1, 2006: Peacekeepers and Diplomats, Seeking to End Darfur's Violence, Hit Roadblock

Sudan has withdrawn its support for a United Nations peacekeeping force to replace African Union troops now in the conflict-ridden Darfur region, and is lobbying other countries to discourage the substitution. In another development ... John Bolton, the United States ambassador, conceded the failure of the American effort to produce a resolution on a United Nations mission to Sudan by the end of February. (NYT)

March 3, 2006: U.N. Chief Seeks Western Support for Darfur Force

Secretary General Kofi Annan told the United States that U.N. members should consider providing close air support in possible combat situations for several thousand African Union peacekeeping troops in the Darfur region of Sudan. U.S. officials have been cool about a potential U.S. combat role in Sudan, noting that the nation has major military responsibilities in Afghanistan and Iraq. (WP)

May 6, 2006: Sudanese, Rebels Sign Peace Plan for Darfur

With a prod from the United States, the government of Sudan and the biggest Darfur rebel faction signed a complex peace plan yesterday that diplomats and experts said would require careful implementation to ensure an end to a conflict that has left as many as 450,000 people dead and 2 million homeless. (WP)

May 9, 2006: Bush Urges U.N. to Act Swiftly on Darfur Cadre of Peacekeepers

President Bush pressed the U.N. on Monday to speed up planning for the deployment of United Nations peacekeepers to Darfur. Mr. Bush also said he had ordered two emergency shipments of food aid for the two million people living in refugee camps in Darfur and asked Congress to approve \$225 million in additional assistance. The United States has been the largest donor of aid in the last year. (WP)

May 19, 2006: Violent Rebel Rift Adds Layer to Darfur's Misery

Two of the main rebel factions fighting the Sudanese government and its allied militias

have turned on each other, spurred by ethnic tensions, and what appears to be a relentless grab for more territory. Now the rebels have unleashed a tide of violence against the very civilians they once joined forces to protect. (NYT)

August 18, 2006: U.N. Official Warns of Major New Sudanese Offensive in Darfur

Three months since the signing of a tenuous peace deal, Sudan appears to be preparing a major military offensive in its troubled Darfur region. Aid workers are increasingly at risk, and the population “may have to relive the horrors of late 2003 and early 2004, and hundreds of thousands of lives will be at risk,” a top United Nations official warned the Security Council in a private briefing. (WP) **September 4, 2006: Sudan: African Union Must Quit Darfur Region**

Sudan has defied the international community and rejected a U.N. Security Council resolution [on 30 August] that calls for the deployment of more than 20,000 U.N. troops and police to Darfur. [Instead], Sudan asked African Union Forces monitoring a shaky truce ... to leave the country by September 30. (WP) **September 12, 2006: Sudan Flouting Peace Treaty, Annan Charges**

Sudan’s government has violated the Darfur peace agreement with military attacks that are “legally and morally unacceptable,” U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said. (WP)

September 28, 2006: U.S. Weighs Moves against Sudan over U.N. Force

The United States is considering a series of punitive steps if the Sudanese government fails to agree to a U.N. peacekeeping force to end the violence in Sudan’s Darfur region. (WP)

October 23, 2006: Sudan Expels U.N. Envoy over Report of Losses in Darfur

The order against the envoy is likely to complicate international efforts to halt the killings, rapes, and other atrocities in the strife-torn region of western Sudan. (WP) **October 23, 2006: Rice Laments Sudan’s Expulsion of U.N. Envoy**

The US denounced Sudan’s order to expel the U.N. envoy and said that international action is needed to contain worsening conflict in the country’s Darfur region. (WP)

November 1, 2006: U.S. Ready Plan for Darfur, President Says

Bush says that his administration is working on a proposal that he hopes will stop the bloodshed in the region. “There needs to be a credible and effective international force to go into Darfur to save lives... The Sudanese government must understand that we’re serious.” (WP)

November 4, 2006: U.N. Reports on Darfur Details Militia Attack

Militia fighters allied with Sudan’s government killed about 50 civilians this week in the Darfur region. “At the very least, the attacks demonstrated the government of Sudan’s continued failure to disarm the militia in Darfur,” said the report. (WP)

November 21, 2006: U.S. Sets Jan. 1 Deadline for Sudan to Act on Darfur

The U.S. special envoy to Sudan said that the Bush administration will resort to an unspecified “Plan B” if the Sudanese government does not agree by Jan. 1 to complete negotiations on an expanded international peacekeeping force for its troubled Darfur region. (WP)

December 17, 2006: Resurgent Militia Blamed for Worsening Conditions in Darfur

The African Union said that the situation in Darfur was deteriorating rapidly because of the resurgence of the Janjaweed militia. The militiamen “seem to have been supplied and rearmed and have been carrying out nefarious activities with impunity in parts of Darfur, particularly in areas controlled by the government of Sudan.” (WP)

January 6, 2007: N'djamena, Chad

Violence in eastern Chad, including raids by mounted Janjaweed militiamen from the Darfur region, has displaced 20,000 in the past two weeks, the U.N. refugee agency said. (WP)

February 7, 2007: Bush Approves Plan To Pressure Sudan

The Treasury Department [will] aggressively block U.S. commercial bank transactions connected to the government of Sudan, including those of oil revenues, if Khartoum continues to balk at efforts to bring peace to the Darfur region. The plan is part of a secret three-tiered package of coercive steps—labeled “Plan B”—that the administration has repeatedly threatened to unleash if Sudan continues to sponsor a campaign of terror. (WP)

March 7, 2007: State Dept. Human Rights Report Faults China's Curbs on Internet

On Sudan, the report outlined evidence that genocide continues to ravage Darfur, and said the Khartoum government and its militias were responsible for it... “It is inconceivable to me to say we've moved away from the issue of genocide,” said Barry F. Lowenkron, assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labor...(WP)

June 25, 2008: Envoy Sees Little Darfur Hope Now

After 18 months of shuttle diplomacy as the U.N. envoy to Darfur, Jan Eliasson believes the chance for peace has slipped away. Rebel groups are more fractured and violent than ever and the Sudanese government is again engaged in brutal attacks on villages. (Los Angeles Times)

July 15, 2008: Sudanese President Charged With Genocide

The chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court has filed genocide charges against Sudan's president for a five-year campaign of violence in Darfur. (CNN)

November 19, 2008: U.N.: Reports of Fighting, Bombing in Darfur

The U.N. is investigating “troubling reports” of bombings and fighting in the Darfur region of Sudan in violation of a cease-fire agreed by the Sudanese president Omar al-Bashir. (CNN)

¹² Bush Unveils and Delays Sanctions for Sudan, *The Washington Post*, April 19, 2007.

¹³ Diplomat Sandy Woodrow to fellow British civil servant Justin Quayle, in the film *The Constant Gardener*, 2005, based on the novel by John le Carré.

¹⁴ Ellis, Stephen, “How to Rebuild Africa,” excerpted from *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005, in *The New York Times*, October 13, 2005.

¹⁵ U.S. Official Tours Damage in Darfur, *The Washington Post*, November 11, 2005.

¹⁶ —Freed by warming, waters once locked beneath ice are gnawing at coastal settlements around the Arctic Circle. In Bykovsky, a village of 457 on Russia's northeast coast, the shoreline is collapsing... Eventually, homes will be lost, and maybe all of Bykovsky, too, under ever-longer periods of assault by open water. Coastal erosion is a problem in Alaska as well, forcing the United States to prepare to relocate several Inuit villages at a projected cost of \$100 million or more for each one. (Old Ways of Life Are Fading as the Arctic Thaws, NYT, 10-20-05)

- Deserts in the American Southwest and around the globe are creeping toward

heavily populated areas... Satellite measurements made from 1979 to 2005 show that the atmosphere in the subtropical regions north and south of the equator is heating up ... according to a study published in the online edition of the journal *Science*. (Warmer Atmosphere Causing Deserts to Shift, *Science and Health* section, WP, 5-26-06)

- Earth's warming climate is estimated to contribute to more than 150,000 deaths and 5 million illnesses each year ... a toll that could double by 2030. The data ... indicate that climate change is driving up rates of malaria, malnutrition and diarrhea throughout the world. Health and climate scientists at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, who conducted one of the most comprehensive efforts yet to measure the impact of global warming on health, said the WHO data also show that rising temperatures disproportionately affect poor countries that have done little to create the problem. (Climate Shift Tied To 150,000 Fatalities, WP, 11-17-05)

- Three studies indicate the Earth is rapidly warming. NASA's Goddard Institute for Space Studies has concluded 2005 was the warmest year in recorded history, while the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the U.K. Meteorological Office call it the second hottest, after 1998. All three groups agree that 2005 is the hottest year on record for the Northern Hemisphere, at roughly 1.3 degrees Fahrenheit above the historical average. (2005 Continues the Warming Trend, WP, 12-16-05)

- Pollution may be slowing global warming, researchers are reporting today, and a cleaner environment may soon speed it up. Writing in the journal *Nature*, an international scientific team provides evidence suggesting that a reduction in haze from human causes may accelerate warming of the earth's atmosphere. "If people clean up the air, more warming will come blazing through," Jim Coakley, a professor of atmospheric sciences at Oregon State University in Corvallis, said yesterday in a telephone interview. (Pollution May Slow Warming; Cleaner Air May Speed It, Study Says, NYT, 12-22-05)

- Scientists studying a fast-dwindling genus of colorful harlequin frogs on misty mountainsides in Central and South America are reporting today that global warming is combining with a spreading fungus to kill off many species... Several scientists criticized the paper, saying it glossed over significant sources of uncertainty; others said it was important evidence that warming caused by humans was already harming wildlife. (Frog Killer Is Linked to Global Warming, NYT, 1-12-06)

- Brazil.—Manaus, capital of the state of Amazonas, and the entire eastern region of the state are suffering the worst drought in more than a century. A government scientist who calls it an "atypical" drought says it is chiefly caused by warmer ocean temperatures. (Amazon Drought Worst in 100 Years, *Environmental News Service*, 10-24-05)

- Six former heads of the Environmental Protection Agency, including five who

served Republican presidents, said Wednesday that the Bush administration needed to act more aggressively to limit the emission of greenhouse gases linked to climate change. Since Mr. Bush took office in 2001, neither the president nor the Republican-led Congress has proposed any comprehensive plan to limit carbon emissions from vehicles, utilities and other sources, a problem that Mr. Bush's own Department of Energy predicts will grow worse. (6 Ex-Chiefs of E.P.A. Urge Action on Greenhouse Gases, NYT, 1-19-06)

- [T]he U.S. Commission on Ocean Policy was the second major task force in recent years to detail the rapidly deteriorating ecology of America's oceans. All serious looks at the issue have reached similar conclusions: that current human use of oceans is unsustainable and that without dramatic changes in the ways the waters are exploited and enjoyed, the seas will die out. (Oceans in Peril, Editorial, WP, 1-23-06)

- Failing to curb the impact of climate change could damage the global economy on the scale of the Great Depression or the world wars by spawning environmental devastation that could cost 5 to 20 percent of the world's annual gross domestic product. (Warming Called Threat to Global Economy, The Washington Post, 10-31-06.)

- If the melting continues, as many Arctic experts expect, the mass of floating ice that has crowned the planet for millions of years may largely disappear for entire summers this century... The Arctic is undergoing nothing less than a great rush for virgin territory and natural resources worth hundreds of billions of dollars. Even before the polar ice began shrinking more each summer, countries were pushing into the frigid Barents Sea, lured by undersea oil and gas fields and emboldened by advances in technology. Last year, scientists found tantalizing hints of oil in seabed samples just 200 miles from the North Pole. All told, one quarter of the world's undiscovered oil and gas resources lies in the Arctic, according to the United States Geological Survey. The polar thaw is also starting to unlock other treasures: lucrative shipping routes, perhaps even the storied Northwest Passage; new cruise ship destinations; and important commercial fisheries. "It's the positive side of global warming, if there is a positive side," said Ron Lemieux, the transportation minister of Manitoba. (As Polar Ice Turns to Water, Dreams of Treasure Abound, NYT, 10-10-05)

- The Bush administration has agreed to study whether polar bears should be added to the nation's endangered species list because global warming is shrinking their habitat. They would be the first mammals to gain protected status as a result of climate change. (White House to Study Protecting Polar Bears, WP, 2-9-06)

- Greenland's glaciers are melting into the sea twice as fast as previously believed, the result of a warming trend that renders obsolete predictions of how quickly Earth's oceans will rise over the next century, scientists said yesterday. The new data come from satellite imagery and give fresh urgency to worries about the role of human activity in global warming, said Julian Dowdeswell, a glacier expert at the University of Cambridge in England who reviewed the new paper for Science.

“We are not talking about walking along the sea front on a nice summer day; we are talking of the worst storm settings, the biggest storm surges ... you are upping the probability major storms will take place.” (Glacier Melt Could Signal Faster Rise in Ocean Levels, WP, 2-17-06)

- The Antarctic ice sheet is losing as much as 36 cubic miles of ice a year in a trend that scientists link to global warming, according to a new paper that provides the first evidence that the sheet's total mass is shrinking significantly. (Antarctic Ice Sheet Is Melting Rapidly, WP, 3-3-06)

- NASA is touting a survey that it says confirms “climate warming is changing how much water remains locked in Earth's largest storehouses of ice and snow.” NASA directly tied the changes to warming and described the survey as “the most comprehensive” ever in both regions. NASA did not directly tie the warming to humans and the burning of fossil fuels, which emits carbon dioxide, a key greenhouse gas. But [lead author Jay] Zwally noted that the predicted climate warming cited in the press release is caused by man-made emissions. (NASA puts its weight behind warming signs, MSNBC online, 3-13-06)

- The president's science program regarding climate change has been hailed by the National Academies of Science as “providing guiding vision” and as able to “effectively guide climate change research for decades...” Effective climate change policy cannot be made without the best available science. It is also important to note, however, that effective policy must take into account other issues, including national security implications, economic effects and societal benefits. CONRAD C. LAUTENBACHER JR. Undersecretary of Commerce for Oceans and Atmosphere National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (We're Funding Climate Science, Not Muzzling It, Letter to the Editor, WP, 4-19-06)

- A federal appeals court blocked the Bush administration's four-year effort to loosen emission rules for aging coal-fired power plants, unanimously ruling yesterday that the changes violated the Clean Air Act and that only Congress could authorize such revisions. (Looser Emission Rules Rejected, WP, 3-18-06)

- Earth will experience significant climate change in the coming century as a result of greenhouse gas buildups, but the more extreme estimates of global warming generated by some studies are unlikely to occur, according to newly published research [led by] Gabriele C. Hegerl, a Duke University climate expert... “It's a very solid piece of science,” said Reto Knutti of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo. (Climate Change Will Be Significant but Not Extreme, Study Predicts, WP, 4-20-06)

- Climate models that predict the Earth's average temperature could rise as much as 10 degrees by the end of the century may have underestimated the increase by as much as four degrees. New research at UC Berkeley and Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory predict that if humans double the carbon dioxide, that will actually lead to more carbon dioxide being released naturally, which in turn will push the global thermostat up between 2.9 and 11 degrees, with the higher temperatures more likely. (Global warming could be worse than predicted, research shows,

Knight Ridder Newspapers, Kansas City.com, 5-22-06)

- A government study released yesterday undermines one of the key arguments of climate change skeptics, concluding there is no statistically significant conflict between measures of global warming on the earth's surface and in the atmosphere. The report also concluded that humans are driving the warming trend through greenhouse gas emissions, noting in the official news release, "the observed patterns of change over the past 50 years cannot be explained by natural processes alone, nor by the effects of short-lived atmospheric constituents such as aerosols and tropospheric ozone alone." Rafe Pomerance, chairman of the Climate Policy Center, a group that advocates mandatory curbs on emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases linked to global warming, said the new report settles the scientific debate over humans' role. (Study Reconciles Data in Measuring Climate Change, WP, 5-3-06)

- The escalating level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is making the world's oceans more acidic, government and independent scientists say. They warn that, by the end of the century, the trend could decimate coral reefs and creatures that underpin the sea's food web... For decades, scientists have viewed the oceans' absorption of carbon dioxide as an environmental plus, because it mitigates the effects of global warming. But by taking up one-third of the atmosphere's carbon dioxide—much of which stems from exhaust from automobiles, power plants and other industrial sources—oceans are transforming their pH level. (Growing Acidity of Oceans May Kill Corals, WP, 7-5-06)

- Mountain glaciers such as this are in retreat around the Earth, taking with them vast stores of water that grow crops, generate electricity and sustain cities and rural areas., and others have confirmed a rapid recession of glaciers worldwide. Snows on Africa's Mount Kilimanjaro, extolled by Ernest Hemingway as "wide as all the world, great, high, and unbelievably white," will be gone within 14 years, Lonnie Thompson, one of the first scientists to sound the alarm, estimates. Glaciers in the Alps, the Himalayas and throughout the Andes are also shrinking, he and other researchers have found. (On the Roof of Peru, Omens in the Ice, WP, 7-29-06)

¹⁷ Samuelson, Robert J., "Global Warming's Real Inconvenient Truth," *The Washington Post*, July 6, 2005.

¹⁸ Humans Faulted For Global Warming, *The Washington Post*, February 3, 2007.

¹⁹ "Climate Change: An Evangelical Call to Action," Evangelical Climate Initiative, January 2006.

²⁰ Beisner, E. Calvin, Driessen, Paul K., McKitick, Ross, Spencer, Roy W., "A Call to Truth, Prudence, and Protection of the Poor: An Evangelical Response to Global Warming," *Interfaith Stewardship Alliance*, 2006.

²¹ Earth a bit cooler; no trend seen, *The Miami Herald*, August 20, 2009.

²² World sets ocean temperature record, *The Miami Herald*, August 21, 2009.

²³ Long-term Arctic cooling reversed, *The Miami Herald*, September 4, 2009.

Epilogue

There are those who, under any circumstances, will not admit to themselves or to others that they are wrong. I am reminded of an old proverb that accentuates this type of behavior: *no one's hearing is worse than he who refuses to listen; no one's sight is poorer than he who is unwilling to see*. Pride and obstinacy are often confused with virtue in these cases.

Others accept truth reluctantly. Initially, a false sense of security or low self-esteem will not allow them to publicly acknowledge being wrong. In the end, after struggling with their inner selves, their views and behavior change accordingly.

And then, there are those who have no trouble accepting the opposite view or admitting being wrong when confronted with sound information. I think it takes a certain amount of confidence on one's part to say, *you're right, I am wrong*.