



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

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to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts

Former Secretary George P. Shultz USIP Headquarters Groundbreaking Ceremony June 5, 2008

Mr. President, Madame Speaker, I say Madame Speaker because I'm here in Washington, but I want you to know, when she comes back home to San Francisco; rolls up our sleeves with the rest of us, as far as Charlotte and I are concerned, she is Nancy. But, Madame Speaker, members of Congress who have been so instrumental in bringing this project to fruition, I see many people who have worked on this hard in the audience. My fellow former secretaries over there, it's a wonderful occasion. And the quality and composition of the crowd kind of spells out what this organization is about. I suppose you would say it's bipartisan, but it's really bipartisan support for a non-partisan ethic to examine these problems of peace; how violence erupts; what to do about it, and so on; in a non-partisan manner.

The history of the organization brings us out a little and I have had some experience with it. From what I know, the idea started getting bandied about seriously during the Carter Administration. And we picked it up in the Reagan Administration. We had our doubts, we struggled. And we finally decided, the President finally decided, this was a good idea. But it's got to be hard-headed, tough-minded approach to the subject. And so the legislation came into being and the U. S. Institute [of] Peace started. And I've watched it evolve. It's been an extraordinary process. For much of its time, led by Dick Solomon, who has done an absolutely wonderful job. And Dick I want to say how grateful we are to you.

But it starts out of [this] organization gathering information about what has happened. How did something violent go to something more stable and peaceful? How did that breakdown that all of a sudden there's violence? From the killing fields of Cambodia, to something more stable? You remember the glory of the Olympics in

Sarajevo, and what an easy and beautiful peace it was and then all of a sudden it breaks down into bitterness and violence. How does that happen? So, this organization became a collector of a vast array of factual information. In the parlance of the day, you might say it had become a fact tank. And then of course, that's not enough. You've got to analyze this material and try to figure out; how did it happen? What took place? What were the motivating factors? How do you put all of this into the context of the information age and the reality that everything is known quickly? Has it fanned the violence? Fanned the flames? Can you use it to your advantage? The ethnic tensions are too apparent in the world. You'd have to confront them and look at the demography.

So all this context is there, and so in addition, the U.S. Institute [of] Peace is a think tank. But then it's done more than that. And the notion has been, well you thinking something about conflict resolution? You thinking of something about reconciliation? We have plenty of problems here; let's see what you can do. And in your brochure some of the places that been or talked about. So, it's become a do-tank. An interesting and unique organization.

So, here we are now at the spot where this building will be erected; and what a place to consider the issues of peace. You look out on memorials to people who have lost their lives fighting for our freedom and security in wars. It's an inspirational place. And I expect just as the work of the Institute for Peace deserves this building, the building will be enriched by what takes place in it once it's put together here. Much of this evolution, Mr. President, has taken place on your watch and in the watch of the members of Congress who are here. So, you've got to feel pretty good about it. All of you.

I've been around this town off and on since the Eisenhower Administration, when I talk to the young students of Stanford, I say the Eisenhower Administration, there's kind of blanks. I say, "He was a general who became president, he got a terrific smile, so they get it." But, I've noticed as you look back on presidencies, what stand out are ideas. What were some of the basic ideas that motivated those times? Now, Mr. President, in your time, I think there is one outstanding idea that has real legs and staying power.

We had this problem of people using the weapon of terror to achieve whatever end they had in mind. And it's gone back a long ways. So, that was assassinated because we made peace with Israel. Our marine barracks were blown up in Beirut in the worst day of the Reagan Administration. I see Frank here that was a tough day. But I remembered going out there and there was... I hurt so much. Our embassy is attacked. When you attack a military installation that is a definite act of war; so the USS Cole is attacked. And what did we do about all of this? Not much. We roughed up Gadaffi a little bit, sent a cruise missile here or there, but we really didn't do anything consequential. We said this was a matter for law enforcement. When something like this happens, you investigate, find out who is responsible, you put them on trial, and if found guilty, you put them in jail.

Well, with 9/11, we saw that is not enough. We still want law enforcement, but when the consequences of one of the acts is so big, you have to say to yourself, "our main strategy has to be to prevent it from taking place in the first place." And we know that force has to be there in your tool kit. And the idea of preventive force is very much alive. On the other hand, we know that this is just one tool in the kit. And that brings me right back to the U.S. Institute [of] Peace because you might say, in a way, another way of describing this, a place where we try to find out as best as we can, what can we do to prevent the need to use preventive force. So, this idea of prevention, Mr. President, this idea has legs. And will last. It's important.

Mr. President, all of this that I've said makes it more than appropriate for you to address this groundbreaking gathering. And so, ladies and gentlemen, it is my great pleasure, and privilege, and honor to introduce to you, George W. Bush, the president of the United States. Mr. President.