



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

An independent institution established by Congress to strengthen the nation's capacity
to promote peaceful resolution to international conflicts

Robin West
USIP Headquarters Groundbreaking Ceremony
June 5, 2008

On behalf of myself, the Vice Chairman Maria Ótero, and the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace, welcome.

Today is the occasion of state. The highest constitutional officers of our government are participating in the groundbreaking for the new headquarters building, we are honored that they are here. We recognize today the essential and timely work of the Institute, develop and apply a practical understanding of conflict. Ronald Reagan said, "Peace is not the absence of conflict, but rather the ability to manage conflict through peaceful means." Our job is to give the means, the skills, to understand and manage conflict. To bring peace to all of the stakeholders, policymakers, diplomats, military, jurists, journalists, academics, people of faith and very importantly, non-government organizations. The Institute, by its charter from Congress, is a bipartisan organization. One of our great strengths, as Senator Reid has just mentioned is the ability to convene bipartisan groups at the request of Congress to constructively examine difficult issues in international affairs. We view this as an important role in these contentious times.

The headquarters building which we formally begin to construct today will have several roles. It will be a working building where the operations of the Institute will be conducted. It will be an educational center, where students and the public can learn about our global challenges and how to deal with them and most importantly, the building will be a symbol. It's not an accident that the headquarters of the United States Institute of Peace is nestled into a hillside near the moving memorials to veterans who made terrible sacrifices in World War I, World War II, the Korean War, and VietNam War, as well as the Holocaust and its calculated brutality and evil. The headquarters should be seen as a compliment, not a

contrast demonstrating that we all have the determination and the ability to protect our values and interests without conflict where we can. If we do go to war, we want to be committed to and capable of winning an honorable sustained peace. The sacrifices of our men and women cannot be in vain.

Across the way is the Memorial Bridge, perhaps the most beautiful manmade entrance to any city in the world. And I've seen most of them. When you come over the bridge at night, leaving the sobering darkness of the Arlington National Cemetery, and the flickering flame of John F. Kennedy's gravesite, you approach three great monuments glowing in the dark; those of Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln. When completed, there will be a fourth; the Institute's glowing roof sculpture evoking the form of a dove.

George Washington, first in war, was deeply committed to peace for his young country. The weathervane on Mt. Vernon was in the form of a dove of peace. The roof of Mt. Vernon leads to this roof's sculpture.

Thomas Jefferson said that, "Institutions must advance to keep pace with the times." So, America must advance also as it confronts new and difficult challenges.

Abraham Lincoln led this country through a time of division, savagery, and sadness, while never losing his faith in justice, always trusting our better angels.

It is our deep hope, that this building and particularly its roof sculpture glowing translucent white at night will become a powerful symbol to this city, this country, the world. Just as the Statute of Liberty is an uplifting monument to the challenges and possibility of immigration, which changed and built this nation in the 19th and 20th centuries, so this Dove of Peace will be an uplifting statement of our values and aspirations in the 21st century.

Without America engaged in the world, there will be no peace. Peace requires skill and commitment combined with generosity, justice, decency, and strength. These are American values which should be

shared universally. This building, this dove, is a compelling and beautiful affirmation of those values. Our better angels.

The development of this headquarters project has been a public/private partnership between the federal government and the private sector. Congress has been a generous partner and I want to thank Speaker Pelosi, and if he was here, Senator Reid, for their support. Congress was instrumental in transferring the land for the site. It has also been very supportive in providing \$100 million towards construction.

I want to express our appreciation to all the members and both Dick Solomon, and Senator Reid, mentioned them; but I particularly want to point out Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, who was the leader in this effort in the appropriations process. We then received a very substantial grant of \$10 million from Chevron Corporation in honor of George Schultz, the former secretary of state and honorary co-Chairmen of our headquarters effort.

Last year Congress transferred to the Institute the two buildings of the Navy's Bureau of Medicine and Surgery, between which we are sitting right now. These buildings will become the Institute's new professional training center in conflict management skills for all the partners, governmental and non-governmental who will be rebuilding nations after war. Senator John Warner, whose father was a doctor in this naval complex in the 1930s, played a crucial role in developing this new center.

Madame Speaker, and Senator Reid, if you are here; I am happy to report that the public/private partnership continues to flourish. Last Friday, I received the kind of phone call that chairmen like to receive. The distinguished philanthropist, Hushang Ansari of Houston advised me that he and his wife Shala would commit \$8 million to the construction of the roof sculpture. We are most grateful for this very imaginative and extremely gift.

I am delighted to report also that the Madeline Albright wing of the headquarters building continues to progress very well. A group of her friends and admirers; and I should point out, there are many, is building broad support for this major element of our facility to honor

her distinguished career in public service to this country. Our job is not finished, this is just the beginning; the groundbreaking. It will take the same level of hard work and generosity which has got us this far to finish this project. We need our help to complete this magnificent building.

Finally, it is important to remember that there are people who will be leaving this remarkable building to go out into the world, to understand and solve difficult problems in tough places and to teach others how to do so. In the past, they have been writing constitutions in the Balkans, negotiating the end to religious wars in Nigeria, working to stop killing among Sunnis and Shiites in Iraq, bringing civil society to Afghanistan, working to help the military and NGOs on tsunami relief. These are just a few examples of the tough, tedious, expert work which is what the men and women of the United States Institute of Peace led so ably by Dick Solomon; Ambassador Dick Solomon. They do everyday. I would ask them all to stand and be recognized. We are very grateful for their efforts.

Again, we are very grateful that you are all here today. Thank you.