Sources of Conflict
Highlights from the Managing Chaos Conference

G. M. Tamás
Samuel P. Huntington
Identity and Conflict

Robert Kaplan
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“The Coming Anarchy” and the Nation-State under Siege
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IDENTITY AND CONFLICT

G. M. Tamás

*The New Nationalism*

- The East European revolution of 1989 was history’s first revolutionary movement that did not offer a utopian alternative to replace the old order. Rather, 1989’s revolution was really a mass rejection of tyranny, which was perceived as a universal condition of politics. As such, it was also a rejection of the liberal Western idea of political community itself.

- Soon after their victory in this “antipolitical” revolution, East Europeans were compelled to find a social organizing principle for their societies. Ethnicity supplied such a need in short order.

- Classic nineteenth century nationalism did not propose absolute dividing lines between nations and peoples: The superiority of one’s own group was justified on the basis of universal criteria which could find acceptance among minorities. Similar claims of superiority in the new nationalism, by contrast, are absolute and based entirely on whether one is perceived as a member of the group or as alien to it. Those who are perceived as different are encouraged to get out.

- The revolutionaries of 1989 fought against a common enemy: an overbearing, centralized state. In rejecting conformity, loyalty, and obedience to law as elements of yet another dictatorship, they have since discovered that the real enemy is anarchy.

- In Eastern Europe, there is no consensus on the common good. People want the “good,” but they don’t want the “common.” Countries are seen as tribes with flags, and states as gangs with charters. Communities that are defined either culturally or racially are unfortunately the only legitimate ones in the East European mind.

- The fragmentation of countries and national identities into a myriad of smaller ethnic groups is not confined to Eastern Europe. Indeed, the ethnic conflict plaguing Southern California shows how difficult it is for ethnic groups of all sorts to identify with values outside those of their own group. Instead of providing an alternative social and political order free from tyranny, the reliance on ethnicity has merely broken up tyranny into smaller tyrannies.

Samuel P. Huntington

*The Clash of Civilizations?*

- When we examine relations between states these days, we are really looking at two worlds: one of growing economic development and integration, and one of increasing ethnic conflict, instability, and global chaos. These two worlds are not separate and exclusive; they coexist and overlap. In fact, the forces of global economic development and integration are also generating much of the chaos that exists in the world today.
Much of this chaos is also attributable to a “global identity crisis” brought on by the end of the Cold War and the loss of national purpose. In such a milieu, people have turned away from irrelevant ideological distinctions and are relying on more traditional sources of identity—cultural groups such as tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, and nations.

The global manifestation of this fundamental change in local and regional identities is the division of the world into civilizations. Consequently, the world’s main divide has shifted eastward—from the Iron Curtain to a historical line that separates the civilizations encompassed by Western Christendom from those of Eastern Orthodoxy and Islam.

Conflict does indeed occur between nation-states and peoples within the same civilization. Yet such conflict, so gruesomely exemplified by tribal warfare in Somalia and Rwanda, has fewer chances of escalating into much wider and more profound conflagrations than do clashes between civilizations (such as in the Caucasus and Yugoslavia).

Confucian and Islamic societies are attempting to expand their own economic and military power to resist and balance the West. Witness the challenges posed to the West by the economically powerful nations of East Asia. “The central axis of world politics,” Huntington maintained, “is and will be the interaction of Western power and culture with the power and culture of non-Western societies.”

“The Coming Anarchy” and the Nation-State under Siege

Robert Kaplan
“The Coming Anarchy”

Traditional political boundaries between countries are becoming increasingly irrelevant, while ties between similar groups in different countries grow stronger. The small middle class in Pakistan has more in common with middle-class Americans than with other Pakistanis.

Of the more than 170 nation-states in the United Nations, failures in just a few of them are enough to create a critical mass that could quickly engulf us in global chaos. Conflict in three small countries—Rwanda, Somalia, and Haiti—resulted in major international instability and the expenditure of huge amounts of money. Imagine what might happen if three were to become six. Moreover, many large regional states that are internally weak and unstable could easily throw world politics into chaos if just one of them were to collapse.

Large states will not necessarily be as important in the future. We shouldn’t assume, for example, that China and India will retain their present geographical and political contours as secessionist movements in these and other large states acquire more significance in international politics.
Too much money is spent on quick fixes—such as short-term military interventions—for sporadic, violent outbreaks of complex international conflicts. As a result, long-term solutions to conflict, such as investment in development projects, continue to be neglected.

Much of the world’s violence is caused not by poverty and economic stagnation but by economic success. Conflict seems to occur more in states that are experiencing unprecedented economic growth than economic decline. Such growth has been tremendous but uneven. While life gets better for some, it gets worse for many more.

Jessica Tuchman Mathews

*Demographic and Environmental Forces*

Between 1950 and 1990, our planet has undergone more environmental change than in the entire period before 1950. For the first time in our history, we are now able to alter the planet’s physiology.

The increase in massive population shifts within and across regions will lead to more cases where states are able to use migration as a weapon in foreign policy. With greater and greater frequency, states will be asking the question: "Can walls be built high enough to keep [immigrants] out, and what are the implications for our values in this country?"

Overpopulation and its consequences could be a major source of global instability and conflict in the very near future. Lack of jobs and looming natural resource crises will have a sharp impact on global politics. Exponential population growth that continues to outstrip the planet’s resource base will lead to larger and more frequent waves of refugees and more intense and destructive conflicts over water and arable land.

Fifteen percent of the population is responsible for 70 percent of global consumption. As developing countries grow, the need to greatly expand our food supply will become crucial.

As these demographic trends accelerate, we will be compelled to divert scarce funds to disaster relief. Meanwhile, prospects for preventive strategies to alleviate resource and population crises remain bleak. U.S. spending on development has already declined by one-fourth, and the UN spends five times more on refugees and peacekeeping operations than on economic development.
On November 30 and December 1, 1994, the United States Institute of Peace convened a major conference to address the vexing problem of how to manage post–Cold War international conflict. In an effort to stimulate discussion, the event was titled “Managing Chaos: Coping with International Conflict into the Twenty-First Century.”

The choice of the term “chaos” could hardly be regarded as a choice beyond controversy. The choice was made in part to acknowledge the debate surrounding the term that surfaced during 1994 and continues apace. Spurred primarily by events in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Rwanda (and the international community’s less-than-perfect responses to them), this debate centers on the question of whether the forces of order in the world are not in fact being overwhelmed by increasing and increasingly novel forces of disorder.

In a Washington Post opinion piece on July 31, 1994, U.S. Agency for International Development Administrator J. Brian Atwood stated what many who feel overwhelmed see as the problem:

> Increasingly, we are confronted by countries without leadership, without order, without governance itself. The pyre of failed states is being fired by common fuels: long-simmering ethnic, religious, and territorial disputes; proliferating military stockpiles built dangerously high during the Cold War; endemic poverty; rapid population growth; food insecurity; environmental degradation; and unstable and undemocratic governments.

Atwood argued that “we must forge the tools and policies needed to meet a threat that can be best summarized by the word ‘chaos.’”

To cite Atwood’s use of the term is not to credit him with being the first to apply it. However, his willingness to use it was an indication that, by the summer of 1994 at least, the term and what it implied were under wide consideration. Indeed, shortly after Atwood’s article appeared, Jeremy Rosner of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace was moved to complain that this way of thinking had got out of hand. The focus of his Washington Post piece of August 14 was the enthusiasm of Clinton administration officials—particularly Atwood and Undersecretary of State for Global Affairs Tim Wirth—for the views of journalist Robert Kaplan, author of a long article in the February 1994 Atlantic Monthly titled “The Coming Anarchy,” which, incidentally, was the product of a United States Institute of Peace grant. To Rosner’s mind, the “chaos” view made the state of the world more dependent on nature and history than on human will and suggested “a foreign policy that glossed over great power relations, ignored the morality of foreign regimes, undervalued democracy, and assumed American decline.” According to Rosner, “Those who are flirting with the chaos doctrine are flirting with disaster.”

Despite the protestations of Rosner and others, the specter of chaos had, if anything, grown greater by the time of the Institute’s “Managing Chaos” conference. The Washington Post’s Stephen Rosenfeld noted in a column on November 25 that chaos was increasingly in the thoughts of serious-minded people, although he properly noted that it was still debatable whether the idea of chaos—described in a manner similar to Brian Atwood’s above—is of central significance for those who search for peace and orderliness in the post–Cold War era. Rosenfeld asked, in effect, whether the cataclysms in Somalia, Bosnia, Sudan, Rwanda, and Haiti—and the overflow effects from them—represent a widening tendency that will be beyond our means to manage unless we dramatically change our way of doing business in the world, or...
whether they represent problems that we are more or less in the process of solving—albeit largely by hit-and-miss methods and not without mistakes so far.

In its “Managing Chaos” conference, the United States Institute of Peace meant to answer both “yes” and “no” to the question of chaos—notwithstanding (and perhaps in response to) the fact that the Institute had facilitated Kaplan’s “The Coming Anarchy.” In the Institute’s view, the fear of chaos is most certainly not unfounded. There is no question that we have problems like failed states, endless civil wars, politically induced famines, burgeoning refugee populations, and genocides, which, although they have occurred before, are now occurring with increased frequency. That increase in frequency by itself might well raise the specter of chaos. There is also no question that some problems—like the environmental nightmares in the former communist states of Eastern Europe and the dubious viability of many of the new states of the former Soviet Union—are unprecedented and whose complexity defies managing with traditional methods and resources.

On the other hand, the evidence is not sufficient to conclude that we are doomed, that our future is simply determined, as Rosner would say, by nature—as in the case of environmental threats—or by history—as in the case of ethnic and religious conflict. If we believe that our future is determined, we would also have to believe that significant natural calamities and historic enmities have not been successfully managed in many recent cases. The Institute’s presumption is, then, that we are indeed threatened with chaos but are not without the ability to imagine the new resources and means to deal with it.

What the Institute hoped to do in its “Managing Chaos” conference, then, was not to bring the chaos debate to closure, but to offer something much more down to earth: to survey and understand both new and enduring sources of international conflict and to consider both established and new ways of dealing with them. In doing so, we involved speakers who represent a range of views that relate to the chaos issue and otherwise offer wisdom and insight into sources of conflict and how to think about them in innovative ways.

This report summarizes the remarks of a number of conference speakers who address new and abiding sources of conflict. The order of presenta-
This report begins with the views of two thinkers for whom current and future conflict revolves around newly developing senses of identity among nations and peoples. In each case, their conceptions of identity have roots in the past. Nonetheless, new content is being poured into old forms. More than this, their perspectives are intentionally provocative: If their analyses prove to be correct, the world will have much to reconsider in order to meet the challenge of twenty-first century conflict.

Hungarian philosopher and political figure G. M. Tamás speaks to the subject of “the new nationalism” as it manifests itself particularly—but not exclusively—in post-communist countries. He is followed by Professor Samuel P. Huntington, of Harvard’s Center for International Studies, who speaks to the subject of “The Clash of Civilizations,” the topic of a Summer 1993 Foreign Affairs article that remains the subject of intense debate internationally.

G. M. TAMÁS
THE NEW NATIONALISM

Political philosopher G. M. Tamás addressed the challenges accompanying new conceptions of nationalism in the post-communist states of Eastern Europe. Contrary to Samuel Huntington’s projection of a world in which nation-states will be overshadowed by conflicts among civilizations, Tamás’s analysis envisions the demise of civilizations, nation-states, and communities as concepts around which to build political life. According to Tamás, rigid definitions of community that identify members along ethnic lines have begun to replace the liberal ideal of communities of free and equal individuals on which Western politics has been based since the French Revolution.

The Velvet Revolution as Freedom from Political Community

The Velvet Revolution of 1989 that brought an end to communism in Eastern Europe was “the first revolution in history that didn’t have a utopia,” according to Tamás. The destruction of communism’s utopian order, however, claimed another casualty as well—the very essence of political community itself. Tamás recalled that the idea that citizens should work together for the common good, or for the sake of institutional loyalties, has been associated traditionally with personal interest. The new idea of freedom in East Europe, he said, is that of the individual as an actor to be free from political community, not the freedom of the individual to exercise rights and duties under law in common cause with others in a political community.

According to this view of freedom, which Tamás asserts is not confined to Eastern Europe, individuals are not rational agents; rather, they are beings whose essence resides in their emotions and private desires. One important desire among Eastern Europe’s revolutionaries in 1989 was to be free from tyranny, which was perceived as part of the political condition itself. Accordingly, the Velvet Revolution was an uprising against not only political rule but against the liberal Western idea of political community as well. However, Tamás contended, as soon as Eastern Europe’s revolutionaries
were finally free from politics, they suddenly realized that some sort of social organizing principle had to be found for their local communities. Ethnicity, he contended, was the one organizing principle at hand that had not been compromised in the struggle for freedom. That it has come to play such a great role is, therefore, understandable.

Nationalism: The Old and the New

“Nationalism” as we are accustomed to thinking of it, is the nationalism of the nineteenth century, Tamás observed. The term is associated in our imagination with strength and support for a strong state and with accompanying images of authority and discipline. In contrast, the new, post-communist nationalism in Eastern Europe is anarchistic, apolitical, and even antipolitical. It refuses to recognize any overarching idea of social morality beyond, say, common decency.

According to Tamás, the old-style, liberal nationalism of the nineteenth century had two main strategies: conquest and assimilation. If a majority wanted to assimilate minorities, he said, that majority would have to believe that there was something in common between the majority and minorities that would allow them to be assimilated. Proponents of this older form of nationalism did not believe in absolute dividing lines between nations and peoples; they justified the superiority of one’s own group on the basis of universal criteria. Such criteria permitted them to claim that their superiority could be recognized and accepted by minorities who would benefit thereby. In contrast, said Tamás, the criteria for claims of superiority under the new nationalism are parochial and absolute, based entirely on whether one is perceived as a member of the group or as alien to it.

Accordingly, Tamás continued, the old and new nationalisms have dramatically different implications for the nation-state. The struggle among southern Slavs in the nineteenth century was for the unity of all peoples, for Yugoslav citizenship. In contemporary Bosnia, however, there is no foundation for a “superethnic” citizenship on which a nation-state can be constructed. Classic liberal nationalism advocated assimilation, but the new nationalism breaks up the state into small, ethnic-based units. According to Tamás, the destruction of the state arises not from a primordial compulsion to destroy, but from doubts about whether political community of any kind beyond the ethnic group is just another form of personal subjugation to omnipotent political power.

The New Enemy: The Reign of Small Tyrannies

Recalling his experience as one of the leaders of the Velvet Revolution, Tamás described the dawning of the realization that beyond providing the rationale for destroying the communist state, the major strains of East European revolutionary thought in 1989 had paid little attention to proposing institutions that could replace the state as the basis for political organization: “We all thought that the enemy was the overbearing, bureaucratic, centralized, tyrannical state. And within a few months, we found out that our enemy was anarchy, and that our conditioning under years of the communist regime to be suspicious of hands-on government—to be suspicious of any great emphasis on conformity, on loyalty, on obedience to the law, etc.—all these things were seen by my generation as pretexts for dictatorship,” Tamás recalled. “And while we were quite successful in destroying all basis for legitimacy of an unelected, tyrannical government, in the process we destroyed the basis for politics as such.”

As a result, Tamás argued, individuals feel that if particular laws are disadvantageous to individual interests, there is no obligation to follow them. The attitude that one should obey the law even if one doesn’t happen to like it is seen as a “servile, conformist, Bolshevik mentality.” In this environment, according to Tamás, “People want the ‘good,’ but they don’t want the ‘common.’” Countries are seen
as tribes with flags, and states as gangs with charters, he said.

The attitudes of “the new nationalism,” Tamás noted, are not confined to post-communist societies in Eastern Europe. Southern California is a stark reminder that Eastern Europe is not the only example of countries based on legal, political, and moral principles fragmenting into ethnic-based communities. In Southern California, too, said Tamás, there is no higher-level appeal against the values held by these groups. Instead of providing a means of escaping what is perceived as tyranny, the assertion of ethnicity as a social organizing principle that supersedes our broader, traditional notion of political community is “simply breaking up tyranny into smaller tyrannies.”

According to Tamás, critics have not yet been able to develop an adequate or dignified response to this new nationalism. In thoroughly rejecting the tapestry of cultural and religious traditions that determine whether people can coexist reasonably within a political structure, the new nationalism defies reasoned analysis. Yet, it can be said that, unlike the old nationalism that was based on strength, the new nationalism is the nationalism of weakness. Russian nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky, Tamás noted, doesn’t even have discipline over his own political group. The Zhirinovskys and Karadzics (i.e., Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic) of the world “are only helping ‘chaos’ to be even more engullying.”

The waning interest among his fellow East Europeans for the rule of law and for the rights and duties that are required under a democratic system, Tamás said, has robbed him of his enjoyment as a revolutionary. Their view that democratic principles don’t work (or are accepted as only a slight improvement over the worst) doesn’t mean that his countrymen are headed back toward a new communist dictatorship: “People don’t want communism and people don’t want the guarantees against it. And this is why the new nationalism is so peculiar. . . . This is why it is so dangerous. Its weakness, indeed, can be as dangerous as strength.”

Samuel P. Huntington
The Clash of Civilizations?

Chaos and the Search for New Sources of Identity

The world Tamás describes is quite different from the one Samuel Huntington envisions. While Tamás predicts anarchy resulting from the steady erosion and fragmentation of the nation-state as both a source of self-identity and an organizing principle in international society, Huntington sees the same process transforming world politics along cultural and civilizational lines, where the new actors in the international arena are agglomerations of individual nation-states that share similar attributes of language, religion, and culture.

To the observer of contemporary international affairs, the world has become a rather schizophrenic place: There is a prosperous world of growing economic development and integration; but there is also a world of increasing nationalism, ethnic conflict, instability, and global chaos. For Huntington, the crucial point is that both of these worlds are real: The world of global economic integration coexists with a world of chaos, and these worlds are interrelated. In fact, and perhaps somewhat ironically, “the forces of economic development and integration are also generating much of the chaos that exists in the world.”

Yet another source of conflict reflects a much more fundamental change in global society brought about by the end of the Cold War and the sudden disappearance of ideological reference points. At the core of their beliefs, people identify most strongly with cultural groups; that is to say, tribes, ethnic groups, religious communities, nations, and, at the broadest level, civilizations. In short, the most important distinctions among peoples today are not ideological but cultural.

Global Politics: Fault Lines between Civilizations

For Huntington, nation-states will remain the principal actors in world affairs. However, the largest groupings will no longer be the blocs of the Cold War era but the ‘seven or eight major world
civilizations.” For forty-five years, Huntington continued, the most important dividing line in the world was the Iron Curtain. Now, that dividing line has moved hundreds of miles east—to the line separating the Christian West, on the one hand, and the Orthodox (Christian) and Muslim East on the other.

The rivalry of the superpowers has been replaced to some extent by the clash of civilizations, and these civilizations’ “core states” will gradually replace Cold War-era superpowers as managers of the international order. Until then, military conflicts among less-developed countries over borders, natural resources, and transnational ethnic politics will be more prevalent.

People who were once separated by ideology but united by culture are now coming together, and Huntington offered as examples the two Germanys and the push for reunification between the two Koreas and the two Chinas. Societies that are united by ideology or historical circumstance but divided by civilization either come apart, as did the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Bosnia, and Ethiopia, or are subject to intense strain, as is the case with Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Sudan, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, and others.

Without a doubt, said Huntington, tribal wars and ethnic conflicts occur within their own civilizations. Conflict stemming from economic competition will become even more acute among Western democracies within the same civilization. However, the violence between states and groups from different civilizations—as is the case in Bosnia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and Kashmir—carries with it the potential for greater escalation, as other states and groups that share the same civilization rally to support their ethnic and cultural kin. In the conflict in the former Yugoslavia, Russia has provided considerable diplomatic support to the Serbs, while Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Libya have provided funds to the Bosnians. “It is precisely situations like these, where the battle lines between societies and groups coincide with fault lines between civilizations, that are the most dangerous ones for the future,” Huntington said.

Though the West will remain without a doubt the most powerful civilization for years to come, according to Huntington, its power is declining relative to other civilizations. As the West tries to assert its values and protect its interests, non-Western societies face a choice. Some may desire to emulate the West, and others may be ambivalent. Still others, primarily the Confucian and Islamic societies, are attempting to expand their own economic and military power to resist and balance the West. Witness the challenges posed to the West by the economically powerful nations of East Asia. “The central axis of world politics,” Huntington maintained, “is and will be the interaction of Western power and culture with the power and culture of non-Western societies.”
The second set of summaries leaves the realm of the search for new identities to look at what Brian Atwood would refer to as other “common fuels” that fire “the pyre of failed states.” Journalist Robert Kaplan spoke from the perspective of new experiences gathered abroad over the past year on the themes of his “Coming Anarchy” argument. Elaborating on this perspective, he challenges us both to acknowledge new forces of disorder and to alter our way of thinking about states and traditional interstate relationships. Similarly, Jessica Tuchman Mathews of the Council on Foreign Relations asks us to acknowledge that enduring problems in the world’s demography and its environment are reaching a level of acuteness that demands considerable thinking about priorities aimed at stemming international disorder.

By way of providing an example of his contention that the current world political system is tending toward chaos, Robert Kaplan described some current realities in Pakistan today. On one hand, there is the view of a multinational corporate executive who visits the country regularly. On each trip, the executive might see more computers, more fax machines, and more mobile phones in use. The executive might also see an excellently run state airline, more and more designer restaurants, and, most important, a growing middle class to enjoy them—a middle class whose culture increasingly resembles that of the Western executive. The spread of such middle-class amenities to a Third World country might cause the executive to wonder why the doomsayers keep predicting impending chaos in the world.

The problem is, Kaplan continued, that what the global executive sees in Pakistan is only part of the picture. Another part is that every year, 540,000 more people are added to the city of Karachi alone. In 1947, the population of Pakistan’s largest city was 400,000; today, Karachi’s population is over nine million. Of that nine million, less than one-quarter has garbage collection, and that number is decreasing. There is frequently no water or electricity for days at a time and unemployment is at 25 percent. Approximately one million of that nine million live in what can only be called shantytowns. In southern Pakistan, there are an equal number (i.e., one million) of drug addicts. Without a doubt, the world of fax machines and VCRs exists in Pakistan, but increasingly they are run on private generators. Similarly, the water and electricity in the country’s fancy hotels are supplied by private wells and generators because the municipal water and electricity systems are breaking down. These conditions, according to Kaplan, are not necessarily new in Pakistan, but they are new for Islamabad, the country’s capital, and especially for the city’s wealthy districts. In recent decades, people have been migrating into the city from the deforested hillsides, building their own makeshift shelters in the shantytowns, and
tapping into the city’s water system; ultimately, such migration causes problems for everyone.

The increasing deterioration in public order is not confined to Pakistan’s urban areas, Kaplan explained. Vast areas of the country are controlled by drug gangs, which also serve as a metaphor for the country’s political gridlock. But unlike the political gridlock Americans are familiar with in Washington, Pakistan’s is frequently divided along ethnic and regional lines; and it is, Kaplan suggested, “far nastier.” Added to these developments are some demographic and geographic realities. Every two to three years, the equivalent of the population of Karachi is added to Pakistan. By the year 2010, the amount of arable land per rural inhabitant in Pakistan will decrease by one-half, and one-quarter of that will be unusable due to salinity and soil degradation. The country has witnessed such an exponential increase in the numbers of its youths that no future educational or employment system can be expected to absorb them.

The bottom line, according to Kaplan, is that regardless of who the political leaders are, governing Pakistan is becoming an increasingly desperate enterprise. To someone who might argue that Pakistan is a particularly desperate case, Kaplan pointed out that two-thirds of the states in sub-Saharan Africa rate lower on the 1994 United Nations scale of human development. Yet, the middle-class “bubble” in Pakistan continues to expand. It has very nearly formed its own private state, with an army of private security guards protecting its “borders.” The financial wellspring of the country’s middle class—the Karachi stock market—continues to expand.

As Kaplan explained, Pakistan is an example of two phenomena that are currently reshaping global society. “Vertical” state boundaries—the visible borders separating states that we see on maps—are, in fact, withering and becoming less relevant. In their place, “horizontal” boundaries are forming—ties among groups, or classes, that cut across nation-state borders. The small middle class in Pakistan, he posited, has more in common with most Americans than with other Pakistanis. “The traditional nation-state is weakening,” Kaplan asserted, “and new forms of community are coming into being.”

To provide a fuller explanation of this phenomenon, Kaplan described the concept of “economic regions” as suggested by geographer Bruce Bayer, referring to the development of economic regions that are more cohesive than the currently recognized nation-states they encompass. In traveling through the Hunza Valley in northern Pakistan, it is clear that if the Pakistani state were ever to wither away, the Hunza Valley may in fact do better on its own. Another example is the Senegal River valley, which may also do better on its own than split between Senegal and Mauritania, as it is currently. Yet another successful economic region is the Mekong River valley, which is an extension of greater Thailand economically, into which Laos is gradually being absorbed. The result is that the Mekong River valley region is developing more of an identity—and becoming more of a reality—than the “nation-state” of Laos.

The Role of “Swing States”

Kaplan turned to the other realities of instability in today’s state system. Citing Paul Kennedy’s term “swing states,” referring to significant regional powers that are in danger because of internal institutional disorder or deterioration, Kaplan suggested that many large regional states are in exactly this position, including Nigeria, Iran, Egypt, and Pakistan. Is it the case that these swing states are only going through a difficult and unwieldy transition period, or will one or two of them possibly fail outright?

There are, said Kaplan, 173 nation-states on the membership roster of the United Nations. To propel the world system into a state of genuine chaos, it may not require the failure of a majority—or even half—of these states. All that is needed, he argued, is a “critical mass” of nation-state failures, a small minority of crises that would be just enough to...
overload the agenda of the world’s decision makers. One need only look at the way in which the failure of just three relatively small, marginal countries—Rwanda, Somalia, and Haiti—resulted in not only substantial political upheaval and instability but also the commitment of huge amounts of financial resources to these crises. Imagine, he said, what would be involved were that three to become six, or were the next failed state a regional power such as Nigeria or Pakistan. Kaplan stated that he is not certain that the policy-making elite would be able to cope, or that it has any ready solutions to such potential crises.

The Growing Irrelevance of Large States

The largest states in the international arena will not necessarily be the most important ones in the future, Kaplan continued, adding that he does not agree with those who claim that China and India will be major regional powers. These two countries are in fact decentralizing and regionalizing in a way that is making their central governments benign and obsolete in a great power sense. Similarly, Turkic Muslims in Xinjiang increasingly talk about separating from the People’s Republic of China. It should therefore not be assumed that in the future China will retain the same borders it has today. There could be a “greater China,” but there could be a “lesser China” also. In any case, a “greater China” would be a “benign China” because it will not be centrally controlled—it will be more of a cultural and economic force than a centrally controlled great power. The same is true for India, where much of what is happening throughout the country is occurring outside of the state network. In the country’s southern state of Carola, for example, New Delhi is becoming increasingly irrelevant. In the case of these two large, regional powers—and perhaps in others as well—it is their smaller entities that are becoming more and more important.

The Increase in World “Stunts”

In the early 1990s, Kaplan continued, the United Nations staged an election process in Cambodia. It was declared a success, the media left, and the world forgot about it. Since then, however, conditions in the country have deteriorated once again. It is now unclear, Kaplan claimed, whether the UN “success” in Cambodia was simply a very expensive “stunt,” or whether it was a pivotal exercise in what will ultimately be a success story. What many are now saying is that perhaps the UN should have spent that money on building Cambodia’s infrastructure, that it is the development of roads and deforestation projects more than the staging of elections that will drive out the Khmer Rouge. Today, the Khmer Rouge controls 20 percent of the country; and of the 80 percent that is controlled by the government, only half is fully secure or safe for travelers.

Kaplan’s main point is that “we seem to be engaged in expensive ‘stunts’ around the world.” In Haiti and Somalia, the United States spent a great deal of money in the hope of going in quickly and getting out after only three or four months. If things collapse three or four years later, the politicians hope only that no one will notice. This is an increasingly dangerous mode of operation in view of the reality of an increasingly isolationist public. All that is needed, Kaplan maintained, is the noticeable failure of one of these “stunts” to drive the public into an even greater isolationist stance. Rather than “stunts” that seek to “solve” such complex conflicts in a few short months, Kaplan suggested that resources could better be spent on less “dramatic” but more long-term solutions, such as women’s literacy and family planning programs and reforestation projects. Such projects are more valuable in the long run, and only then can there be hope of gradual, incremental improvements that will enable democracy to grow on its own. The “expensive stunts,” Kaplan said, are of limited value.

Echoing Huntington, Kaplan noted the irony that most violence in the world today is caused not by poverty and economic stagnation but by global economic success and development. Mass violence (in India, for example) has visited itself more upon countries that have boasted of recent economic achievements than among failed states and regions. “We are in a gawky, awkward, pubescent stage in human development,” he asserted. Because capitalism cannot be controlled, the more growth there is, the greater the disparities become. Global economic growth has been tremendous of
late—but it has been uneven, and it is the unevenness that is causing the problems. While life gets better for some, it unfortunately gets worse for many more.

Ours remains a world of ‘yearning,’ said Kaplan, and ‘everyone wants to be a player.’ Yet the reality is described better by a statistic noted in the *Atlantic Monthly* that by the year 2000, some 40–70 percent of North African youth will have no possibility of finding employment. The current system is producing a new “sub-proletariat of young people” without jobs. It is true, Kaplan conceded, that he has focused mainly on places that are in a “downward spiral”; yet, this describes a large section of the world. It is important to keep in mind, he said, that 90 percent of the babies born today are being born not in places like Singapore, but in the kind of places he has been describing. The question remains: “Is democracy going to be up to the job? Is democracy going to create wealth in those places?”

Elections often do not provide the answer, since in some societies a dictator will engage in more ‘civil’ behavior than a democratically elected leader. On the other hand, corporatist neo-authoritarianism, such as the variety found in Singapore, is not a universal model either. It may work in Singapore, but it cannot be a model for others.

Kaplan offered Thailand as proof of Francis Fukuyama’s theory that democracy may not emerge everywhere, but that where it does emerge, people will be happier. Little by little in that country, the military mafiosos are constrained by an increasingly feisty and sophisticated press, suggesting that democracy is gradually gaining ground. Thailand is also a good example, Kaplan maintained, of how democracy, economic growth, and falling birth rates are interrelated. The problem in Washington, however, is that policy makers view this crucial interrelationship through its separate parts, such as demography or democracy. Yet in those parts of the world the interrelationship between scarcity, corruption, and civil society is clear. Places where there is land scarcity and high population growth, he said, are not places where good government is likely to emerge.

In closing, Kaplan noted: “I’m a global optimist. I just think that the next forty years are going to be very difficult.”

**Jessica Tuchman Mathews**

**Demographic and Environmental Forces**

Jessica Tuchman Mathews described what in her view are the environmental, demographic, and population changes that will pose the greatest challenge to international order in the future. She asserted that, to a certain extent, these sources of conflict have grown up with us during the Cold War but have escaped our attention. Demographic and environmental challenges, she said, are not the only sources, or the key sources, or even new sources of conflict, but they are the most frequently ignored sources of modern instability.

**Overpopulation**

In the period between 1950 and 1990, Mathews noted, there was more change in our environment than in the entire period before 1950. For the first time in our history, we have been able to alter the planet’s physiology. There have been historic changes and new stresses on our environment as a result of adding three billion more people to our human population in the space of only three decades. We have doubled the amount of nitrogen on the planet, created a hole the size of a continent in our ozone layer, and created what biologists call a “spasm” of species loss at the rate of one per hour. This means that 10 to 25 percent of our species will be gone within twenty-five years. During the post-war period, 11 percent of the planet’s arable land—an area equal to India and China combined—has been degraded, some of it irretrievably. In addition, water demand has increased by eight or nine times in this century, and will triple from present levels by 2050 if the current growth trend continues. Owing to improvements in infant mortality rates and nutrition over recent decades, there are more hungry people in absolute numbers on the planet than ever, Mathews noted. Given the projected rate of population growth, we can expect another doubling of population by 2050.

The challenge of burgeoning population growth could be a major source of instability in the coming decades, according to Mathews. Echoing a concern of Robert Kaplan’s, she argued that the need
for new jobs to meet the needs of the working-age population in developing countries by 2025 will be larger than today’s total number of workers worldwide. This population will create a gigantic—possibly unsatisfiable—demand for jobs, and will create greater pressures for massive population shifts through internal and external migration among nations.

As population growth continues, Mathews noted, we will face new inequities in resource use that will grow more stark as the developing world continues to expand faster than the industrialized world. We will need to triple both our energy use and agricultural production in the next fifty years—at a time when all the “easy” measures for increasing our food supply have already been exhausted. For instance, rice yields in China in the 1970s grew at about 4 percent annually; but in the 1980s, annual yield increases were only 1.6 percent, a rate that is only barely sufficient to stay ahead of population growth. In addition, there is a severe crisis in global fisheries, all seventeen of which are at or beyond their sustainable yield.

In a few crucial regions, potential conflict surrounds the disparity between available water sources and consumption. By 2050, one-quarter of all river water will be used to meet human consumption needs. In the Middle East, where there is 3 percent annual population growth, water resources are already in severe deficit. To state the obvious, water and food are the basic elements for survival. As such, they are the most obvious sources of conflict in regions, like the Middle East, where there are both a shrinking per capita resource base and historical and ethnic rivalries. This type of conflict can quickly transform once peaceful communities into vengeful ethnic cauldrons.

Migration

Mathews projected that population growth in the next fifty years will result in an increase in internal migration and rapid urbanization, with concomitant internal political instabilities. The number of refugees has grown ten-fold in the past twenty-five years, she noted. If one includes internally displaced people who are refugees within their own countries, we currently have fifty million migrants and refugees, a number that will inevitably continue to rise. This unprecedented population growth, Mathews asserted, has forced people to use land in ways that it was not meant to be used. As a result, our vulnerability to natural disasters increases.

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More Relief, Less Development

Mathews argues that all these trends are creating humanitarian crises that divert scarce resources from productive investment to unproductive but morally compelling uses. Financial resources spent on peacekeeping or humanitarian assistance—such as the $3 billion spent on Somalia—are funds that could have gone to areas ripe for...
economic growth. The portion of the UN budget devoted to humanitarian relief and peacekeeping increased from 25 to 45 percent between 1988 and 1992. The UN will spend five times more on peacekeeping than economic development this year, a trend that is reflected in the national budgets of its individual member-states.

According to Mathews, parallel stresses of dwindling arable land, global warming, and population growth are leading to coastal crowding and pressure on fisheries. The interaction of population growth, poverty, and environmental stress is a toxic combination, as we have seen recently in Rwanda and Haiti. In the telecommunications age, it will be impossible not to know how everyone else lives, and pressure on governments to open up will increase. Not all governments will succumb to such pressure, however, especially those on the verge of developing the capacity to build biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons to enhance their international prestige. Without the requisite security measures, these countries may become unwitting accomplices in supplying these weapons to outlaw states and international crime groups. Avoiding that outcome, said Mathews, will require unprecedented international cooperation.
As Professors Huntington and Tamás suggest in their presentations, the search for “identity” is a key feature of the post–Cold War era. That search extends beyond the uncertainties facing formerly oppressed nations and peoples to the reconceptualization of the relationships among states and the institutions that serve them. As Ambassador Jack Maresca said during the Institute’s “Managing Chaos” conference, we ought to acknowledge that “chaos” may reside in our thinking about the world these days rather than in the world itself.

The reader may have noticed that some of Robert Kaplan’s assertions contradict Professor Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations?” theory. While the latter sees inevitable conflict between civilizations, Kaplan suggests that the lines between peoples are not based on civilization, but on class or even lifestyle. As Kaplan notes, there is a sense in which, despite the differences in religion, history, and culture, middle-class Pakistanis have more in common with middle-class Americans than with their fellow countrymen who live in shantytowns. This remark may put Kaplan—the reputed author of “chaos theory”—closer to the global optimist Francis Fukuyama than to Samuel Huntington. Fukuyama, of course, argues in “The End of History?” that democracy and the free market will triumph universally. One supposes he would square his argument with Kaplan’s by saying that the forces that segment Pakistani society and threaten to rend social cohesion will eventually be overcome when Pakistan (and the world) becomes more “bourgeois.” The debate on post–Cold War identity issues is obviously complex and is being joined by exponents of a wide variety of views.

Regardless of one’s reaction to various concerns about “identity” and to the claims of commentators like Kaplan and Jessica Mathews regarding the ultimate effect of demographic and environmental forces of disorder, it can hardly be disputed that the nation-state system is under considerable stress and cannot be expected to continue unchanged in the coming decades. The task before the international community is not deciding whether change is for better or worse, but how to galvanize the proponents of freedom, justice, order, and peace into responding appropriately to change. Wide-ranging and creative thinkers like Huntington, Tamás, Kaplan, and Mathews provoke our thinking—and in ways that are clearly vital to our ability to meet the challenge of international change.
Samuel P. Huntington is Eaton Professor of the Science of Government and director of the John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies at the Center for International Affairs, Harvard University. In 1977–78, he served as coordinator of security planning for the National Security Council. Huntington’s association with Harvard University dates from 1950. He was also associate director of the Institute of War and Peace Studies at Columbia University from 1959 to 1962. In 1970, he was among the founders of the quarterly journal Foreign Policy, of which he was coeditor until 1977. He has been a fellow or guest scholar at numerous universities and research institutes, including the Brookings Institution, the Woodrow Wilson Center, the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, and All Souls College, Oxford. He was a member of the Council of the American Political Science Association (1969–71), and served as the association’s vice president (1985) and president (1986–87). He has also served as a member of the Presidential Task Force on International Development (1960–70), the Commission on United States–Latin American Relations (1974–76), and the Commission on Integrated Long-Term Strategy (1986–88). Huntington is the author or editor of over a dozen books and ninety scholarly articles on issues involving military politics, strategy, and civil-military relations; American and comparative politics; and political development and the politics of less-developed countries. His most recent book, The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century (1991), received the Grawemeyer Award for Ideas Improving World Order. He is also author of “The Clash of Civilizations?,” which was published in Foreign Affairs in the summer of 1993. Huntington received a B.A. from Yale University, an M.A. from the University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Jessica Tuchman Mathews is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations and a columnist for the Washington Post. In 1993, she was deputy to the undersecretary of state for global affairs. In 1982–83, Mathews was vice president of the World Resources Institute, a policy research center working on the management of national resources and the environment. Mathews was also the Institute’s research director from 1982 to 1988. From 1977 through 1979, Mathews was the director of the Office of Global Issues on the staff of the National Security Council. Her responsibilities included nuclear proliferation, conventional arms sales policy, chemical and biological warfare, human rights, and international environmental issues. She has served on many study committees of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the congressional Office of Technology Assessment, and the National Academy of Sciences, including the latter’s Committee on the Policy Implications of Greenhouse Warming. She is a member of the Advisory Committee of the Institute for International Economics, and a distinguished fellow of the Aspen Institute. She is currently a member of the board of Radcliffe College, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Inter-American Dialogue (vice chair), and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. She has previously served on the boards of the Joyce Foundation, the Population Reference Bureau, and the Federation of American Scientists. Mathew’s Washington Post column appears nationwide and regularly in the International Herald Tribune. She has also written for the New York Times, Foreign Affairs, and other scientific and foreign policy journals. She holds a B.A. from Radcliffe College and a Ph.D. in molecular biology from the California Institute of Technology.

G. M. Tamás is a reader in philosophy at the University of Budapest and formerly a member of the Hungarian parliament. He is also director of the Institute of Philosophy of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and, since 1990, vice president of the Hungarian Philosophical Society. He emigrated to Hungary from Romania in 1978, at which time he was appointed senior lecturer and senior research fellow in the Faculty of Letters at the University of Budapest (ELTE). Tamás’s open association with dissidents resulted in his dismissal from the university, and he was unable to gain employment again until 1989. During that time, he published widely in samizdat publications on issues of political philosophy, and broadcasted regularly for the Hungarian Section of the BBC World Service and for Radio Free Europe. In 1986, he received permission to travel abroad and taught at Columbia University, the Polytechnic of Central London, and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris, among many other universities in Europe and North America. In 1988, he participated in the demonstrations against communist rule in Hungary and was arrested several times. That same year, he founded the Alliance of Free Democrats and, in December 1989, became the first dissident member of the Hungarian parliament. Tamás remains chairman of the National Committee of the Free Democrats. In parliament, he was a member of the Select Committee on Foreign Affairs and vice chairman of the Interparliamentary Group. In 1989, Tamás wrote Idola Tribus, a book on nationhood, tradition, and values, which was originally published in Hungary and will be released in an expanded version under the title Tribal Concepts by Open Court Press next year. Tamás writes regularly for international periodicals, including The Spectator, the Sunday Telegraph, The Times, the Daily Telegraph, The European, the Review of Politics, the American Scholar, the Journal of Democracy, Social Research, and the Times Literary Supplement. At present, he is at work on a book on authority to be published by Basic Books.
The Changing Character of International Conflict

**November 30, Morning**

**Welcoming Address**

**Session 1**

*The Character of Twenty-First Century Conflict*

**Moderator**

**Speakers**

**Session 2**

*A New Look at Key Sources of Conflict*

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**Coping with International Conflict into the 21st Century**

November 30 – December 1, 1994

**Chester A. Crocker**, Chairman, Board of Directors, United States Institute of Peace

A conceptual assessment of the changing character of international conflict designed to advance today’s awareness of change and the breakdown of institutions created in the Cold War era.

**Paul D. Wolfowitz**, SAIS, The Johns Hopkins University

**Samuel P. Huntington**, Center for International Affairs, Harvard University

**Robert D. Kaplan**, author of “The Coming Anarchy” and *Balkan Ghosts*

A focus on known and anticipated sources of conflict in the coming decades, including the resurgence of ethno-religious nationalism; environmental and related threats; and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and the persistent threat posed by certain closed societies.
**November 30, Luncheon**

**Challenges to the U.S. Military in Post–Cold War Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Interventions**

**Speaker**

*Les Aspin*, Former Secretary of Defense and Congressman

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**November 30, Afternoon**

**New Institutions of Conflict Resolution**

**Session 3**

**NGOs: The New Conflict Managers?**

An examination of the changing roles of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) across the broad spectrum of conflict-related activity. The evolving relationships among NGOs, governments, and international organizations in managing international conflict will also be addressed.

**Moderator**

*Allen Weinstein*, Board of Directors, United States Institute of Peace, and Center for Democracy

**Speakers**

*Phyllis E. Oakley*, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration

*Jan Eliasson*, Permanent Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Kingdom of Sweden

*Julia Taft*, InterAction

*Vesna Pesic*, Visiting Fellow, United States Institute of Peace, and Center for Anti-War Action, Belgrade

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**Session 4**

**NGO Burdens and Needs as Conflict Managers**

This session will ask leaders from various parts of the NGO community to assess the increasing burdens upon—and opportunities for—NGOs in managing international conflict directly. The speakers will discuss the extent to which—and how and why—NGOs with other
mandates and expectations have been called upon to be direct conflict managers. Finally, speakers will survey their evolving needs as international actors, both under their traditional mandates and new ones.

**W. Scott Thompson**, Board of Directors, United States Institute of Peace, and Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University

**John Paul Lederach**, Eastern Mennonite College

**Lionel Rosenblatt**, Refugees International

**Andrew Natsios**, World Vision

**Vivian Lowery Derryck**, African-American Institute

**Session 5**

**Key Challenges in International Conflict Management**

**Panel A**

**Averting Chaos: Preventive Diplomacy in Eurasia and Africa**

**Moderator**

**Speakers**

**Panel B**

**NGO Conflict Resolution, Relief, and Rebuilding Activity in Former Yugoslavia**

**Moderator**

**Speakers**

Drawing from preventive diplomacy efforts in East Europe, Asia, and Africa, this panel will explore the roles that the UN, the U.S. government, regional organizations such as the OSCE and OAU, and nongovernmental organizations are playing and can play in early warning and preventive action in potential crisis spots.

**Michael Lund**, Senior Scholar, United States Institute of Peace

**John Marks**, Search for Common Ground

**John J. Maresca**, former U.S. Ambassador to OSCE

**Linda Perkin**, Deputy Director for East Asia and Pacific Affairs, United Nations

**Harold Fleming**, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs

This breakout will examine NGO conflict resolution, relief, and rebuilding activity in former Yugoslavia, with a focus on Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia. Special attention will be given to the question of NGO, government, and international organization support for the Muslim-Croat agreement in Bosnia. Indigenous NGO activity will be discussed along with the activities of those from abroad.
**Panel C**

**Bringing Peace to Sudan: The Roles of NGOs, Governments, and Regional Organizations**

This panel will examine the full range of activity—including the roles of NGOs, governments, and regional organizations—that has been involved in efforts to bring peace to Sudan. The panel will also assess the prospects for coordinated activity in the future, including the relationships between internal actors and international actors. Among activities to be surveyed will be advocacy, mediation, Track II diplomacy, relief work, conflict resolution training, and support for mediation.

**Moderator**

David Smock, Director of the Grant Program, United States Institute of Peace

**Speakers**

Francis Deng, Brookings Institution

John Prendergast, Center of Concern

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**Session 5**

**The Future of Intervention in Violent Internal Conflicts**

This session focuses on the recent experience of NGOs, governments, and international organizations in intervening in violent internal conflicts. Focusing on what has actually been done in humanitarian, political, and military efforts, the speakers will address the future prospects of such interventions.

**Moderator**

Denis McLean, Distinguished Fellow, United States Institute of Peace

**Speakers**

James Schear, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

J. Brian Atwood, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development (remarks presented by Nan Borton, Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, USAID)

Joseph Kennedy, Africare

John J. Maresca, former U.S. Ambassador to OSCE
DECEMBER 1, LUNCHEON

An Interactive Forum on the Global Information Revolution

Speaker

Ted Koppel, Anchor and Managing Editor, ABC News

DECEMBER 1, AFTERNOON

The New Diplomacy and New Tools for Conflict Management

Session 6

“The New Diplomacy”

Presupposing the need for innovation and creativity in diplomacy, this session will examine the potential efficacy of new techniques and means while evaluating the continuing applicability of more traditional tools. The speakers will assess whether an international consensus is building, or can be built, regarding the future of national and multinational intervention in regional conflicts. They will also examine the possible utilization of the experience and techniques of the NGO and business communities by governments and international organizations.

Moderator

Chester Crocker, Chairman, Board of Directors, United States Institute of Peace, and School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

Speakers

Chester Crocker

Robert Zoellick, Executive Vice President, Fannie Mae

Mohamed Sahnoun, International Development Research Centre, Ottawa

Thomas R. Getman, World Vision

Session 7

Conflict Management Tools

Panel A

International Conflict Resolution Skills Training (ICREST)

Moderator

Lawrence P. Taylor, Director, National Foreign Training Center, U.S. Department of State

Speakers

Hrach Gregorian, Director of Education and Training, United States Institute of Peace

Steve Pieczenik, Consultant, United States Institute of Peace
Panel B
Cross-Cultural Negotiation

Moderator

Speakers

Panel C
Information and Data Management

Moderator

Speakers

December 1, Dinner
Perspectives on Diplomacy in the Twenty-First Century

Speaker

John Paul Lederach, Eastern Mennonite College
Lewis Rasmussen, Program Officer, United States Institute of Peace

This panel explores the impact that culture has upon international negotiation and how awareness and skills training in national negotiating styles can make negotiators more effective.

Richard H. Solomon, President, United States Institute of Peace
John Graham, University of California, Irvine
Jean Freymond, Centre for Applied Studies in International Negotiations, Geneva
Chas. W. Freeman, Jr., Distinguished Fellow, United States Institute of Peace
Jerrold Schecter, Peace Fellow, United States Institute of Peace

This panel will explore the current and potential use of various software programs, information-and data-management systems, and the information highway during negotiations as aids to general policy analysis and as tools for early warning and preventive action.

William Wood, Geographer, U.S. Department of State
Lance Antrim, International Negotiating Systems
Chad McDaniel, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland
John Davies, Center for International Development and Conflict Management, University of Maryland

Henry Kissinger, Former Secretary of State
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*Keynote Addresses by Les Aspin and Ted Koppel* (Peaceworks No. 3)

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United States Institute of Peace
1550 M Street NW, Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005-1708

Phone: 202-457-1700
E-mail: usip_requests@usip.org
Internet: gopher.usip.igc.org 7001