

DISASTER RELIEF AND DIPLOMACY: MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE



MAY 2023

OPENING REMARKS:

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STUDIES



NOTICES

Once again, the latest devastating earthquake in Türkiye and Syria has caused grave humanitarian costs with critical implications for regional and global security concerns. Distinguished American diplomats and other officials discussed how the U.S. can gain diplomatic advantages during the ongoing tragedy for the purpose of advancing international cooperation to avert future disasters both caused by Mother Nature and man-made threats.

Video of the full conference may be found here: [LINK](#)

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“DISASTER RELIEF AND DIPLOMACY: MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE”

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<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS</u>		<u>PAGE</u>
I. PREFACE	PROFESSOR YONAH ALEXANDER PROFESSOR DON WALLACE, JR.	1
II. SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS		3
III. OPENING REMARKS	DR. JENNIFER BUSS	7
IV. CONTRIBUTORS PRESENTATIONS	AMBASSADOR [RET.] CHARLES RAY	7
	AMBASSADOR [RET.] C. STEVEN McGANN	8
	AMBASSADOR [RET.] PETER ROMERO	10
	DOUGLAS STROPES	12
	FRANKLIN MOORE	14
V. COMMENTATOR REMARKS	DR. DANIEL GERSTEIN	15
VI. QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, DISCUSSIONS		16
VII. ABOUT THE EDITORS		21
VIII. ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS		21
IX. ABOUT THE COMMENTATOR		23

I. PREFACE

PROFESSOR YONAH ALEXANDER AND PROFESSOR DON WALLACE, JR.

EDITORS

As we have repeatedly learned from history, the two key causes of catastrophic disasters are “Mother Nature” and “man-made.” These twin permanent threats to humanity have brought grave security costs on political, social, economic, and strategic levels. Therefore, it is not surprising that every generation from antiquity to modern times has developed “best practices” to cope with selected current challenges as well as a need to avert or survive the next expected and unexpected national, regional, and global dangers.

More specifically, such tragedies include earthquakes, famine, and plagues. Thus, during early 2023, misfortunes have struck China, Turkey, and Sudan. Additionally, the death toll due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic has reached 6,922,654ⁱ as of May 1, 2023.

Similarly, technological failures such as leakages of nuclear power plants occurred in the United States, Japan, and Ukraine. Also, state and non-state actors have launched tragic terrorist operations, wars, and flights of refugees, at home and abroad. Will civilization survive ongoing and future human conventional and unconventional calamities?

In this context, the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (IUCTS) administered by the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies (PIPS), the International Law Institute (ILI), and in collaboration with numerous governmental, inter-governmental, and non-governmental bodies has published a total of fifteen digital and hard copy reports during the past several years. Relevant topics include titles such as: “Global COVID-19 and Sports: Exposure Claims and Liability Mitigation Considerations” (September 2021); “Global COVID-19 and Sports: Threats and Responses” (October 2021); “Combating Global Coronavirus: From Isolation to International Cooperation” (November 2021); “A Lab of One’s Own: Fighting Bioterrorism, Cholera, and COVID-19” (December 2021); A Special Ambassadors’ Forum, “Combating Terrorism Amid COVID-19: Review of 2020 & Outlook for 2021” (June 2021); “Combating Biological Threats: A Legal Agenda for Future National & Global Strategies” (August 2021); “Covid-19 and the Role of the Military” (September 2021); “Post 9/11: Twenty Years of Multilateral Counter-Terrorism Cooperation” (October 2021); “Covid-19 and the Role of Technology” (December 2021); “War or Peace in the Middle East: Quo Vadis?” (January 2022); “Combating the Religionization of Terrorism: Governmental, Inter-Governmental, and Non-Governmental Perspectives” (June 2022); “NATO: Strategic Lessons From the Russian Invasion of Ukraine” (July 2022); “Iran’s Security Challenges and Prospects for Conflict-Resolution?” (October 2022); “The Security Situation in the Sahel: Assessing Threats and Responses” (March 2023); and “Latin American Security Concerns (April 2023).

The current academic effort on “Disaster Relief and Diplomacy: Mutually Supportive” was held on March 23, 2023. Distinguished contributors to the virtual Forum were Ambassador (Ret.) Charles Ray (Former U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia and Zimbabwe; As well as Member of the Board of Trustees and Chair of the Africa Program at the Foreign Policy Research Institute); Ambassador (Ret.) C. Steven McGann (Former U.S. Ambassador to the Republics of Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu; Deputy Commandant and International Affairs Adviser at the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at the National Defense University (NDU); As well as Co-Chairperson, Board of Directors, Women’s Refugee Commission); Ambassador (Ret.) Peter Romero (Former U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador and Chief of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in San Salvador; As well as Assistant Secretary of State of the Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau); Mr. Doug Stropes (Division Chief, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance); Mr. Franklin Moore (Career member of the U.S. Senior Executive Service (SES); And Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) for the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Africa Bureau); and Dr. Daniel M. Gerstein (Former DHS Undersecretary (Acting) and Deputy Undersecretary for Science and Technology Directorate). The entire discussion prepared by the ILI is available for viewing here: [LINK](#). Additionally, the printed publication is also accessible on the PIPS website under the ICTS page [here](#).

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On a personal note, Professor Alexander wishes to express his deep appreciation for the decades-long academic and professional partnerships with the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies and the International Law Institute; Thanks are due particularly to PIPS's Dr. Jennifer Buss [CEO], General Al Gray (USMC [Ret.], Chairman of the Board), and Gail Clifford [VP for Financial Management & CFO]. Likewise, he is most grateful to the ILI's Professor Don Wallace, Jr. [Chairman], Robert Sargin [Deputy Director], ILI interns, Isabella Stevens [Northeastern University], Emeline Benson [Brigham Young University], and Morgan Van Beck [College of St. Benedict St. John's University].

Finally, thanks are also due to Kevin Harrington (coordinator of the IUCTS internship program since January 2021) who provided research and administrative support for this publication in conjunction with our graduate and undergraduate student interns: Adrik Bagdasarian (James Madison University); William Brooks (George Washington University); Louisa Burch (American University); Andrew Jones (University of Arizona); Harrison Kopitsch (American University); Jinhao Li (Johns Hopkins University); Jacky Linden (Miami University, Oxford Ohio); Yunchao Mao (George Washington University); Royon Meerzadah (Carnegie Mellon University); Evan Rohe (University of Kent); Loren Sera (American University); Bastien Veilhan (London School of Economics and Political Science); and John Watters (Colby College).

ENDNOTES:

¹World Health Organization. May 1, 2023.

II. SELECTED HIGHLIGHTS [DRAWN FROM THE MARCH 23, 2023, FORUM'S PARTICIPANTS]

1. Natural disasters increased tenfold between 1960 and 2019.
2. Flooding, caused by climate change, accounted for 42% of natural disasters that resulted in death and displaced people.
3. In addition to natural disasters, 30 to 40 armed conflicts each year also account for humanitarian emergencies, displacement, and deaths.
4. Robust diplomatic efforts that bring countries together are vital for an effective international response to natural disasters.
5. Two positive examples of disaster diplomacy are the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey and the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia.
6. The window of opportunity opened by a disaster for diplomacy is only effective when there has been prior diplomatic activity and when the parties involved are predisposed to put aside their differences.
7. Examples of negative disaster diplomacy are the recent earthquake in Syria and Cuba's conditional aid during Katrina.
8. Diplomacy and disasters both operate through processes: pre-disaster, preparation, immediate responses to a disaster, and post-disaster recovery phase.
9. As a result of "the ring of fire", there will be more disasters in the stretch along the Mediterranean and into Turkey and Syria. Therefore, there may be a diplomatic potential to maintain a good relationship within that area or any area that is prone to disasters.
10. It is crucial to work closely with both environmental experts and governments before disasters occur to bring a more effective response.
11. Diplomacy needs to be active, vigorous, well-supported, and so is dealing with natural disasters.
12. The role of the military, supported by diplomacy, is to provide for the safety and support for friendly non-combatants while suppressing threatening forces.
13. All issues of stability operations were on full display during the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria.
14. The growing issues of climate change have exacerbated challenges with stability operations.
15. Women are differentially impacted by conflict, but remain underrepresented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict building efforts.
16. For public safety operations to be successful, three things need to be taken into account: mitigating gender-based violence, promoting health infrastructure, and identifying additional safeguards for protecting vulnerable populations.
17. The key barriers behind HADR (humanitarian assistance and disaster response) processing is lack of political will, not enabling environments for women public speakers, and insecurity in reprisals against women's rights defenders.
18. To have successful outcomes in humanitarian assistance and disaster response, there must be full, equal, and meaningful inclusion of all parties.
19. Mechanisms for informal, advisory, ad hoc, or other means of inclusion must be introduced to address issues of underrepresentation in HADR operations.
20. Disaster diplomacy opens channels of communication.
21. The aid provided to disaster-stricken countries does not mitigate or even reduce grievances, resentment, or violence in many disaster-stricken countries.

22. A nexus exists between disasters and prolonged conflict.
23. A country with marginalized groups or poor governance is more likely to experience long-term suffering.
24. Several patterns appear after a natural disaster, including media predictions and information, early reports from those on the ground, and action is taken by the United States government and diaspora groups.
25. There can be a lag in time between when aid is announced and when it actually arrives to a disaster area.
26. The U.S. and other donors become increasingly frustrated by a recipient government's inability to reform itself.
27. Corruption, waste, marginalization of populations, grievances, and resentments cause conflicts to continue.
28. In 2020, USAID went through a reorganization that merged the Office of U.S. for
29. Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the Office of Food for Peace (FFP) into one bureau, known as the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).
30. Most of the crises and emergencies USAID responds to are "complex emergencies," some sort of man-made disaster, often civil wars, strife, or conflict, causing the need for Humanitarian assistance.
31. The public often does not see the U.S. government on the ground, but USAID tries to work with local or international NGOs, local communities, or the UN agencies, and then responds with the local culture and demeanor in mind.
32. Seasoned U.S. disaster experts on the ground after the Turkey and Syria earthquakes have said that the disaster is unlike anything they have ever seen.
33. USAID makes sure that assistance is branded and identifiable as American. If an American flag would prevent aid from getting into the hands of those in need or possibly cause harm by association, such as sending assistance to Syria under the Assad Regime, then USAID does not brand those commodities.
34. Unfortunately, supplies that USAID have donated can be used for other reasons beyond what they are intended for. For example, supplies provided to the Turkish organization known as the "White Helmets," are already being used for relief but sadly also for the bombing campaigns that are still ongoing.
35. Countries that are affected by disasters and receive aid are able to continue to reuse the tools and repurpose materials for other emergencies if another disaster occurs. For example, when local responders in Turkey had maintained, sustained, and continued to use some of the supplies that were previously donated to them following an earthquake in 1999.
36. Two areas that USAID supports are humanitarian assistance and development assistance, which is governed by humanity, neutrality, and impartiality.
37. The concept of resilience allows USAID to deploy relief efforts depending on the needs of others.
38. Humanitarian aid requires diplomacy because some aspects of a country often do not adhere to neutrality and impartiality.
39. In 1961, the World Food Program was established to address assistance in times of crisis, and the U.S. primarily donated excess food that they had at the time.
40. Today, the U.S. funds about 40% of the World Food Program and is the largest provider of disaster assistance.
41. The World Food Program experimented with local purchases to determine the different outcomes. This resulted in the program transitioning from providing goods to providing cash and vouchers.
42. The resources for humanitarian assistance come from the budgets of USAID, the State Department, and the Department of Agriculture.
43. There is diplomacy within the U.S. government, between the U.S. and other donors, as well as between the U.S. bilaterally and multilaterally.

44. The diplomacy aspects of disaster relief have mutual benefits that are often ignored. Emergencies and the loss of life should not be necessary to remind our governments, citizens, and general society of the importance of these relationships.
45. The Department of Defense offers unique perspectives and capacities to the topic of disaster relief.
46. Benefits such as generating goodwill, opportunities for sharing of science and technical data, and valuable insights into how different countries function helps the U.S. in the long term extending beyond natural disasters, but also human-induced disasters.
47. There are major benefits in our bilateral relationships and many things to learn from these relationships as nations continue to evolve.
48. The U.S. was able to see the expertise of the Netherlands in water management when they provided flood assistance to the state of Louisiana after Hurricane Katrina. In Christchurch, they built back by working with geological circumstances to create the infrastructure.
49. Collaboration is key regarding disaster relief which is often overlooked by people. By familiarizing ourselves with Sweden and Australia's response to potential viral outbreaks, we gained insight on how to respond to our own viral outbreaks.
50. It is crucial to coordinate and share information learned by the U.S. government with the various agencies and with the public.
51. The diplomatic windows that open during each crisis are transitory, temporary, and not permanent. They certainly can be taken advantage of to build better governance and better relationships.
52. It is a matter of what we have done before and during an emergency. The key is how many lives were saved and how much aid was distributed to the necessary areas.
53. The people who received help will remember clearly who provided the aid. This impact made on the ground is something the government should take advantage of.
54. The most important thing about humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations is discussing gender at the beginning stages of providing aid.
55. The U.S. and its partners must impose these values of gender equality as they are completing their stability operations.
56. Many countries have difficulty with a continuous cycle of natural and man-made disasters.
57. Changes must be made in a very intense way so that conditions, particularly of poor governance and violence, are not mitigating factors or particularly critical factors in the years ahead.
58. The U.S. mission to the UN in New York helped secure additional border crossings from Turkey into Syria, leading UNSC to increase approved crossings into Syria for humanitarian assistance from one to three.
59. The UNSC was also able to negotiate with the Assad regime for some visa flexibility for Syrian responders, which allowed the UN to have greater roam.
60. There are success stories in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, where they are requiring less assistance and not as frequently as they did before.
61. In a sudden onset disaster, the government does not yet know how to quantify our transition from needing assistance to needing less or not needing assistance.
62. In 2013, efforts began on structuring the use of both humanitarian as well as development assistance to make communities more resilient when facing recurring challenges.
63. Man-made and non-cyclical emergencies such as floods and droughts are affecting the productivity capacity of citizens and causing a hunger crisis.
64. The number of individuals who are affected by the current hunger crisis will increase.

65. The response to Hurricane Maria in 2017 was extremely complex.
66. It is a self-defeating proposition to rebuild something the exact way it was previously.
67. The Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, must figure out ways to build resilience in critical infrastructure.
68. There is a great deal of emotion when it comes to disaster response, but we must continuously find more efficient ways to handle it.
69. The response to Hurricane Maria in 2017 was extremely complex.
70. It is a self-defeating proposition to rebuild something the exact way it was previously.
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72. There is a great deal of emotion when it comes to disaster response, but we must continuously find more efficient ways to handle it.

III. OPENING REMARKS

DR. JENNIFER BUSS

CEO, POTOMAC INSTITUTE FOR POLICY STUDIES

Thank you everyone for joining us.

I am pleased to be part of the group this afternoon talking through the trend that Yonah has been looking into during the wake of a pandemic. How can our government and military support other countries and societies through tragedy and loss? We are here to support the panelists. I am certainly not the expert here, but I thank you all for your time.

IV. CONTRIBUTORS' PRESENTATIONS

This section of the Report consists of presentations made by the contributors at the Special Forum: "Disaster Relief and Diplomacy: Mutually Supportive" that was held on March 23, 2023, via Zoom conferencing. Some updates and revisions were made by the invited participants.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] CHARLES RAY

*FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO CAMBODIA AND ZIMBABWE, AND
MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND CHAIR OF THE AFRICA PROGRAM AT THE FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE*

Thank you, Yonah, and I'm really honored to be here with such a distinguished group of experts. I am hardly an expert, but I would like to, sort of, address the issue from the standpoint of someone who has been impacted by this issue.

According to data from the Institute for Economics and Peace, between 1960 and 2019 there was a tenfold increase in the number of reported natural disasters, from 39 in 1962 to 396 in 2019. In 2005 alone, there were 402 incidents with a death toll of about 90,000. These incidents, or these natural disasters, can either be low-intensity events that happened frequently like flooding and droughts, or they can be one-off catastrophes like the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia that claimed over 200,000 lives, or the recent earthquakes in Syria and Turkey, which claimed over 30,000. The most common of the natural disasters, I mean, earthquakes and tsunamis draw a lot of attention, but 42% of the disasters that claim lives and displace people each year are actually flooding, and many of them are related to climate change. And this will only increase as time goes by. Flooding is followed by storms, earthquakes, extreme temperatures, droughts, wildfires, and volcanoes. And added to all this, added to what nature throws at us each year, you have from 30 to 40 armed conflicts each year that cause humanitarian emergencies, displacement, and deaths.

Now, many people would probably not think of natural disasters as a subject that would lead to a discussion of diplomacy, but that's not the case. To start with, in order to have effective international response to natural disasters, you have to have a robust diplomatic effort to bring countries together and to organize to get relief to the needed areas as quickly as possible to try to save as many lives as possible. In addition, history has given us examples where disasters and the disaster relief efforts that follow have opened brief windows of opportunity to deal with other crises or issues. And it is interesting, we just had the earthquake in Turkey. The 1999 earthquakes that hit Turkey and Greece occurred at a time when both countries had a very tense relationship. However, in the response to the earthquakes in 1999, they put aside their differences to assist each other in dealing with the aftermath of this disaster. We saw, for example, in the 2004 tsunami in Southeast Asia, the international response from the U.S. and other countries was quick and fulsome.

The thing to keep in mind though, when we talk about diplomacy and natural disasters, is that the window of opportunity opened for diplomacy by a disaster is only effective when there has been prior diplomatic activity, and when the parties involved are predisposed to put aside their differences. I think as a current example, Assad in Syria has been using this earthquake as a means to further punish his opposition in certain parts of the country, and there's been a counter-diplomatic effort on the part of the U.S. and the Western world to try and mitigate this. We saw during Katrina, for example, this was before our rapprochement with Cuba, we rejected offers of assistance from Cuba for

Hurricane Katrina and the reason given was that the Cubans' condition for their assistance to us was that sanctions against their country be lifted, and so, in that situation, diplomacy didn't work.

I think that if we look at the role of diplomacy in natural disasters and the benefits that can come out of it, if we are willing to look at this as a phase, I mean, diplomacy is a process, and in effect, actually so are natural disasters. You have the pre-disaster, preparation, immediate responses to a disaster, and then the post-disaster recovery phase. We need to look at it in terms of areas where we need to have good relations that also might be prone to disasters, and I predict that the situation we are seeing in Turkey is not the last nor will the problems in our relationship with Turkey go away soon. An interesting side note: one of the reasons that earthquakes are so common there is because the continent of Africa is moving northward toward Europe at the rate of a few centimeters per year. I think the term used is "the ring of fire." As the European plates slide under the African plates, I think you're going to see more disasters like this in that stretch along the Mediterranean, into Turkey and Syria.

We need to reinvigorate our diplomacy before disasters, to have procedures and policies in place to deal with them when they arise, we need to be involving not just the government but also the possessors of knowledge: the scientists, the relief experts, transportation experts, and equally important, the affected communities, either the potential or the actual affected communities, so that assistance can be applied quickly and in the proper places, so that we can take the advantage of these temporary opening of the windows of opportunity. So, as we've said in previous seminars of this type on the role of diplomacy, diplomacy, like defense and like development, is one leg of our international relations stool that we can not afford to ignore. It needs to be active, it needs to be vigorous, it needs to be well-supported, and this is nowhere more apparent than in dealing with natural disasters and the world has more than enough of them. You have 10 million children in the Sahel who are in jeopardy because of conflict. And you have Cyclone Freddy in Mozambique and Malawi, which has killed over 300 people, you have climate change, and you have the conflict in Ethiopia that has resulted in over 500,000 deaths, and hundreds of thousands of displaced people. I could go on and on but I think the point is clear. Diplomacy is something that needs to be vigorous and needs to be on the spot in terms of dealing with natural disasters before, during, and after they occur.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] C. STEVEN MCGANN

FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI, NAURU, KIRIBATI, AND THE KINGDOM OF TONGA AND TUVALU, AND DEPUTY COMMANDANT AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS ADVISER AT THE DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER SCHOOL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AND RESOURCE STRATEGY AT THE NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY [NDU], AND CO-CHAIRPERSON, BOARD OF DIRECTORS, WOMEN'S REFUGEE COMMISSION

It is critical to understand the nature of humanitarian assistance/disaster response (HA/DR) frameworks to better determine their intent and outcomes. HA/DR for the United States military is primarily envisioned as a stability and support operation that involves military forces providing safety and support to friendly non-combatants while suppressing threatening forces. This has to be expanded to include protecting civilian responders deployed by U.S. civilian agencies, United Nations bodies, and non-governmental organizations. Most importantly, gender analysis and assessments must be seen as structural elements of our overall response framework.

These operations encompass everything from natural disasters such as earthquakes, storms, and flooding to insurgencies and social upheavals. This is further complicated when in the case of situations such as the recent humanitarian response to the recent earthquake in Turkey and Syria. However, it is likely to be further exacerbated by the impacts of climate change and related circumstances that could result from drought, cross-border incidents, and migration.

To better understand the complexity of these operations we should understand clearly the respective elements that ensure appropriate outcomes. The Women, Peace and Security Index (WPS) very clearly shows the link between the security of women and stability operations. Nevertheless, women and girls are still differentially impacted by conflict. Also, women remain under-represented in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts.

Three key areas are essential in achieving successful stability operation outcomes:

1. Mitigating gender-based violence
2. Promoting increased health care infrastructure, particularly sexual health and reproduction.
3. Identifying additional safeguards for protecting vulnerable populations, including people with special needs and disabilities.

How can the inclusion of women in stability operations be achieved?

Key barriers to the inclusion of women in HA/DR processes:

- ***Lack of political will:*** Women's participation in peace processes requires commitment by decisionmakers to proactively include them, but this is not a consistent priority for those in charge, including members of the UN Security Council who do not implement their own resolutions on WPS. Women's participation often drops to the "bottom of the list" for governments engaging in peace and political processes.
- ***Lack of enabling environments for women's rights advocates to be heard,*** in particular, poor understanding by decisionmakers that women's participation requires proactive measures, including transparency on how to participate and dedicated resources to enable their inclusion.
- ***Insecurity and reprisals against women's rights advocates:*** Women leaders regularly face hostility, violence, and other attacks for their activism, elevating their risk of possible reprisals for engaging in peacebuilding processes or other public affairs.

Full, equal, and meaningful inclusion of women partners in these stability operations:

- ***Taking proactive measures to engage women human rights activists and peacebuilders:*** Invite them to discussions, fund/support their travel or engagement, ensure their safety before/during/after they participate, and make clear how they can participate.
- ***Creating an enabling environment for women's participation:*** Governments should ensure systematic inclusion of women in all stages of peace and political processes, including on their own delegations, by asking women peacebuilders what barriers they face and then work together to overcome them. The USG, for example, can leverage its influence at the UN to ensure that all processes led or co-led by the UN have meaningful representation of women.
- ***Ensuring the direct, substantive, and formal inclusion of diverse women in positions of power so that they can influence the outcome of negotiations and other processes as well as their implementation.*** This includes women's inclusion in setting and shaping agendas as well as experiencing tangible benefits from engagement. It also requires investments in local partners and women leaders to have the capacity and core funding to operate and provide their expertise beyond one-off moments.
- ***Full, equal, and meaningful participation must also be systematic, timely, and transparent:*** Should be inclusive of monitoring of agreements, political processes, constitution-building, economic development, transitional justice and reconstruction, as well as disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR), and security sector reform (SSR). While informal, advisory, ad hoc, or other means of inclusion besides formal inclusion can be useful, they are not, and must never be presented as, a substitute for direct, formal participation of women in leadership roles and decision-making structures and processes.
- How can greater integration, inclusiveness, and integrity of women in international security be achieved to ensure that this principle fully lives, not just exists?
- Integration requires ensuring a gender perspective in all areas, not just on WPS or women's rights issues, such as economic recovery and governance. Siloing women to these spaces stymies their full, equal, and meaningful participation in public discourse and undermines gender equality and equity in international security and writ large.
- Recognizing that women are not a homogenous group, it is critical to ensure the participation of diverse women's voices in international security. All WPS initiatives should integrate an intersectional approach and diversity, equity, and inclusion considerations. E.g., any conflict analysis should include an age, gender, and disability analysis to better understand the different needs and capacities of affected populations.
- Key priorities for stronger integration, inclusiveness, and integrity of women in HA/DR must mean prioritizing the issues that pose barriers for them — shrinking civil society space; reprisals against women human rights defenders; discrimination based on age, gender, disability, and other diversity factors; poor respect for their human rights, including their right to sexual and reproductive health and freedom from gender-based violence.

- Inclusiveness also means going beyond the obvious interlocutors to seek new voices rather than relying on the existing cohorts to achieve successful outcomes.
-
- We should integrate an age, gender, and diversity perspective in determining equitable results; ensure women affected by conflict are directly heard by key decision-makers; and drive these initiatives to focus on meaningful implementation of commitments.
- Moreover, it will bring to bear overarching concerns that gender equity is achieved in these operations, particularly as they impact human rights, women’s leadership and participation in humanitarian relief, disaster response, and stability operations.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] PETER ROMERO

FORMER U.S. AMBASSADOR TO ECUADOR AND CHIEF OF MISSION OF THE U.S. EMBASSY IN SAN SALVADOR, AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE OF THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE AFFAIRS BUREAU

Thank you so much Yonah. I appreciate it. I have to admit though, when your invitation came across my email inbox, I read it very quickly and thought that it was perhaps a commentary on my years at the State Department. Luckily with a closer look I was able to determine what the subject matter was. Indeed, my mother has always told me: “Why do the countries that you’re always assigned to seem to have disasters associated with them?” And I said: “Mom, I go to those countries for that reason. They don’t fall into the disaster category after I’ve been there or because I’ve been there.” Over a 25-year career in the State Department, and then several years heading up NGOs in the United States, I’ve dealt with hurricanes, floods, cholera, epidemics, civil war, gang violence, earthquakes etcetera.

As a practitioner, I want to stress that there's a lot of literature on this subject, but I can only tell you what my experience over 35-40 years has been. I started with the question of, does disaster diplomacy open up channels of communication and new diplomatic possibilities? And from my own experience, what I was able to come up with was: communication? Yes. The host country’s immediate needs generate intense dialogue between host country nationals, affected country nationals, and governments in the United States and particularly between potential donor countries and the United States. So, communication rapidly opens up. Does it involve new diplomatic possibilities? I think that there has been a notion that because disasters happen, that somehow the past is wiped away and that there's new diplomatic possibilities. I think the track record shows that disasters and the assistance that flows from them does not mitigate or even reduce grievance, resentment, or violence over the medium or long-term in a lot of these countries that are suffering from it. In fact, some people could even make a case that there's a nexus between disasters and prolonging the conflict. And I guess the key to all of this is what quality of governments existed before the disaster. If there's marginalized groups in that country or if governance is not effective, there is a greater chance of longer-term suffering and deprivation.

ENDNOTES:

[Open Letter to Permanent Representatives to the UN in Advance of the Annual Open Debate on Women, Peace and Security \(2022\)](#)

[Ukraine Policy Brief \(2022\)](#)

[Press release: Afghan Women’s Rights Remain on the Periphery of Talks with Taliban \(2022\)](#)

[Press release: On Eve of Generation Equality Forum, Women’s Refugee Commission Calls on World Leaders to Take Bold Action for Displaced Women and Girls \(2021\)](#)

[NGO Working Group on WPS Civil Society Roadmap \(2020\)](#)

[Men as Partners for WPS: Vital Lessons \(2020\)](#)

[Prioritizing the WPS Agenda in the First 100 Days: Memo to the Biden Administration \(2020\)](#)

I'm not so sure disaster tends to lead to new diplomatic openings nor greater possibilities. I think Ambassador Ray suggested that Cuba, for example, reached out to the U.S. during Katrina with conditionality to help the survivors of New Orleans and the surrounding area. China did the same thing. I don't think anybody remembers any of that to this day. So, I'm not sure that the offers or the actual assistance that flows has a long-term effect on the diplomatic possibilities. I think the quality of good governance is key and I think the best examples of how it works has been more or less, man-made, although punctuated by earthquakes, floods and other natural disasters such as in the case of Colombia. I think there you've got relatively good governance, and in Colombia we've had a long-term United States commitment to counterinsurgency and anti-drug trafficking through Plan Colombia to address 65 years of persistent violence, human rights abuses, and civil war. But at the same time, they've had substantial economic growth with our assistance and that of others. Their own health indices are up, homicides are down, and investment is growing, and I think that that is a success story that I'd be willing to talk more about.

I think the poster child for what can go wrong in the Western Hemisphere is Haiti. After \$2.6 billion in the last 12 years and literally billions of dollars before that, the country is plagued by and some would even say, run by gangs. The government has begged for an international force to deal with the violence. They cannot do it themselves. There was a recent GAO report that was highly critical of our assistance and the assistance of NGOs and others. There are some bright spots. A December 21st accord between the government and civil society groups holds some real promise. But what I tried to do and let me finish up with this, is to try to kind of amalgamate the 40 years or so that I spent in this in this area to try to come up with a pattern that happens to donors and on the ground in the petitioning country after natural and man-made disasters.

I don't want to be cynical here, but I want to be practical. So, the first thing that happens is there's predictions of disaster. They're all over the press and media. Then early reports start to dribble in: first cell phones and then social media is awash with people on the ground reporting to their loved ones in the states. Then comes a massive deluge of localized information, media sources, governments (particularly ours), and our own national media try to piece all of this together to try to find a meaning. Then there's further international media that arrives to chronicle the suffering. You see that displayed on all our news organizations. The U.S. government comes forward and diaspora groups in the United States start to get animated and active. There's a clamor for action. NGOs get involved. The National Guard is oftentimes deployed by state governors, particularly if there's a large diaspora community from that country in the state, and I cite probably more often than not New York State as an example of this.

I worked with a lot of governors as Assistant Secretary. Hospital ships are usually the first to be deployed. Our federal government becomes involved. Then the United States government announces a response. Most people just look at the numbers. They don't know the details behind it, but they look at the numbers. Other governments start to respond based on our numbers. National leaders of the affected country or countries come forward and make their appeals expecting a dividend out of all of this. Then the universal momentum starts to build. And I use the word momentum because there are so many actors and so many resources directed at so many different things, that in reality it is very difficult to try to harness all of that. This starts to condition this assistance towards reforms in the affected country. It becomes like trying to hold water in a paper bag. There is an acceleration of assistance to meet the needs of suffering people. To try to harness it or to condition and tie it to reform efforts by the affected country becomes extremely difficult, if not impossible. These governments, particularly in the case of Haiti, see this as a dividend more than an opportunity. The media moves on to the next crisis and the U.S. government as well as the other donor governments increasingly get frustrated by the government's inability to reform itself, which was key to all of this to begin with. As a consequence, the U.S. and other donors start to channel more of that assistance towards NGOs and the private sector. The recipient government, after a time, feels like it's weathered the storm. It moves on with little enduring reforms to show for itself. Corruption, waste, marginalization of populations, grievance, and resentments continue until the next episode. The next disaster comes in and its rinse-and-repeat. I think probably the lesson that I get from all of this is that it's difficult, if not impossible to change the cycle. But it is also an opportunity, particularly after the immediate crisis has ended. As soon as immediate relief and crisis management start to wind down would be the optimum moment for donors to speak with one voice to reform expectations and set forth milestones to evaluate progress. This would be to apply pressure to the recipient governments to condition the assistance in such a way as to put pressure on governments to change in order to do the right thing so that we have a different set of circumstances the next time that there is a natural or man-made disaster.

DOUGLAS STROPES

DIVISION CHIEF, THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT [USAID] BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE.

Thank you very much, Professor Alexander, and thank you everyone for this opportunity. I have to admit, I'm honored and very humbled to be asked to speak to this group. I am very excited to be following the three spoken. As you heard, I'm from the U.S. Agency for International Development, or USAID. I represent one of the tools that ambassadors have at their disposal following a disaster or some sort of crisis within their country. Specifically, I'm from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance, or BHA, as we call it. In 2020, USAID went through a reorganization, and we merged the Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, or OFDA, and the Office of Food for Peace, or FFP, together into one bureau, known as the Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance. This allows us to have more efficiency, effectiveness, a larger budget, a stronger voice at the table, and to make sure we're speaking with one coherent U.S. government voice with regard to our foreign disaster assistance.

In my current role with BHA, I'm serving as the Response Manager for the Türkiye and Syria earthquakes response. I was activated on February 6, immediately after the earthquake, and stood up a Response Management Team (RMT) here in Washington, D.C. We support our field team, known as our Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART), to lead U.S. government efforts for the disaster response. BHA's mandate is to save lives, alleviate human suffering, and reduce the impact on physical, social, and economic areas with regard to a humanitarian response. It's a global mission. In 2022, we responded to 72 different disasters around the world in 64 different countries. During 2022, BHA had a budget of \$11.8 billion dollars with which we carried out this humanitarian assistance. In addition to responding to disasters, we focus on the steady state period, where we are trying to build up the resiliency of countries, communities, and the most vulnerable so they are able to absorb the shock, able to recover, and able to respond to their neighbors' needs. We have spent a lot of time doing resilience and disaster risk reduction, and disaster preparedness training.

Most of the crises and emergencies we respond to, are what we call "complex emergencies," some sort of manmade disaster, often civil wars, strife, or conflict that cause the need for humanitarian assistance. Within my office, we certainly don't look at humanitarian assistance as a tool for diplomacy when we determine whether to respond. We respond as USAID with our mandate, because it is the right thing to do, it is what we have been asked to do by the legislators, appropriators, and the administration, because at the end of the day, our government is and we are a benevolent and philanthropic country. We want to do the right thing in this space. We look to find ways to do this, and we have a very politically neutral mandate to be able to do so. We are greatly supported by both sides of the aisle.

However, I fully acknowledge that the implementation of our humanitarian mandate is a tool for diplomacy. It is something we are able to do that demonstrates American values and represents the U.S. government in this space. There are four criteria, or four questions, that need to be met in order for us to respond. The first is that we try to identify some sort of evidence, knowledge, or information that demonstrates that there are unmet humanitarian needs in the area of which we are considered responding. Second, we look and see if our assistance would be able to save lives or alleviate suffering, should we decide to respond. Then third we ask, if the host government has requested assistance? Or, do we know that they will be willing to accept foreign assistance, and specifically assistance from the U.S. government? We do respond all over the world, we have staff located in multiple countries, strategically positioned, along with warehouses around the world. So, we have staff and resources close to that disaster so we can get to them as soon as possible after that disaster happens. We are embedded in various diplomatic missions, military and combatant commands, and other areas that are prone to have disasters strike in that area.

We also work closely with United Nations (UN) agencies, and non-governmental organizations (NGO), which act as our implementing partners. We work with local or international NGOs, local communities, or UN agencies, and then try to incorporate the local culture and demeanor into the response. We have the ability to deploy a Disaster Assistance Response Team, or a DART, on moment's notice, anywhere around the world. DART will get on the ground and immediately start carrying out assessments, figure out who else is responding, and coordinate a U.S. government response from their position as close to the disaster as we are able to get.

Specifically looking at the earthquakes that took place in Türkiye and impacted Türkiye and Syria, I think many are aware that this happened on February 6th, starting with a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, followed hours later by a 7.8 aftershock. There have been over 16,000 aftershocks and tremors in this area in Türkiye and Northwest Syria. The earthquakes and aftershocks had a destructive force of 132 atomic bombs. Our disaster experts that are on the ground now have said that it is incomparable to anywhere they have been, and these are seasoned disaster responders that have been all around the world following earthquakes, volcano eruptions, civil war, and strife. More than 52,000

people have died in the two countries thus far, at least three million people have lost their homes, and hundreds of thousands of buildings were damaged or destroyed.

In consultation with the U.S. Ambassador of Türkiye, and the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs who oversees Syria, a decision was made to deploy a DART and stand up the RMT here in Washington, D.C. We immediately dispatched two USAID Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. These were the teams from Fairfax County in Virginia, and also from Los Angeles County in California. Together, the teams were 160 people, they flew out on two military aircraft with their 12 K-9s as well. We were on the ground within a day and a half after the earthquake to immediately start performing rescues, building assessments, and augmenting the disaster response capabilities of the Turkish government. In addition to the 160 USAR personnel and 12 dogs, we also had 40 disaster assistance experts assessing needs and how the U.S. government response could take place. Our personnel who were on the ground, including K-9s, all wore USAID branded gear. It is clear that they are representing the U.S. government there and they are clearly a tool of diplomacy in that regard. We make sure that our assistance, when it does go out the door, is branded accordingly to acknowledge that the assistance is being provided by the United States.

In addition to sending the USAR teams immediately, we then started sending supplies, blankets, tents, cooking sets, and hygiene kits. We pulled these out of our warehouses, and within the first two weeks delivered ten 747s worth of equipment. Over 8 million pounds of supplies were delivered from the American people to the earthquake affected people of Türkiye and Syria.

The Department of Defense (DoD) flew out our USAR teams to the region on their large cargo C-17 aircraft. We also used DoD to provide local airlift. They sent 13 helicopters to the region, which we used to move over 600,000 pounds of assistance from the ports, and the airports, to the actual communities in remote areas where they were needed. DoD also donated and assembled a 125-bed field hospital that has an intensive care unit (ICU) and surgical capabilities, and they deployed 75 people to run operations and assemble that hospital. Additionally, we sent a ship that was loaded with humanitarian commodities to Türkiye, and through a military-to-military engagement, they were able to transfer those commodities as well. Using diplomacy in the form of defense was appropriate in this response. All told, DoD spent about \$25 million dollars of their commodities and donated supplies, such as the hospital, for the response.

In addition to what the DoD brought to the table, USAID/BHA provided \$116 million dollars worth of funding that we have used to purchase commodities and fund nonprofits and NGOs, local NGOs, international NGOs and UN agencies that are on the ground in both Türkiye and Syria carrying out the assistance. Our colleagues at the State Department's Office of Populations, Refugees and Migrations, or PRM, have also contributed \$75 million dollars to the response, which has gone to organizations that focus on refugee needs in the region. Just a little side note there, when our USAR teams left, they donated several \$100,000 dollars worth of supplies to local responders both in Türkiye and Syria. These local responders received real-time training on the equipment, and then that equipment was turned over to them to help augment their supplies and to be able to use them following a disaster. We donated to the Syria Civil Defense organization, also known as the "White Helmets". They are already using the supplies, not only for earthquakes, but sadly also in response to the bombing campaigns that are still ongoing in Syria. Our team that turned the supplies over said it was quite emotional because some of the supplies they had been using were previously donated to them in 1999 following an earthquake. Now, we were able to refresh that a little bit by leaving some of these supplies and some training behind with the responders in both countries.

The diplomatic channels at the U.S. Mission to the UN have also been integral to this response, helping to secure additional border crossings from Türkiye into Syria. Previously, there was only one UN Security Council approved crossing into Syria for humanitarian assistance. Because of the disaster, they were able to negotiate to now have three border crossings. Finally, we work with the private sector. We have the Center for International Disaster Information, or CIDI.org, that shares best practices on how the private sector can respond to the disaster, but also how the diaspora communities or the American public at large can support ongoing relief efforts. We use this as a tool for our embassies that are often overwhelmed by people asking how they can help. This resource is able to redirect them and say: "These are the best practices, and these are the organizations you may want to consider working with." Diplomacy often comes from our office in the form of where we are working, our ability to represent the U.S. government, and certainly our presence in the field. We are not only out there as humanitarians, we are out there as Americans. That presence comes with, hopefully and usually, a good association. It is great working with all the different ambassadors I have had the honor to work with, and I'm sure we can sit around and tell stories about disasters for hours on end.

FRANKLIN MOORE

*CAREER MEMBER OF THE U.S. SENIOR EXECUTIVE [SES], AND
FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR [DAA] FOR THE U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT [USAID] AFRICA BUREAU*

I think I'll be a little shorter than the first presenters and I am going to try to tie together some things that they have said thus far. We start with the concept of humanitarian aid. We see humanitarian aid as a response to disasters and emergencies. Ambassador Ray laid out a series of emergencies and disasters that have taken place. In all of them but one, you have a very direct effect on food and the availability of food for a population. So, I am going to look at this from the perspective of food, also because that's where I spent most of my sector time when I was at USAID.

Humanitarian assistance is one bucket. The other bucket that USAID deals with is development assistance. Development assistance is intended to deal with structural problems and issues. They could be physical: you have a health system that doesn't have clinics so they physically need clinics. Or they could be human, and many of the things that Ambassador McGann talked about in relation to women fit into this area. And I'll come back to why that's important.

We are governed by three principles for disaster assistance. The first one is humanity. As Doug said, the first question asked is does whatever has taken place have an effect on human suffering? And are what we are about to do going to help to relieve human suffering? The other two principles for humanitarian assistance, which are kind of different than development assistance, is the idea of neutrality (i.e. humanitarian assistance will go anywhere that people need it) and impartiality (i.e. humanitarian assistance will not decide that one person gets a response and their neighbor does not get a response for some reason).

Doug mentioned the word resilience. At USAID, a lot of work was done to put together on how we link humanitarian assistance more directly with development assistance. And resilience was seen as a way to do that which allows one to do some things with humanitarian assistance and some things with development assistance. With Ambassador McGann's pieces, because there is development assistance involved, one can begin to move them in. But that movement between the two requires a fair amount of diplomacy, quite often because one is dealing with some aspects within a country that do not adhere to the principles of neutrality and impartiality. And, therefore, as you come in with that second wave as you are moving out of humanitarian assistance, you have diplomacy to deal with that.

There is one set of diplomacy that relates to how we take these three principles that we use for humanitarian assistance and make use of them as we make that shift to development assistance. There is another area where I think there is a fair amount of diplomacy, and I can speak to this directly. As you know, I spent three years in Rome in a special job as the advisor to the ambassador to the Rome-based organizations. One of which is the World Food Program. One of the other aspects of diplomacy is between what the U.S. government is doing directly and what is taking place by international organizations, primarily the UN. In the case of food, it is the World Food Program. Now why does this sometimes get complicated? The United States independently is the largest provider of humanitarian assistance. But we are also the largest funder of the World Food Program. We fund about 40% of the World Food Program. In fact, the United States is involved in giving money bilaterally and giving money multilaterally. Being involved in solutions that are bilateral and being involved in solutions that are multilateral.

And there are many cases where diplomacy helps to link these together and helps us to be able to learn something in one of those spheres and move it over to other spheres. The World Food Program, for example, was able to experiment and look at what happens when local purchase takes place and how local purchase should be carried out. And that has influenced the whole concept of local purchase that encouraged the beginning of a movement from providing goods to providing cash and vouchers.

The third area where there is a little diplomacy that takes place is inside the U.S government. Because as you look at who it is and where we get the resources for humanitarian assistance, it is not just the budget of AID and the State Department. Some of that also comes from the Department of Agriculture. If you recall, back in 1961 when the World Food Program was established as something to deal with humanitarian assistance, we – the United States – provided primarily excess food that we had at that time. And that excess food was provided through the Department of Agriculture. And the Department of Agriculture still has a role because we still provide some provisions and we provide some cash. As I look at diplomacy, there is diplomacy both inside the U.S. government that gets carried out, there is diplomacy between the U.S. and other donors. There is diplomacy between the U.S. and recipients, and there is some diplomacy that is necessary between the U.S. bilaterally and U.S. multilaterally.

V. COMMENTATOR'S REMARKS

This section of the Report consists of comments made by the commentator at the Special Forum: "Disaster Relief and Diplomacy: Mutually Supportive" that was held on March 23, 2023, via Zoom conferencing. Some updates and revisions were made.

DR. DANIEL GERSTEIN

FORMER DHS UNDERSECRETARY [ACTING] AND DEPUTY UNDERSECRETARY FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE; ADJUNCT PROFESSOR AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITY; NATIONAL SECURITY AUTHOR; MEMBER OF THE HOLBROOKE DELEGATION THAT NEGOTIATED THE PEACE SETTLEMENT IN BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

This is a tough group to follow. Ambassador Ray talked a lot about preparedness, response and recovery, and the role of diplomacy. Then, Ambassador McGann talked very eloquently about this relationship between women and peace and security outcomes. Ambassador Romero reminded us of both good governance, but also the dreaded patterns of disasters that we should really, probably seek to avoid. Mr. Stropes spoke from a very operational perspective and reminds us of the mandate for how do we, as a government, get involved in these disasters? But then also, what guides those decisions? And then finally, Mr. Moore reminded us of this relationship between disasters, development, and diplomacy.

What I'd like to do is remind the group that what we have been talking about so far is really thinking very much about the effect on the host nation, but I would like to flip that around just a little bit. In my roles in government, as a senior official in both the Department of Defense and in the Department of Homeland Security, I find that disaster relief (the diplomacy aspects) actually have mutual benefits that we often don't talk about and that we often need to remind our government - more broadly, our citizens and our general society - how important these relationships can actually be. So I'm going to talk about my time in the Department of Homeland Security Science and Technology Directorate, where we had bilateral relationships with 13 different countries in the European Union. And then some of the less formal R&D relationships that we developed and why they were so important.

And then I also just want to remind the group—although I don't know that you need that much reminding— about the unique perspectives and capacities that the Department of Defense brings. So in going about this, I thought I would just tick off a couple thoughts about what some of these mutual benefits are. First, of course are the trusted relationships and the access. We also generate goodwill. Second, we also get some very important insights into how these countries function and that helps us in the long term. And I think what we're talking about extends not only to natural disasters, but also human-induced events. So as many of you have talked about how planning, preparing, and mitigation response recovery are essential in what we're talking about, I also think there are great opportunities for the sharing of science and technical data.

And let me just give you some examples - again from both DoD and DHS. So my first example is Japan. It was in the aftermath of the Fukushima Tsunami and nuclear disaster and I had the opportunity to be a political appointee in the Office of Secretary of Defense for Policy. We were able to bridge that gap between the science and the diplomacy of being able to work with the government of Japan to understand what they were sensing and connect that to what we were taking in from our readings from Department of Energy, and from the Defense Threat Reduction Agency in terms of the technical data that was being generated. And then making decisions based on this technical data, it came down to not only the relationships with the Japanese government, but it also came down to the relationships of the US government in these very technical areas. So big benefits accrue from our bilateral relationships in times of crises.

It's really fascinating how much we got from the other countries. The Netherlands - they are experts in water management. What they face is similar to Louisiana, specifically in New Orleans when the levees were topped. There is so much to be learned, and much of what we gained from that bilateral relationship we were able to bring back for flood mitigations here in the United States. We also thought it gave us a leg up to think about areas like climate change, which is going to exacerbate what we're seeing in some of these very troubling areas.

The next one I'll take you to is New Zealand. I went there immediately after the earthquake in Christchurch and their plan for building back was extraordinary. They had already come to the conclusion that you just can't replace Christchurch in the same way that the city was laid out prior to the disaster. In places where the fault line was particularly severe, they put in parks. And in places where the ground was more solid and more static and less prone to geological events, they put in their housing. And in places in between that they could put in low-rise buildings and have shopping centers and things like that. Their work provided an approach - the same type of approach - that we

had to think about with regard to the Puerto Rico hurricane that occurred almost a decade later, in which we had to think about “how do we actually build back?”

Another opportunity we learned and collaborated was in the area of biodefense. We worked with a number of countries in biodefense (by biodefense, you know we considered extremely dangerous pathogens like tularemia or anthrax). We worked, for example with Sweden, on understanding their work with tularemia because they actually have endemic tularemia. Our goal was to understand their efforts, share our knowledge, and discuss how to talk to populations about it. We also worked very closely with Australia on two very important viruses that could emerge as potential pandemics: Nipah virus and Hendra virus. And so it is very important, in terms of this collaboration. Oftentimes, I feel like we lose focus and people don't understand that it is really a two-way street. We develop these relationships by providing this assistance and getting this access.

VI. QUESTIONS, ANSWERS, DISCUSSIONS

Selected comments by the contributors to this report during the discussion following the presentations. Some of the invited attendees from the United States and internationally participated during this segment.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] CHARLES RAY

I would just like to say, I think listening to other speakers, it struck me; my thought as I was preparing for this was, “This is a very complex issue”, and listening to the speakers I see that I was right, it is very complex. But each person made very good points, and I especially like the point about domestic diplomacy, that it is necessary to coordinate and share information learned within the U.S. with the various agencies and with the public. Just a point to underscore, I mentioned that the diplomatic windows that open during each crisis are transitory. They are not permanent, but I don't know that I would necessarily agree that they can't be taken advantage of. It's a matter of what we've done before, and of course, during an emergency, during a crisis. The key is how many lives we save and how much aid we get to where it needs to be. But I think to follow on that, taking advantage of these open doors and trying to build better governance, better relationships. And just my own experience, I was at the University of Houston right after Katrina and during Hurricane Rita, and the people in government might not remember the foreign assistance that came to New Orleans and other places, but I can tell you the people down there remember the Dutch, the team that Professor Gerstein mentioned: these flood disaster guys. People in certain parts of the bayou remember them and they remember them clearly. And this is something that we as a government need to be able to take advantage of, this impact made on the ground by our disaster relief people. What do we do as a government to go in and build on that?

AMBASSADOR [RET.] C. STEVEN MCGANN

I would like to start by saying that one of the most important things about this discussion, or any discussion on humanitarian assistance, disaster response, and I'm adding stability operations, is the importance of talking about gender, women, peace, and security even when women aren't visibly in the room because it won't work unless we as men start talking about these issues. I would also like to point out that when we look at all these various operations, we have to have an understanding of the importance of gender equity at the beginning of the process. Because often the principles that we may have concerning gender equity, inclusion, and outcomes may not exist in the conditions in which we're going into. So in very many ways, the United States and its partners may have to, in effect, impose these values as we're helping. It's not just that the linkages begin later in the response to the crisis, but they actually begin at the beginning.

Secondly, I do want to emphasize the fact that we have to fully comprehend the role of the U.S. military in these operations and why we think of them as stability operations. The reality is that our military is likely to engage in HA/DR in the coming years as opposed to expeditionary deployments that we saw in previous years. And the fact that the DoD understands this is seeing that all the combatant commands now have gender advisors, to the point that there may be more gender advisors in the DoD than in State.

So I think that we have to really focus on the totality of the outcomes that we're trying to achieve in our responses to these situations. And that totality is ever evolving in terms of the mechanisms we bring to bear to achieve it, but we still have to have an overarching framework, starting from the moment of deployment through that phase in which we move from an immediate humanitarian assistance to a much more development assistance and sustainable process, because you can't build resilience unless you also have sustainability.

So, we have to understand that the role that we play, as humanitarian citizens and disaster response is not a tertiary role, but in fact, it has to be central to overall thinking of how we engage diplomatically in this humanitarian and development space.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] PETER ROMERO

I continue to be impressed by people who are engaged in humanitarian assistance and this panel is no exception to that. I think that all of you have direct experience rolling up your sleeves and getting this done. What we need to do though is what I talked about in my remarks. And that is to look at things in the long term, if not, the recipient government's capacity to better deal with the next disaster will not improve. A lot of these countries that struggle with continued natural disasters and human made disasters are part of a continuous cycle, whether it be Syria, Turkey, or Haiti. My thoughts, more than anything else, is to not take your eye off the ball in terms of what has been spoken of here, particularly mitigating the suffering for the next disaster. Done right, this can be an opportunity. One that needs to be worked on in a very intense way, so that these conditions - particularly the conditions of poor governance and violence - are not mitigating factors or particularly critical deleterious factors in the years ahead.

DOUGLAS STROPES

I will just build off what Ambassador Romero said; my office has a very keen focus on trying to work ourselves out of a job. When we are not responding to disasters, we are there building the capacities, the capabilities, and the resources of those countries so that, hopefully, the next time they don't need to call for assistance, or the assistance that they request is less than it was before. We do have success stories in Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines, where they have not only not needed as much assistance as in the past, but they have also become responding governments to regional disasters. That is a model we look at, but it certainly does not cover the complex ones including bad governance, civil strife, and conflict. Humanitarian systems are not meant to be long-term solutions and challenges us to ask ourselves: how do I work with my colleagues in the rest of USAID and at the State Department to try to address those other issues as well.

FRANKLIN MOORE

I would just support what Doug just said. I was there 10 years ago when the conversations were hot and heavy over how do we look at humanitarian assistance, how do we look at development assistance, and how do we marry them in a way that there is some sort of continuum. We were being asked that question quite honestly because we had members of the agriculture committee and members who oversee the foreign assistance committee asking why year after year do we come to get money for this piece of what we are calling humanitarian assistance, for many of the same places and we have done it for 10 years. And there was the beginning of looking at how one very consciously structures the use of humanitarian assistance and the use of development assistance in a way that makes a community more resilient when that same problem occurs three years later. I just support Doug in saying there has been a lot of thought about that at USAID and I think a lot of very positive movement.

DR. ANTHONY FAINBERG

It is perhaps likely that climate change will lead to greater global needs for disaster relief. Is this taken into account in the future of U.S. planning?

FRANKLIN MOORE

I'm not sure anyone knows what the effect of climate change is going to be in the long term. I think it was Ambassador Ray who talked about the number of incidents we had in 1960 versus the number of incidents we've had recently. And we know that many of the things that we call sort of man-made emergencies and we know that many national emergencies that are out of cycle, those particular being flood and drought, are having an effect upon the productive capacity of citizens. And is moving many of them to a crisis of hunger and we know that number is going to increase. We are not sure how much it's going to increase. If you listen to David Beasley, who's leaving the World Food Program this week, you'll hear that he always talks about the explosion of populations who are now food insecure. And it's a problem that we all knew was coming. I'm not sure anyone has been able to tell you exactly what its effects are at this point and time.

DR. DANIEL GERSTEIN

I'm happy to come in for just a moment here and talk about how we did some work after the Puerto Rico hurricane. We looked at what it would take to sort of build back the Puerto Rican government and the whole area and what gets done and what doesn't get redone.

And it's a really complex issue. We did this on behalf of FEMA as well as with support from the governor of Puerto Rico. We see in many ways that there's this push off and on the ground to just rebuild what's there, but that's really a self-defeating proposition. What you want to do is not just rebuild something that was existing, but figure out ways in which you - as somebody mentioned in the discussion already - is to build resilience into your critical infrastructure, into your society, so that the next time a hurricane hits you're not going to have the same sorts of outcomes. This is obviously very challenging. It creates a lot of emotion in terms of how much funding and "are we trying to rebuild after a disaster?" or "are we trying to completely build a society?" and the answer might be yes to both, but we have to figure out how to do that and do it more efficiently. So, these are discussions that are actually continuing to be held from within the Federal Emergency Management Agency. I know that they do this in coordination with USAID so it's very complex.

CURTIS PEARSON

We seem to have a good handle on quantifying the aid and support we deliver. Do we have a good methodology for quantifying the impact that support has on relief and recovery based on the type of disaster?

DOUGLAS STROPES

With regard to quantifying the impact our assistance has, that is a challenging question. It's one that we certainly need to have answered. We too often, in a disaster, focus on counting trucks. We see this in Northern Ethiopia, in Ukraine, and at the Türkiye-Syria border crossing. Our metric is "How many trucks crossed today?" That doesn't necessarily tell you how many people we were able to assist that day, how many people came out of a severe food insecurity into a different status or that were provided with medical assistance. Trying to get those that do this sort of analysis into a region that may be unsafe, or may not be able to host them at that time proves challenging as well. That is a long way of saying that your question is extremely valid, Curtis, but we don't quite have the answer yet on being able to quantify, in a sudden onset disaster, how we move from needing assistance to needing less or not needing assistance. We are able to do that in a more methodical and academic environment in some of the more protracted conflicts, but we have less of a handle on it in the immediate aftermath of a sudden onset disaster.

MAJOR GENERAL [RET.] MIHAIL IONESCU

I am from Romania, a country close to Türkiye and prone to earthquakes. What lessons were learned recently in Türkiye concerning prevention, namely preparing in advance, to minimize the deadly effects of such disasters?

DOUGLAS STROPES

With regards to the question on lessons learned, I don't think we are at the point yet of really rolling up our sleeves and looking at those lessons learned, but I can give you some comparison and contrast between what we saw in Türkiye and Syria, and what I saw in Haiti after their earthquake recently as well. Türkiye seemed very well-prepared in comparison to Haiti or Syria, in a sense that they are a G20-country, they have several internationally certified USAR teams, the minute the ground stopped shaking, their first responders kicked in. They had a mechanism to do so and it was coordinated, and they were able to start saving lives immediately, but they needed more assistance because the shocks that happened there were so overwhelming and devastating. In Syria and Haiti, which are less trained in the international search and rescue techniques, and have less infrastructure to do so, it was more people trying to help people but not necessarily with the tools and resources needed to do so. How many people weren't reached just because they lacked that training? I think that the lesson learned would be to have that first responder network, to have that infrastructure in place. To have the training in an area like Türkiye, Romania, Syria, Haiti, that are earthquake prone, to be able to respond immediately while you are waiting for a national or international response to come in. Then also, taking a much longer look at how we build back better, how we ensure building codes are in place. If they have building codes in place, how do we ensure that those codes are enforced during the rebuilding period?

PROFESSOR ROBERT TURNER

Let me start by commending Yonah and Don Wallace on another "home run" program. I learned from it. I enjoy it. I have a comment, but I would welcome comments on the comment.

It's very important for the United States to maintain the high moral ground in our dealings with the world and our humanitarian assistance gives us a wonderful opportunity to do that. I particularly like Dr. Gerstein's observations about the mutual benefit of humanitarian assistance and diplomacy. They really are, as your title suggests, mutually supportive. I think back to 70 years ago when my father was an Air Force physician and was assigned to Oslo Norway as a NATO advisor. This was a few years after WWII ended but the Norwegians remember it well and remembered our part in it. And time and again I listened as Norwegian visitors praise the United States. We ended WWII with the largest and least damaged major army in the world. We suffered a lot of casualties but not as many compared to the Brits, the French, or the Soviets and others. And yet, rather than using our monopoly on atomic weapons, we rebuilt Germany and Japan. We set up the United Nations. We had the Marshall Plan to rebuild Europe and the Norwegians viewed us really as, to use the modern term, an exceptional country. They did not fear us. Had that not been the case, had we acted as a great power and said, "we're the biggest guy on the block and here's what we demand," the entire world would have had an incentive to unite against us. But that was not the case, because we behaved honorably, I would say even nobly, during that time. I think it's extremely important to maintain the high moral ground. Even when we come to the aid of a country like Syria, run by a very anti-American leader, the people of the country will make judgments about us. When their government is telling them that we are evil and they see that we come in and give them food and medical assistance and so forth, that's a big plus for us in the big picture.

Also, when we send a U.S. naval aircraft carrier to a disaster zone, that is mutually beneficial. We were still going to pay for that aircraft carrier to operate that day. The sailors on it get good training and aircraft carriers have turned out to be one of the most effective humanitarian relief instruments in the world. They can produce hundreds of thousands of gallons of potable water from sea water every day. They have helicopters that can reach people in disaster areas. They produce an incredible amount of electricity that can help power hospitals and other things on the land. They have medical facilities, emergency rooms, and so forth. So, it costs us a little more, obviously, but generally the basic cost of that aircraft carrier is going to be borne by the American taxpayers whether they are doing good in a troubled part of the world or out waiting on the ocean for what we hope will never happen: an attack on the U.S. But the benefits we get when the world sees America come to the aid, particularly when we come to the aid of people that have not normally been our friends, that buys us a lot of good will that I think converts to helping our diplomatic and even our military security issues.

PROFESSOR DON WALLACE, JR.

Let me make a few observations and I have a question for Ambassador McGann. I have presided on many panels, as Charlie knows, this is certainly one of the best. If this is the U.S. deep state, then I am awfully proud of it. I am so impressed by the sort of sophistication described by Mr. Stropes of our programs. It is impressive and everyone really should be proud of it, quite frankly.

Another theme which comes up from Ambassador (Ret.) Romero and others, we are both the children of Woodrow Wilson and Henry Kissinger. On the one hand, and Bob Turner touched on this, we are doing good. It is like lawyers, they do good, and they end up doing well. I think there is a real value in being true to our best values, quite frankly. And at the same time, there is this whole question: how do we convert with doing the immediate into the long-term? I have a friend, Alex Aleinikoff at Georgetown who was the deputy of U.N. High Commission for Refugees. He is always saying we should link work with refugees with development that reminds me of some of the things you are saying here. Some of these things, internationally, tend to be silos. So, how do we bring them together, promote long term development, and our long-term security interest?

My question for Ambassador McGann is about women. I served in the Middle East, Turkey, and elsewhere. They are all very different, of course. How can one make these countries more sensitive, and many of them are already to a certain degree, to the gender issue? Also, just a mechanical question, I have a colleague whose son is in the Virginia survival and rescue team. I had the impression that they are mostly husky firemen, and not fire women. It is a sort of two prongs, maybe marginal question about women and this process we're talking about Mr. Ambassador.

AMBASSADOR [RET.] C. STEVEN MCGANN

Well, thank you for that question. I must begin by saying that my familiar attitude with the Fairfax team goes all the way back to 1998 when I had to play a key role in our response to the bombings in Nairobi. And even at that time, while the majority of the Fairfax team that was sent to Nairobi to help dig out the rubble of the building surrounding our embassy, there were still women included in that. So, I think that we should not short-change our own selves in terms of the access we've given women really large. But I think to your broader point that how do we engage other countries and their perceptions of gender equality and equity, that's going to be a very difficult challenge for the United States.

I think that there is a great deal of global understanding of the importance of women's roles, but the application of that is not universal. I think that obviously in the Middle East, and I don't want to necessarily start a discussion about the role of Islam, but the interpretation of Islam in the Middle East varies from country to country. What we expect to find in Egypt and Tunisia, for example, we're not necessarily going to find in Pakistan or Saudi Arabia or as we saw in Turkey and Syria. Although I will say that the more you find women participating in various roles in conflict situations, you find greater equity and equality.

At the same time, I think what we have to do is understand that our planning for disaster response and humanitarian assistance is broader than the Middle East. To be clear, we can foresee even more deployments on HA/DR in the Indo-Pacific, where these issues aren't necessarily as difficult as they are in the Middle East. At the same time, if we go back to the tsunami in Indonesia, which is still largely a Muslim country, we were able to effectively create equitable outcomes for the delivery of humanitarian assistance in that crisis.

So, I think that it's almost situational as we go about it, but if we have, as Americans as well as with our partner countries, at least a uniform approach, then we can address these greater universal issues of gender equity and equality.

PROFESSOR YONAH ALEXANDER

As a young academic, if I may mention, going all the way back to when Secretary General of the United Nations U Thant remarked about the value system. He said, "unity comes before peace and cooperation." I was very blessed to have an opportunity, subsequently, to spend time at the United Nations and to work on technical assistance around the world. Now, we are moving to the holiday seasons of Passover, Ramadan, and Easter. So, I will mention the common value system to Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. And I quote, "whoever saves one single life, is considered by scripture to have saved the whole world."

PROFESSOR DON WALLACE, JR.

I really want to thank everyone. This was really of a very high level and several of you pointed out that you've learned from your colleagues. Again, I think Americans are often too hard on ourselves. I was at AID years ago, and it has come a long way, upward, if I may say so, Doug. And actually, Samantha Powell is my neighbor across the street, she is an impressive woman as you know. I think this was a very impressive panel, Yonah, really. And I hope we will have a written proceeding as we usually do, because I think there was a lot of learning here, and we should share it as widely as we can.

VII. ABOUT THE EDITORS

PROFESSOR YONAH ALEXANDER is the Director of the International Center for Terrorism Studies (at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies) and the Inter-University Center for Legal Studies (at the International Law Institute). He is a former Professor and Director of Terrorism Studies at the State University of New York and the George Washington University. Professor Alexander also held academic appointments elsewhere such as American, Catholic, Chicago, Columbia, and Georgetown's Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He has published over 100 books and founded five international journals. His personal collections are housed at the Hoover Institution Library and Archives at Stanford University.

PROFESSOR DON WALLACE, JR. Yale University BA, Harvard University, LLB, is a Professor of Law at Georgetown University as well as Chairman of the International Law Institute. He is a U.S. delegate to UNCITRAL, vice president of the UNIDROIT Foundation, a member of the American Law Institute, and the former chairman of the International Law Section at the American Bar Association. He is also the author and co-author of several books and articles.

VIII. ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

DR. JENNIFER BUSS earned her B.S. in Biochemistry with a minor in Mathematics from the University of Delaware, and a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the University of Maryland. She has served as Assistant Vice President, Vice President, then in 2018, was promoted to President of the Potomac Institute. Since joining the Institute as Senior Fellow in 2012, Dr. Buss has written and won numerous proposals, created several new centers and is in charge of all day-to-day business and operating functions of the Institute.

AMBASSADOR (RET.) CHARLES RAY served 30 years in the Foreign Service (from 1982 to 2012), after completing a 20-year career in the U.S. Army. His Foreign Service assignments were Guangzhou and Shenyang, China; Chiang Mai, Thailand; PM bureau/ DCM in Freetown, Sierra Leone; Consul General in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam; Ambassador, Phnom Penh, Cambodia; Diplomat in residence, University of Houston; Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel; and Ambassador, Zimbabwe. He has a B.S. from Benedictine College, Atchison, KS; an M.S. from the University of Southern California; and an M.S. the National War College. He's also a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, the Army War College's Land Forces Commander Course, and the Defense Intelligence School's Postgraduate Intelligence Course.

AMBASSADOR (RET.) C. STEVEN MCGANN is the Founder of The Stevenson Group, a consulting firm based in Washington, D.C. that identifies opportunities in the defense/security sector and implements specialized advisory services which focus on strengthening public-private partnerships. Ambassador McGann served over 37 years in the Foreign Service. Ambassador McGann, a retired Senior Foreign Service Officer with the rank of Minister-Counselor, was Ambassador to the Republics of Fiji, Nauru, Kiribati, and the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu. Ambassador McGann also was assigned as Chief of Mission (ad interim) of the United States Embassy in Dili, Timor-Leste. He previously was the Deputy Commandant and International Affairs Adviser of the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at the National Defense University (NDU). McGann also served as the Vice Chancellor, College of International Security Affairs at NDU. Ambassador McGann is a member of the Board of Trustees at Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA. McGann has a B.A. in political science from Claremont Men's College and pursued graduate studies in comparative government at Cornell University. Ambassador McGann was nominated to the Board of Visitors of the Army War College, Carlisle, PA. He earned an M.S. from the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and

is a graduate of the Naval War College Joint Force Maritime Combatant Commander Course. McGann also is an affiliate of the Center for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Studies, Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. Ambassador McGann serves as the current president of the Association of Black American Ambassadors (ABAA). He also serves on the boards of the Women's Refugee Commission, (WRC), the United Nations Association-National Capital Area (UNA-NCA), the American College of National Security Leaders, and the Diplomats and Consular Officers Retired (DACOR). He is a member of the advisory councils of The Una Chapman Cox Foundation, Our Secure Future (OSF) a WPS advocacy group, and several foreign affairs organizations that address diversity and gender equity.

AMBASSADOR (RET.) PETER ROMERO is the CEO of Experior Advisory, a Washington DC-based consulting firm that specializes in international business and political advising. Mr. Romero has over twenty-six years of experience negotiating in international markets and politics. He has advised major U.S. corporations on national and local strategies regarding environmental, indigenous, labor, and political issues. Formerly, Mr. Romero was the Assistant Secretary of State of the new Western Hemisphere Affairs Bureau (an area that stretches from Canada to Chile), where he was the highest-ranking Hispanic in the career U.S. Foreign Service. A twenty-four-year career diplomat, he previously served inter alia as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary, U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador and Chief of Mission of our Embassy in San Salvador. The bureau Ambassador Romero led is responsible for promoting U.S. interests in the Western Hemisphere in support of strengthening democratic institutions, expanding U.S. trade opportunities and attaining sustainable economic development, including the start of free trade negotiations with Chile. Ambassador Romero promoted enhanced cooperation on counternarcotics, crime, and poverty reduction. On counternarcotics, he was a principal architect of the Forward Operations Location (FOLS) concept, which now forms the lynchpin of our national security strategy. Ambassador Romero was responsible for making and defending budget proposals before the U.S. Congress and executing an annual operations budget in excess of \$2 billion. First as U.S. Ambassador to Ecuador, and then as Assistant Secretary of State, Ambassador Romero played a key role in support of the peaceful resolution of the border dispute between Peru and Ecuador. His diplomatic negotiation skills also bore fruit in the peace accords, with their implementation and management of a \$270 million assistance budget between 1991 and 1993 in El Salvador. Ambassador Romero first conceived of "Plan Colombia" and was the principal State Department official to convince the U.S. Congress to appropriate \$1.2 billion in support of the Plan. Ambassador Romero continues to be sought after for his expertise in investment strategies, national reconciliation, and conflict resolution. He advises Presidents and cabinet members of governments throughout the hemisphere. Ambassador Romero received the Department's highest award, the Distinguished Honor Award in 2001, the prestigious Equal Employment Opportunity Award in 1998, the Baker-Wilkins Award for leadership of an overseas mission in 1993, and the Walter J. Stoessel Award in recognition of his highly distinguished career, as well as several Superior Honor Awards. He received the highest civilian award from Colombia, the Order of Boyacá, for his contribution to national security and development in that country. Ambassador Romero is on the board of Special Olympics International, the Americas Foundation, the Inter-American Economic Council and was a founding member of the Hispanic Council on International Relations. He is the 2001 recipient of the Roberto Clemente Award from Boricua College for his distinguished public service. Born in New York, Peter Romero received a Bachelor of Science degree and a Master of Arts degree in International Relations from Florida State University. He speaks fluent English, Spanish and Italian.

DOUGLAS STROPES is the USAID Response Manager for the Turkiye and Syria earthquakes response. When not serving in a disaster response leadership role he is the Division Chief, of the Office of Africa's West Africa Division for USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), the U.S. Government lead for international disaster response. Doug helps lead BHA's USAID disaster response activities, which includes engaging with multiple U.S. government agencies and departments, the United Nations, foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector and the entire spectrum of humanitarian responders and organizations. Mr. Stropes worked on a number of disaster responses including the 2018 Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the 2018 Venezuela regional crisis, Caribbean hurricanes in 2017 and 2019, the Haiti earthquake in 2021 and most recently the earthquakes impacting Turkiye and Syria in 2023. Mr. Stropes graduated from the United States Air Force Academy in 1989 and served for 26 years as an Officer in the United States Air Force. While in the military, he worked for the Office of the Secretary of Defense, overseeing humanitarian assistance and disaster response activities and policy. Mr. Stropes has served as on-scene disaster response commander, as well as a firefighter and emergency medical technician.

FRANKLIN MOORE served as a career member of the U.S. Senior Executive Service (SES) and twice as Deputy Assistant Administrator (DAA) for the U.S. Agency for International Development's (USAID) Africa Bureau (2012-2014 and 2008-2010). He also served as Agency coordinator for both Food Security and Climate Change during 2009. Between serving as DAA, Mr. Moore, was Senior Development Counselor to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations Agencies in Rome. Mr. Moore joined the SES in 2000 as Deputy Director of the USAID Environment Center. Before joining the Africa Bureau, he provided sector leadership in biodiversity, water, energy, climate change and agricultural

research. Among multilateral experiences, he served as the U.S. representative to the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR), to the Convention to Combat Desertification and to the Global Crop Diversity Trust. Prior to joining USAID, Mr. Moore held positions in the areas of agriculture, environment and natural resource management with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. He has lived in Ghana, Zimbabwe, and Malawi working for a university, the ministry of Agriculture, and for the NGO Africare. After retiring from USAID, he served as Africare's Chief of Programs for several years. Mr. Moore has a B.A. from Yale and a M.S. and Certificate in African Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

IX. ABOUT THE COMMENTATOR

DR. DANIEL GERSTEIN is a Senior Policy Researcher at the Rand Corporation and Former Acting Undersecretary and Deputy Undersecretary in the Science and Technology Directorate, Department of Homeland Security (2011-2014). Dr. Gerstein has extensive experience in the security and defense sectors in a variety of positions, while serving as a Senior Executive Service (SES) government civilian, in uniform, and in industry. Before joining DHS,

He served as the Principal Director for Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) within the Office of the Secretary of Defense (Policy). In uniform, he has served on four different continents participating in homeland security and counterterrorism, peacekeeping, humanitarian assistance, and combat in addition to serving for over a decade in the Pentagon in various high level staff assignments. Following retirement from active duty, Dr. Gerstein joined L-3 Communications as Vice President for Homeland Security Services, leading an organization providing WMD preparedness and response, critical infrastructure security, emergency response capacity, and exercise support to U.S. and international customers. Dr. Gerstein graduated from the United States Military Academy at West Point and has master's degrees from Georgia Institute of Technology in Operations Research, the National Defense University in National Security & Strategic Studies, the Command & General Staff in Military Arts & Sciences, and a PhD from George Mason University in Biodefense. Dr. Gerstein's latest book is titled, *Tech Wars: Transforming U.S. Technology Development* (September 2022).

