

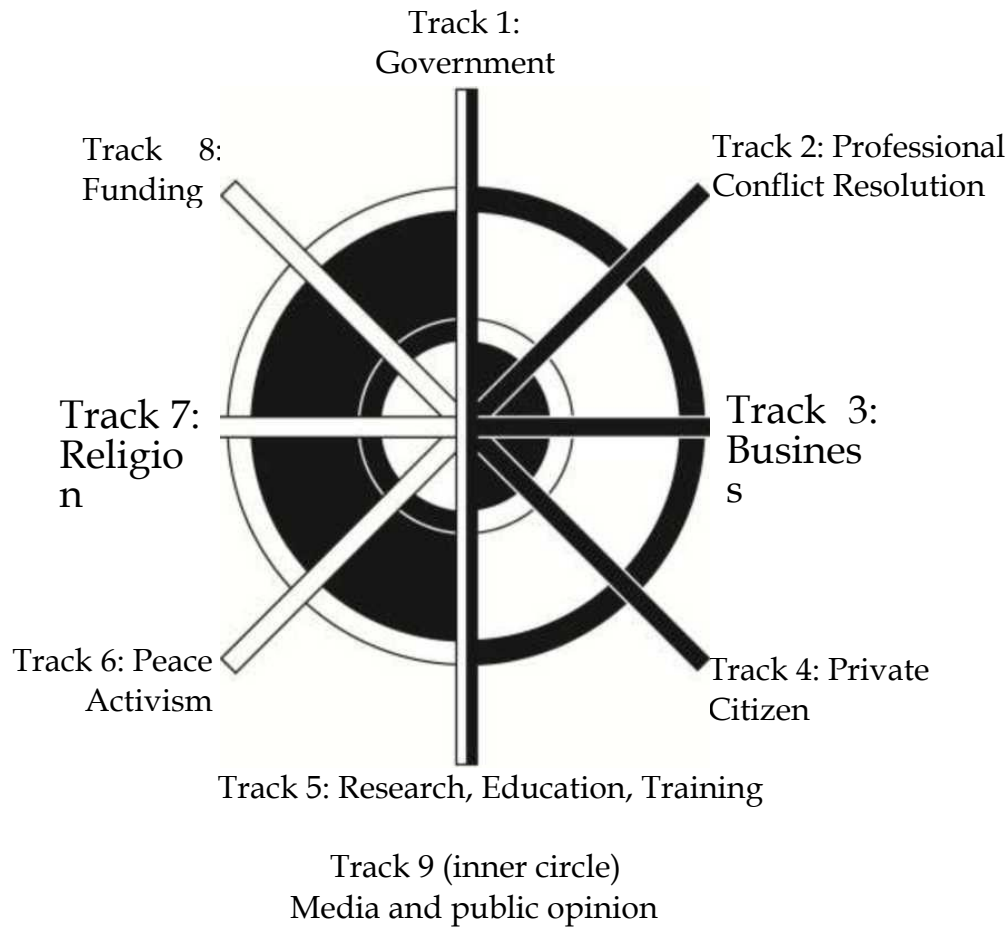
**Ambassador John W. McDonald**

**The Impact of NGO's on Policy Makers**

**The Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy**

**Occasional Paper 11**

**December, 2003**



The mission of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy is to promote a systems approach to peacebuilding and to facilitate the transformation of deep-rooted social conflict

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## Background

*My first assignment in the US Diplomatic corps took me to Berlin, Germany, as a young lawyer. I arrived on January 15, 1947, in the middle of the coldest winter in a hundred years, and was assigned to the Allied Control Council's Four Power Secretariat. Made up of Soviet, British, French, and American representatives, this was Occupied Germany after World War II. I served eight years in Western Europe, four years in Washington DC, eight years in the Middle East, then back to Washington DC to attend the National War College. In 1967, I was assigned to the State Department's Bureau for International (UN) Organizations Affairs.*

*It was finally, at that point in my diplomatic career, that I first heard the term NGO!*

### **NGOs and the United Nations**

My first UN World Conference (UNCTAD II) as an official State Department Delegate was on trade and development issues between the typically wealthy nations of the North and the typically impoverished nations of the South, and was held in New Delhi, India in 1968. There were a handful of non-governmental organization representatives present during the ten weeks of the conference; but they were ignored, and had no impact on policy.

My second UN World Conference was the 1972 Environment Conference in Stockholm, Sweden. There, for the first time, the NGO community demanded to be heard. This was to be the first of many struggles between peoples and governments about their respective roles at UN international conferences, and NGO efforts to impact on Policy.

The Stockholm Conference presented a new format to the world – and it was very well received. In 1968, the then Swedish Ambassador to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proposed a two-week long conference which would focus on a single agenda item: the environment. This was in stark contrast to UNGA's annual meeting, which lasted for three months and had 250 items on its agenda. He thought that Ministers would attend a two-week event, and that policy issues could be decided on the spot. The UNGA agreed. This new format was also unique because for the first time NGOs were meeting in parallel sessions that brought together private citizens interested in the environment. Some 25 UN world conferences have followed this model since the pilot in 1972. I was Secretary to the US Delegation in Stockholm, and had spent the two previous years preparing for it; designing and then negotiating the creation of the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), its terms of reference etc., and was deeply involved in the process from beginning to end.

One day at the conference, I was approached by Dr. Margaret Meade, the world-famous anthropologist. Staff in hand, she demanded to know why the US

delegation was not listening to her. I pointed out the landmark nature of this conference in the history of NGO-Government-UN relations, and that NGOs were deeply involved in discussing major substantive issues before the Conference. She dismissed all of that activity, and said "I want to impact on policy!" I replied that it was too late for this conference, and that the US position papers had already been developed. She stormed off, unsatisfied and still angry. She had heard me, however. We met again at the first UN World Conference on Population, in Bucharest, two years later. She had done her homework, had been active in Washington months before the meeting, and this time had an impact on US policy.

The four UN World Conferences on Women and Development (Mexico City, 1975; Copenhagen, 1980; Nairobi, 1985; and Beijing, 1995) saw an enormous and exciting growth in NGO participation. It is estimated that some 30,000 women from approximately 4000 NGO's were present in China. At the Second World Conference on the Environment (Rio, 1992), there was a similarly massive growth in NGO participation. The Third World Conference on the Environment (Johannesburg, 2002) had some 35,000 participants.

What is most notably important is that the world's Governments in turn began to change their attitudes towards the NGOs. The NGO community, with all of its diversity, was becoming more skilled in UN procedures and more knowledgeable about their role in helping governments to carry out many of the recommendations that emerged from these global conferences.

Some governments, however, are still holding back on opening up accreditation of NGOs to the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC (UN Economic and Social Council), because there are often disagreements between governments and NGOs over important policy areas such as human rights, family planning, and environmental issues.

However, because of the gradual building of a trust relationship between NGOs and Governments, a remarkable shift has taken place at the UN Security Council with regard specifically to conflict resolution. In 1997, senior representatives from CARE, Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders), and OXFAM, were invited to brief Security Council Members on the grim situation in the Great Lakes region of East Africa. The NGO leaders pointed out a fatal flaw in the current interventions: humanitarian assistance to the region was being used as a substitute for political action. These informal, unofficial, behind the scenes briefings have continued, and are an outstanding example of how NGOs can impact positively on global policy issues when mutual trust has been established.

### **NGOs and the United States Government**

Every senior US diplomat that I know has horror stories to tell about the stupidity and ineptness of a particular NGO that was operating in "their" country. NGOs are often described as having "parachuted in" with no knowledge of the regional culture, history, or language. Anecdotes present NGOs as being overly pushy, demanding, impatient, or stubborn. Diplomats complain that NGOs ignore

the tensions of the current political situation and have no interest in cooperating or working with the Embassy. NGOs "just get in the way," and rarely inform Embassy personnel of their activities; they are simply too independent. Unfortunately, all of the above are negatives and certainly give the impression that NGOs are not welcome by the US foreign policy establishment overseas.

On the other hand, I have now worked as an NGO for the past 15 years and I have heard similar stories about trying to work with the US Embassies from NGO friends. Often using the same words and phrases. The answer, of course, is better communications; but that is more easily said than done.

One story that I heard repeated several times from my State Department colleagues took place at a day-long briefing for 600 women in preparation for the Second World Conference on Women and Development. This was to take place in Copenhagen in 1980. At the end of a long day of briefings by senior State Department officials, the floor was finally open for questions. The first question asked was "How many places are there going to be on the US delegation for lesbian women?"

I believe that question would not be asked today because all parties involved have become more sophisticated and are more aware of the needs of the women in the developing world who are more concerned about basic human needs such as food, water, health, education, shelter, and jobs. NGOs involved in humanitarian assistance have been working with governments and international organizations for decades and generally have good relationships with the donor community. However, for NGOs involved in other areas, including the relatively new fields of conflict prevention and conflict resolution, communication between the diplomats, the military, and the NGOs needs serious improvement.

### **Differences in Perspective**

One must also realize that government policy makers and NGOs often have different agendas.

1. Timeframe: Most politicians want to start and finish something useful "on their watch" so they can get the credit - if it works. They are usually very impatient and often very unrealistic in their demands. Diplomats are not much better because they work for politicians and are always under pressure from them.

In 1989, I remember walking into a meeting in Moscow with five members of the recently elected Soviet Parliament, and within two minutes they asked me to solve the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan! In 1995, I was asked by two three-star Generals, one from India and one from Pakistan, to solve the Kashmir problem! Unfortunately, expectations of what conflict resolution practitioners can achieve in a certain timeframe are often unrealistic and have to be tempered considerably.

There is also the problem of personnel turnover – not only on the political side, but also on the diplomatic side. Just when you are really developing a trust relationship with someone, they get transferred. The worst

case is in Bosnia where the OSCE has a major presence. In the early years of that mission, personnel changed every six months because they were detailed from their headquarters. Some diplomats are now staying for nine to twelve months but even that is not long enough.

NGO's, on the other hand, if they are experienced, realize there is no quick fix out there - there are no magic wands. The issues we are talking about can take months, years, even decades to improve or resolve. My Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, for example, always makes an initial five-year commitment to any project, sometimes even longer. For example, we worked for eight years in Cyprus; and it is only now, in the Spring of 2003, that we begin to reap real success with the "opening" of the borders between the Turkish and Greek sides of the country.

2. Expectations: There are often different expectations on the part of funders and practitioners. Foundations, at least in the United States, generally want more for their money than it is possible to achieve. "We have been funding you for nine months. Why haven't you brought peace to the region?" Or, "Why can't you quantify peace? Our Board wants results!" All serious peacebuilders are faced with the problem of evaluation by impatient donors, because it is difficult to prove peace.
3. Risk-takers: You need to be a risk-taker to be a peacebuilder. You have to identify the risk-takers in a conflict to make a difference. You cannot tell someone to be a risk-taker. That level of commitment must come from each individual because they are going to be meeting with the enemy and then coming back to their group and saying "I met with the enemy and they have the same goals and aspirations for peace that we do." That takes courage. But the risk-takers in the donor communities must be found, although they are becoming fewer and fewer in number. That is a key problem.
4. Antagonism: One must be realistic. Many institutions in the foreign affairs field just don't like NGOs and don't want to work with them. Most of the military falls into this category. There is no understanding of the important but different roles that each group can play in their honest efforts to build peace.

There was a major difference between the US military and a number of US humanitarian assistance NGO's at the end of the Iraq war in the spring of 2003. The military told the NGO's they would be under the command of the US military while they were operating in Iraq-told what to do—where to go—etc. A number of NGO's rebelled and refused to bid on USAID contracts for Iraq post-war reconstruction efforts, saying they needed independence and separation from the occupying forces.

I lecture often to the Industrial College of the Armed Forces in Washington D.C., and to other military establishments. In those lectures, I always say that the only "exit strategy" that will ever produce a clean break for the military and not

cause more problems than it solves is to realize that the pull-out can't happen until a peaceful community is built to leave behind. This is definitely not US policy today.

Because they are intergovernmental organizations, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund prefer to deal with governments. They, too, do not understand the positive roles that can be played by NGOs and usually don't want to take the time to find out. There is a lot of talk about cooperation, but the two organizations contribute very little money for the development of relationships and joint projects with NGOs.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is starting to do better recently under their new Administrator. He has publically declared that conflict resolution is a major part of his development program. That is real progress.

### **Track Two Diplomacy**

During my last five years at the State Department (1983-87) I was assigned to the newly established Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs – a think-tank located in the Foreign Service Institute, the training arm of the Department. Unfortunately the Center only lasted for seven years because it was viewed as an eventual threat to the system by other parts of the State Department, and was abolished. This new posting, however, gave me a wonderful opportunity to do some writing and thinking and led, in 1985, to the first book in the field of citizen diplomacy, called "Conflict Resolution - Track Two Diplomacy."

Track One diplomacy is what I did during my forty years in the US government. That type of initiative is defined as the government-to-government, formal, official, sometimes rigid interaction between instructed representatives of sovereign states. It can be either bilateral in nature – involving two governments – or multilateral, involving many governments.

Track Two, on the other hand, is non-governmental, citizen to citizen, informal, often risk-taking and unofficial. It is interaction between private citizens or groups of people within a country, or from different countries, who are outside the formal governmental power structure. Track Two, a phrase coined by my colleague Joe Montville, has as its objective *the reduction or resolution of conflict within a country by lowering anger, tension and fear through improved communications and a better understanding of all sides' points of view*. Track Two diplomacy is not a substitute for Track One; rather, it is in support of or in complement to Track One goals. In fact, a successful Track Two effort may well lead into Track One, especially when specific agreements, treaties or other formal understandings are called for.

When my colleagues in the foreign affairs community heard about my upcoming book, they told me I was crazy. The concept would undoubtedly lead me to work with NGOs, and "You know how bad they are." My views were different, so I went ahead as planned. Publication of the book was stopped suddenly because there was concern about publishing anything under the State Department's aegis saying there was another way to do business. The book was published 18 months later when those who had stopped the process moved on to other posts. The book

turned out to be revolutionary when it was finally printed in 1987 because it gave examples of how Tracks One and Two had worked together more effectively than if they had gone their separate ways.

### **The Track Not Taken**

I wrote an article for the Harvard International Review in the Fall of 2000, titled "The Track Not Taken." It expressed my disappointment that the State Department had still not embraced the concepts of Track Two or multi-track diplomacy.

My fifty-plus years of experience in dealing with a wide variety of bureaucracies has led me to conclude that no bureaucracy, large or small, ever changes by itself. People are afraid of change, of what it might do to their job, their turf, their security. When change is proposed, the most typical reaction is to sit tight and do nothing. Or, more ominously, to actively try to kill the new idea. Change is even less frequent from the top down, within a system. Middle management always finds a way to bury the new idea if they feel threatened. Sometimes, however, a small shift does take place because of pressure from an outside source.

This is the major lesson we all have to learn when trying to change policy at any level of society. Only if you can develop a win-win strategy and make "them" look good, do you have a chance. Your own ego, however, has to be behind you – not in front – and you may have to give others the credit that is really due to you.

In exploring why the State Department has trouble with new ideas, I found three areas that above and beyond all the rest need considerable improvement.

1. Arrogance: The United States is the only super-power in the world today, and arguably the most arrogant nation in the world. We project this feeling of superiority in unpleasant ways that do not endear us to non-Americans. We give the impression that we already have it all, and we don't have to – or need to – change.
2. Listening: We are also the poorest listeners in the world. We already have the answer to your question before you finish talking. We tend to think we don't really have to listen because we already know what is good for you and we will fix your problems or secure your needs for you.
3. Impatience: Lastly, we are the most impatient people in the world. We want it now. We look for the quick fix. Certainly, as a politician or political appointee, we want this issue settled favorably *now* so that we can get the credit.

When you put all of these three characteristics together-arrogance, poor listening skills and impatience-we do not project very well as a foreign policy establishment. This then makes it difficult for NGOs to bring about policy changes in government bureaucracy.



## Ten Examples of Successful Policy Change

I have found that it is possible to bring about policy changes in a system, if you master the system and bring patience, skill, persuasion and dedication to bear on the issue.

1. United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA): In 1968, Denmark made the first governmental contribution, of \$500,000, to the United Nations for population and family planning. An historic occasion in the field of sustainable development-unfortunately, the UN's Secretary General U. Thant didn't know where to put the money or who to make responsible for spending it. The donation was a first, and there was no department or agency in the United Nations tasked with population issues. Thant finally gave the money to the Population Division in the UN Secretariat because they were responsible for population statistics and could use the money for that purpose. The Danes were unhappy with this bureaucratic solution because that was not their intention when they made their contribution.

By 1968, USAID and the State Department were just beginning to realize the impact of unrestricted population growth in the world. At that time in my career at the State Department, I was responsible for all interactions between the US and the UN system with regard to economic and social affairs. I asked myself, how could one develop a win-win solution with regard to this issue?

I knew that the UN bureaucracy would not respond favorably to a UN Resolution from governments ordering the Secretary General what to do about the next governmental contribution for population. I made a speech in 1968 saying that the US government would make a \$1 million dollar contribution for population and development to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP; founded only in 1966, the group was headed by a distinguished American named Paul Hoffman), if the Secretary General would make an "in-house," voluntary decision giving responsibility for population and development to the UNDP. You can imagine the bickering that my offer caused.

Actually, the Secretariat moved fairly swiftly. It only took five months for the internal shift to be made by the Secretary General before the US contribution went to the development arm of the United Nations.

Shortly thereafter, Paul Hoffman called me at the State Department and said "Now I don't know what to do with your money, so I have established a five person expert committee consisting of a Dane, a Swede, a Dutchman, a Cana-

dian and you, to figure out what to do next." Our small group worked for a month and designed the name, the structure, the terms of reference and mandate for the United Nations Fund for Population Activities – UNFPA. It is a voluntary fund, under the UNDP, managed by an official at the Under Secretary General level, which has raised billions of dollars over the decades and is the world's most effective instrument for population and family planning.

2. UN Disaster Relief Coordinator (UNDRO): For 25 years, the US government kept the United Nations out of the disaster relief business. The US was the only country, after World War II, who had the airlift capability to fly food, medical supplies, tents and other necessities to Third World countries who were unexpectedly hit by natural disasters such as earthquakes, floods, landslides

and hurricanes. The US government, especially the Pentagon, loved the favorable publicity and the political kudos it received for its most excellent efforts.

By the late 1960s, however, the Soviets, the British and the French saw the political benefits of helping out in disaster situations and got into the act. The result was total chaos at the disaster site. There was no communication between the parties, no coordination anywhere and the affected country could not cope with all the aid it received. I felt this was unacceptable; but how to change the policies responsible for the mess? The key was the Pentagon. Knowing a bit about bureaucracy by this time, I thought if I could make this a budget saving issue I could make the policy changes required to bring the United Nations into the picture. I tracked the four previous international disasters and discovered that the Pentagon had lost about \$10 million apiece in these four situations because of overlap, duplication of effort, and general inefficiency. The policy makers listened and agreed some order would be helpful to everyone.

In 1971, my staff and I crafted a resolution creating UNDRRO. First the UN Economic and Social Council and then the United Nations General Assembly approved the creation of the Office of the United Nations Disaster Relief Coordinator, at the Under Secretary General level, to be based in Geneva. The Office set up a round-the-clock Operations Center, and coordinated and vetted requests for assistance, restored order to the disaster sites, began special trainings in disaster-prone areas (Turkey for earthquakes, for example) and the pre-positioning of equipment and supplies in those areas for a swifter response. This was a real win-win solution.

3. International Labor Organization (ILO): I became Deputy Director General of the International Labor Organization in Geneva, in 1974. This specialized agency of the United Nations was actually launched by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, and is unique because its membership is tri-partite - made up of delegates from labor, management and government. Its mandate is to support the workers of the world and to improve working standards for those workers. When I arrived in Geneva, as the number two person in this organization of 3200 people operating in 120 countries around the world, I was told to modernize a very ancient Secretariat. I proceeded to do so. It was a special challenge because in this situation I was the policy maker – the task was to get the people in the Secretariat to do what I asked and instructed them to do.

Shortly after I arrived, I was asked to sign 150 letters to the Ministers of Finance whose countries belonged to the ILO, requesting them to pay their annual dues. The letters were fine, but the closing phrase bothered me. It read "Your Obedient Servant, John W. McDonald, Deputy Director General." I had seen that closing phrase before; Benjamin Franklin had used it over 200 years ago when he was reporting from Paris to the Secretary of State. I thought this was too out-dated and decided to change it.

I called in the Director of Administration, who was British and had been with the organization for over 30 years. I told him that as a symbol of my arrival and my desire to start bringing about change in the organization, I wanted to change that ancient phrase. The more I talked, the redder his face became.

Finally he gathered himself together and barked a loud "NO." I was taken aback and asked why not. His answer was one I was to hear frequently: "You can't change that because it has always been done that way!"

I could not change his mind and was unable to go around him because he had all avenues blocked. After several weeks I finally had an idea, called a friend of mine in the British Foreign Office in London, and told him of my problem. He laughed and said he thought I should be doing more serious business. I explained this was the first challenge to my efforts to modernize the ancient bureaucracy. He finally asked what he could do and I said just send me a letter on Foreign Office Stationery congratulating me on my recent appointment. He agreed and the letter arrived several days later.

On receipt of the letter I called in again the Director of Administration, and showed him the letter. The closing sentence said "Very Truly Yours." I asked if he minded changing the ILO closure to the closure followed by his Foreign Ministry. His reply was "I will do it this afternoon."

4. ILO II: I made many policy changes in the ILO system while I was there, (1974-78) including computerizing the Library. This was 20 years ahead of the UN library in New York. One change, that I liked especially, had to do with the role of women in the ILO. At my first meeting with the senior staff, 80 people attended. There were 79 men in the room, and one woman. I could not believe my eyes. The Constitution of the organization said it was responsible for helping the workers of the world, of whom 53% were women and we had only one woman in the top ranks of the institution! I decided on the spot to change that, but it was obviously going to be more difficult than I had anticipated. The majority of the staff was not at all responsive to my idea to create a Women's Bureau, headed by a woman at the Assistant Director General level, who would review all technical projects to insure that women's issues were also considered. In fact I was told repeatedly by the male staff that my concerns were unnecessary because they always took a woman's perspective into consideration. I persevered.

I knew that the ILO's Governing Body, which was a tripartite group of some 300 people who met three or four times a year, and the Annual World Conference of 2,500 people, who met every June, would be shocked at the composition of the Secretariat and would agree with me. My challenge was how to get the Director General on board. I finally got all my papers together, went to see him and asked if he would like to see the ILO as a hero in the eyes of the women of the world? I explained that with his support I knew the Governing Body and the Annual Conference would agree to the creation of a new Bureau for Women and Development, headed by a woman Assistant Director General. Once this resolution was approved by the Annual Conference at the end of June, his representative would fly to Mexico City. On July 1, 1975, in the opening hour of the opening session of the first ever UN Conference on Women and Development, the announcement would be made from the podium that the ILO had just established the first Bureau in the UN system on Women and Development. He bought my idea and, a policy was changed and the ILO made history.

5. Peer Mediation: In 1982, the Community Boards program in San Francisco created the first peer mediation program in the country. They developed a

curriculum, videos, and lectures for a one-week course to train primary and secondary school teachers in conflict resolution skills so they could in turn train some of their students. The students would then go out on the playground, or into a room in the school, and settle the conflicts they had identified on the spot – with no adults around, and before they escalated into violence. It was a fantastically effective program. The Nation should honor those pioneers who created this program because in case after case it dramatically reduced violence in the schools.

The problem across America, in the 1980s, was that the educational systems rejected 90% of the teachers who took this training. There were all kinds of reasons given; there was no time, it was too new an idea, it wasn't tested, it might be expensive, the School Board would not approve, the PTA would not like it.

I became the first President of the Iowa Peace Institute in Grinnell, Iowa, at the end of 1988. I told my Board that I wanted to create the first state-wide Peer Mediation program in the United States, but I needed their help. I was going to use the exact same materials that the Community Boards in San Francisco had developed but, as an old bureaucrat, I was going to sell the idea differently. I was going to take the political route at the state level.

With introductions from my Board in hand, I first visited the state Department of Education. It took several visits, but I got them to accept the idea of a pilot project. Then we drafted a simple one-page resolution asking the State Legislature to pass a law authorizing the Department of Education and the Iowa Peace Institute, at no cost to the state, to develop a week-long pilot project on peer mediation and report back to the Legislature the following year. Thanks to the help of a number of people and my testimony before various committees, the bill was passed in April, 1989, by both Houses, and signed into law by the Governor. We were legitimate. Now we had to make it happen.

We brought the experts from the Community Boards program to Iowa and on a Sunday in June, we held a day-long program to explain the concepts to the 100 people who attended. During the next week, our California experts trained 50 teachers in peer mediation skills. At the end of the week we had a graduation ceremony, and gave each person a certificate. We had also arranged, for those who needed it, a one-hour graduate credit for the training. Then on the spot, we created the Iowa Teachers Peer Mediation Association and made them all Charter members. They were ecstatic!

I next wrote to the state's 500 school Superintendents and told them what we had done, enclosed the new legislation and then asked if they would like to be that one pilot project called for by the Governor. Thirty-two Superintendents responded with a "yes", and suddenly we were across the State and politically accepted. Over the following three years we trained 2,500 teachers. In Iowa, as in most States, teachers are given some money to further their own education and many of the teachers used those funds to take this training. We thus put the program in the black, and got the University of Northern Iowa, which educates half of the teachers in the State, to require future teachers to take peer mediation training so that they graduated into the system with those skills as a part of their education. I understand that almost every school in the State of Iowa now has a peer mediation program.

We found that in three month's time the number of trips to the principal for disciplinary purposes dropped 75% in every school. Four years in to the program some 2,000 trained teachers said, in response to a questionnaire, that they now have one hour more a day to teach, instead of spending time on disciplinary problems.

We thought outside the box and approached the policy makers from a different perspective. We went state-wide, not local, and we went the political route – which was riskier but more effective.

6. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS): While I was president of the Iowa Peace Institute, two colleagues of mine and I were invited to Moscow, in 1989, by the USA-Canadian Institute, and were asked to bring conflict resolution to the Soviet Union. We met dozens of people during that visit and went back with a full team in March, 1990, to train 100 Soviets in conflict resolution skills. We worked with four different groups: trade union leaders, teachers, academics and personnel managers from the nuclear power-plant industry. Many positive things grew out of these two visits, and a number of policies were influenced by new ideas at a very important turning point in Russian history.

I want to focus here on the training for Trade Union leaders. The old Soviet Trade Unions were but instruments of the Communist State with no freedom whatsoever. The Berlin Wall had fallen in November, 1989, a few months before our March training mission, and change was in the air. The coal miners had gone on strike for the first time, demanding living wages from the Government. We insisted that at least ten of the thirty-five Trade Union leaders who wanted to take the training be from those Unions on strike. The organizers finally agreed. It was an historic week because for the first time the miners began to see, with the new skills they had learned, what was possible for them to achieve. We changed national policy on this issue of participation.

Within weeks of our return to Washington D. C., the Soviet Government asked us for help in solving labor management issues. This subject had never before even been discussed in the Soviet Union. We helped to send some lawyers to Moscow, who helped draft new labor legislation. We also approached FMCS, which had just started a small international unit, and asked if they would advise the Soviets on labor-management relations. They agreed, and over the next several years were responsible for training labor-management mediators. In effect, they established an FMCS for the Russians. Modeled after the US approach, a central Office in Moscow and sixteen Branch Offices across Russia were established.

This is an excellent example of US NGO and US Government cooperation with regard to creating new policies and new institutions in another country. This example is particularly relevant because it demonstrates the possibility of changing systems, at the policy level, even with our former Cold-War enemy!

7. A Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland: In 1985, after long negotiations, Ireland and Great Britain signed a treaty called the Anglo-Irish Agreement. This dealt with certain aspects of the relationships involved in the ongoing conflict in Northern Ireland. I was at the State Department at the time, and quite interested in this attempt by Track One to deal with a seemingly intractable conflict. I organized a one-day Seminar to explore various aspects of the Agreement – I

was especially interested in one clause in Article Three of the Treaty that called for a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. I thought this a remarkable statement considering that neither signator had a Bill of Rights of their own.

At the end of 1989, while in London, I visited a friend at the Foreign Office and learned, with regard to the establishment of a Bill of Rights, nothing had happened. I asked why it was put in the Treaty if no action had been taken. I was told it was put there for public relations purposes! I was shocked and decided to do something about the issue.

In January 1990, I got together with several concerned friends, including Joe Montville, for a two and a half days' meeting in Boston. We invited two outstanding people from Belfast to join us – one a Catholic lawyer, the other a Protestant human rights activist. The whole meeting was spent developing a strategy for producing a credible Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

We reached agreement on a two-step process. The two talented men from Northern Ireland would jointly draft a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland and get informal, unofficial support from the various political parties in Northern Ireland that this was a good idea and should be further explored.

As President of the Iowa Peace Institute I agreed, as a second step, to host a small week-long meeting in Des Moines, Iowa. This would bring together representatives of all the political parties in Northern Ireland and experts on Bills of Rights from other countries, to discuss the draft text developed by our two friends from Belfast.

It took them almost a year to draft their text, and another year to raise the money for the meeting in Iowa. We met in December 1991 with great success. Eight men from Northern Ireland and seven experts from Canada, New Zealand and the United States met together for a week. The entire time was spent reviewing and amending the draft text. Our goal was to do the staff work for the two Governments, have them acknowledge its credibility and use it as a working draft. We also wanted to build trust relationships between the eight men from Northern Ireland. We succeeded on all counts.

In September 1992 a conference was held on Northern Ireland by the UK and Ireland. An Ad Hoc Committee on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland was established; the Iowa draft was the only document on the table and three representatives from the Des Moines meeting were on the Committee. At the end of the Conference, both Governments announced publicly that they supported a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland.

"The Northern Ireland Peace Agreement" of April 10, 1998, talks about a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland in four separate places in the Treaty!

8. The Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGIE): In 1959, the young Dalai Lama escaped from the oncoming Chinese army, fled Tibet, and with the approval of the Indian Government, settled in the northeast Indian city of Dharamsala. I became interested in the Tibetan cause in 1988 and carried out the first diplomatic training for the TGIE at the Iowa Peace Institute, in June, 1990. I have been involved with them ever since.

With the approval of His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, over the years we have focused on three specific areas of mutual interest.

- i. We have helped to establish a professionally trained Diplomatic Corps by training about one hundred Tibetans in diplomatic and conflict resolution skills.
- ii. We have provided special training on how to negotiate with the Chinese Government.
- iii. We have tried to establish a think tank, first in India and then in the United States, to help the Tibetans think and plan for the future.

We are continuing our work as funds become available.

9. CARE: This great humanitarian assistance organization was launched some 50 years ago. Its goal, at that time, was to bring humanitarian assistance to the peoples of Western Europe after World War II. CARE has continued and expanded its work over the decades, and now has about 11,000 staff operating in some 70 countries around the world.

In 1993, Dr. Louise Diamond and I, as co-founders of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, visited several humanitarian assistance organizations, including CARE, pointing out that around 70% of their staffs were working in countries with active ethnic conflicts. Those staffs were not trained in conflict resolution skills. We said we could help.

Two years went by before we got a positive response from CARE. We did our first training for 42 senior members of their East Africa-based staff in 1996, in Nairobi, Kenya. A great serendipity at that training was that the new President of CARE, and two of his Vice Presidents, flew from Atlanta, Georgia to take the training.

Since 1996 we have trained several hundred CARE senior staff in regional meetings held in Sierra Leone, Jordan, Sri Lanka and Guatemala in addition to special country trainings in Tanzania and Sri Lanka.

What is exciting about this effort, over the years, is that we have had a positive impact on CARE's policies, on their system and on the way they think about their work. CARE has now broadened its Mission Statement and incorporated many of our ideas into their system.

10. US Department of State and USAID: Trying to change the way policy makers think in these two major institutions of US foreign policy is a monumental challenge and one that I have been involved in for some time. In the past year, there have been some signs of progress.

My goal has been to get the State Department to recognize that Track Two diplomacy is an important element of foreign policy and that NGOs can be responsible and should be supported. We can play an important role in conflict prevention and conflict resolution. I have pointed out that every Ambassador I have worked with overseas, over the past 15 years, has supported our work. Unfortunately, when they return to Washington for re-assignment the system absorbs them and they tend to think differently than when they were overseas. It is a powerful system.

The Canadian, British, Dutch, Norwegian and Swedish Foreign Ministries all have special offices, special Ambassadors and special funds focusing on conflict prevention and conflict resolution. I have urged the State Department to do the

same thing for years, arguing that they need to institutionalize a system of conflict prevention, peacebuilding and conflict resolution, with an office and a career path to make it work.

Three things have happened in the most recent years that give me some hope:

1. The G-8 Foreign Ministers met in Berlin in December 1999 and issued, as part of their Communique, a ground-breaking statement on conflict prevention. Under the leadership of International Alert, Safer World and the European Platform for Conflict Prevention, fifty-five international NGOs, including our Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, cosponsored a report for the G-8 Heads of State Meeting in Okinawa on July 21-23, 2000. This excellent eight page NGO Report contained a number of recommendations dealing with conflict prevention.

The G-8 Communique following that meeting was most remarkable. Paragraphs 72 and 73, under the title "Conflict Prevention", for the first time in the history of the G-8, talk forcefully about the need for conflict prevention and urge their Foreign Ministers to continue their good work.

2. The G-8 Foreign Ministers met for the first time under the Bush administration, in Rome, on July 18-19, 2001. Secretary of State Colin Powell was in attendance. Their Communique went even further; its first paragraph was on Conflict Prevention and discussed two new initiatives. They had as an appendix to the communique an attachment on the contribution of women in the prevention of violent conflict, and a second attachment on the role of the private sector in conflict prevention.
3. At the June 14-15, 2002 meeting of the heads of state in Canada, they focused on, among other things, an Action Plan for Africa. Highlights of that document are as follows:
  - Providing support to peace efforts in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, Angola, and Sierra Leone;
  - Taking joint action to support post-conflict development in the Great Lakes Region and Sudan;
  - Working with African partners to develop a joint plan to develop African capability to undertake peace support operations;
  - Training African peace support forces including through the development of regional centers of excellence for military and civilian aspects of conflict prevention and peace support.;
  - Supporting effective African-led reconciliation efforts, including both pre-conflict and post-conflict initiatives;
  - Encouraging more effective coordination and cooperation among donors and international institutions in support of peace-building



and conflict prevention efforts, and the special needs of women and children;

- Working with African governments, civil society, and others to address the linkage between armed conflict and the exploitation of natural resources.
4. During his confirmation hearings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 25 April, 2001, for the post of AID Administrator, Andrew Natsios said that one of the two new pillars he wanted to build upon, if he was approved by the Senate, was conflict prevention. The new Administrator has moved resolutely towards this goal. He has created a new Agency Task Force to institute measures to prevent deadly conflict and has integrated the word "Conflict" into a new Bureau called the "Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance." A new unit has been created called the Office of Conflict Management and Mitigation.

This is progress at the policy level. Perhaps AID has even up-staged the State Department on this issue.

#### **Additional Thoughts and Useful Principles to Remember**

1. In order to bring about policy change in any system, large or small, you need patience, knowledge of the substance of the issues, good listening skills, and perseverance.
2. The larger the system, the slower the change.
3. Start small and focus on a particular policy issue you want to change. Success builds trust and allows you to proceed further.
4. Become familiar with the intricacies and peculiarities of the system you want to change. Get to know a few people, at various levels in the system, who are willing to help you, and work with them. Identify some risk-takers.
5. At whatever policy level you want to deal with, be it local, national or international, the only way you can hope to bring about change is through face-to-face meetings. This is critical because they allow one to express one's enthusiasm, dynamism and personal commitment to one's cause.
6. Letters, telephone calls and e-mails don't bring about change in a bureaucracy. They should only be used to set up face-to-face appointments.
7. Always make your own appointments. Get to know the personal assistant, appointments secretary or whomever makes up the schedule of the person you want to meet and influence. Remember, they are the "gatekeepers." Never antagonize, look down on or patronize them. That could be fatal to your mission.
8. Eventually you need to build a trust relationship with the policy-maker you hope to influence and then change.
9. Try to bring the policy-maker into the change process. When they see your idea is going to work then you step back, put your ego behind you and give them all the credit. That way the change will last.
10. Treat all policy makers the same, at whatever level of society or government

- they come from. Always treat them with deference, and with respect. Never get angry or impatient. Remember that they are very probably arrogant, poor listeners, and very impatient with regard to time. Also remember that you know more about your issue than they do and you are trying to help them understand your point of view.
11. All policy makers have large egos. Treat them accordingly.
  12. At IMTD, we always take a "systems approach" to peace. We know from experience that no one path or track can develop and implement a lasting path to peace by themselves. The only peace that will work is when you bring all elements of the community in conflict into the peace process. The people you will be meeting with don't understand this. Your job is often an educational one. Help them to understand the reality of this premise.
  13. It is absolutely essential to understand that no conflict, at any level of society – from family disagreements to international conflicts – can ever be solved if you don't sit down face-to-face and talk about it.
  14. It is difficult to generalize about why a policy makers' priorities may shift; each case is different. Riots and death in the Panama Canal Zone changed the US Government's decision to finally sit down with the government officials from Panama to talk about the Panama Canal Treaty. The US Air Force told the Spanish Government it did not want to extend its base agreements, because it already had a large base in Tripoli, Libya. After Libya's President Quadafi came to power and shut down the US base, the Air Force was forced back to the Spanish, hat in hand, to start negotiations all over again.
  15. External forces, out of your control, can always impact on policy. The bombing by Israel of Iraq's nuclear reactor in 1982, for example, almost derailed the very successful UN World Conference on Aging being held just then in Vienna, Austria.
  16. Unfortunately, US policy makers are constantly involved in putting out fires and never seem to have the capability to plan even six months to three years ahead, to try to prevent those fires from breaking out in the first place.
  17. The best way to deflect mutual antagonism between NGOs and donor governments is through improved communication at home and abroad. The best mechanism abroad is to establish an in-country coordination committee, preferably chaired by the UNDP Resident Coordinator. Weekly or bi-monthly meetings, depending on the local situation, can be essential instruments of coordination simply by providing a "show and tell" forum for all to learn what is going on in-country. These meetings also provide an opportunity for trust-building between individuals so that they can get together between meetings if necessary.
  18. As indicated earlier, some other governments are ahead of the US Government in the field of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. They have established mechanisms in their own Foreign Ministries to focus on these two subjects and then carry out practical projects overseas. Remember this when looking for backing.
  19. Over the long term, the best example I know of regarding the creation of a global understanding at a national level is The Netherlands. Why are they the highest GNP contributor to the economic development of Third World coun-

tries? There is a very simple – but powerful-explanation: their educational system. From kindergarten through University, every student, at every level of their education, learns about the world outside Holland. Each year their studies become more sophisticated, so that by the time they graduate, they are world citizens and familiar with the world's problems. That is why they, as a country, contribute 1% of their GNP to development; and the United States, whose public are among the most uninformed in the world, contribute only .1% of its GNP to the same cause.

20. Always be prepared to think outside the box and have an open mind and an open heart.
21. You, personally, have to be a risk-taker if you are going to be a policy change-agent.

Ambassador John W. McDonald

*Ambassador John W. McDonald is a lawyer, diplomat, former international civil servant, development expert and peacebuilder, concerned about world social, economic and ethnic problems. He spent twenty years of his career in Western Europe and the Middle East and worked for sixteen years on United Nations economic and social affairs. He is currently Chairman and co-founder of the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy, in Washington D.C., which focuses on national and international ethnic conflicts. In February, 1992, he was named Distinguished Visiting Professor at George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, in Fairfax, Virginia.*

*McDonald retired from the Foreign Service in 1987, after 40 years as a diplomat. In 1987-88, he became a Professor of Law at The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. He was Senior Advisor to George Mason University's Center for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and taught and lectured at the Foreign Service Institute and the Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs. From December, 1988, to January, 1992, McDonald was President of the Iowa Peace Institute in Grinnell, Iowa and was a Professor of Political Science at Grinnell College.*

*In 1983, Ambassador McDonald joined the State Department's newly formed Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs as its Coordinator for Multilateral Affairs, and lectured and organized symposia on the art of negotiation, multilateral diplomacy and international organizations. He has written or edited eight books on negotiation and conflict resolution.*

*From 1978-83, he carried out a wide variety of assignments for the State Department in the area of multilateral diplomacy. He was President of the INTELSAT World Conference called to draft a treaty on privileges and immunities; leader of the U.S. Delegation to the UN World Conference on Technical Cooperation Among Developing Countries, in Buenos Aires in 1978; Secretary General of the 27 th Colombo Plan Ministerial Meeting; head of the U.S. Delegation which negotiated a UN Treaty Against the Taking of Hostages; U.S. Coordinator for the UN Decade on Drinking Water and Sanitation; head of the U.S. Delegation to UNIDO III in New Delhi in 1980; Chairman of the Federal Inter-Agency Committee for the UN's International Year of Disabled Persons, 1981; U.S. Coordinator and head of the U.S. Delegation for the UN's World Assembly on Aging, in Vienna, in 1982.*

*From 1974-78, he was Deputy Director General of the International Labor Organization (ILO) in Geneva, Switzerland, a UN Agency, with responsibility for managing that agency's 3,200 person Secretariat, coming from 102 countries, with programs in 120 member nations, and an annual budget of \$135 million. From*

*1947-1974, Ambassador McDonald held various State Department assignments in Berlin, Frankfurt, Bonn, Paris, Washington D.C., Ankara, Tehran, Karachi, and Cairo. Ambassador McDonald holds both a B.A. and a J.D. degree from the University of Illinois, and graduated from the National War College in 1967. He was appointed Ambassador twice by President Carter and twice by President Reagan to represent the United States at various UN World Conference*