

UN Millennium Summit Draws the Battle Lines

by Muriel Mirak-Weissbach

Ceremonious gatherings of world leaders in the recent period have been gala events celebrating, more than anything else, the impotence and/or unwillingness of such leaders and their institutions to face the fact of an impending financial blowout, and concomitant strategic crises. The United Nations Millennium Summit, held in New York on Sept. 6-8, had promised to be yet another such meaningless extravaganza, albeit carrying a heftier price tag commensurate with its unprecedented level of political representation, which included more than 150 heads of state and government.

Instead, a bitter political fight emerged, largely between the nations of the developing sector and formerly communist world, on the one hand, and the tiny grouping of would-be one-worldist dictators, on the other. Although the public speeches and formal declarations, with a few noteworthy exceptions, did respect the sacrosanct rules of UN diplomatese, whereby nothing of significance is said, or, if it is, it is couched in terms acceptable to polite society; still, in the several roundtable sessions held behind closed doors, as well as in numerous bilateral meetings, important issues were thrashed out, and, in some cases, far-reaching agreements were reached.

The extraordinary session focussed on crucial issues affecting every nation and individual on the planet: globalization; poverty; epidemic disease, especially HIV/AIDS; Africa; and debt. The framework for the discussions that took place, had been set by two reports—that of Secretary General Kofi Annan, and that on UN peacekeeping by Lakhdar Brahimi, dubbed the “Brahimi report.”

The proposals contained in the two reports, particularly the latter, met with serious opposition, sparking a debate on what international relations, as mediated through the UN, should look like in the new millennium.

Which Way: A Brave New World, or A New, Just World Economic Order?

The report of the Secretary General, entitled “We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the Twenty-First Century,” issued in March, is full of laudable proposals, aimed at building a more just and moral world. These include specific targets identified by Annan: to halve the proportion of people living in extreme poverty—those earning less than \$1 per day—by the year 2015; to halve the proportion of people without access to clean drinking water, by 2015; to

narrow the gender gap in education, and to ensure that, by 2015, “all children complete a full course of primary education”; to reduce “HIV infection rates in persons 15 to 24 years of age by 25% within the most affected countries before the year 2005 and by 25% globally before 2010,” thus halting and beginning to reverse the spread of the pandemic; and to expand debt relief, eventually cancelling “all official debts of the heavily indebted poor countries, in return for those countries making demonstrable commitments to poverty reduction.”

What vitiates the otherwise well-meaning report, is the explicit premise, that the world is governed, and will continue to be governed by globalization, the banner under which the summit took place. Although Annan’s report does acknowledge a backlash against globalization, due to the social disparities still dominating the world, and in consideration of “greater vulnerability to unfamiliar and unpredictable forces that can bring on economic instability and social dislocation,” like the Asian crisis of 1997-98, yet it argues, that with “better governance,” globalization can bring economic success to all.

One chapter, “Freedom from Fear,” in the Secretary General’s report, addresses the fact that the 1990s witnessed so-called internal wars, rising out of ethnic and religious conflicts, which have necessitated external military intervention, and UN peacekeeping missions. Passing rather quickly over the “dilemma of intervention,” raised by concerns that “humanitarian intervention” could be used as a pretext for violating sovereignty, Annan asks rhetorically, if not by armed intervention, then, “how *should* we respond to a Rwanda, to a Srebrenica—to gross and systematic violations of human rights that offend every precept of our common humanity?” Nowhere does the report identify the actual causes behind such atrocities as in the Great Lakes region of Africa and the Balkans, nor the perpetrators in the Anglo-American elite.

Strengthening Peacekeeping Operations

The most concrete proposition made in the report, relates to strengthening peacekeeping operations. Due to the weight given this item, a special report was commissioned by Annan, and carried out under the chairmanship of Brahimi, a former Algerian foreign minister and UN diplomat. The panel’s report, issued in August, calls for an overhaul of UN peacekeeping operations, to provide them the wherewithal—logistics,



African leaders spoke out at the summit against globalization and the debt burden. Left to right: South African President Thabo Mbeki, Zimbabwe President Robert Mugabe, Nigerian President Olusegun Obasanjo.

manpower, equipment, financing, information, and a clear mandate—for “rapid and effective deployment.” This means establishing a standard timeline for deployment, whereby the UN could “fully deploy ‘traditional’ peacekeeping operations within 30 days of the adoption of a Security Council resolution, and complex peacekeeping operations within 90 days. In case of the latter, the mission headquarters should be fully installed and functioning within 15 days.”

If one can wade through the alphabet soup typical of UN Newspeak, one gets a glimpse of what the panel’s recommendations amount to: a one-worldist rapid deployment force, equipped with all the trappings of the information age, to be sent on “peacekeeping missions,” including those which follow “humanitarian interventions,” as in the Balkans. The underlying assumption is that the so-called ethnic and religious conflicts witnessed in the 1990s, will continue and expand, worldwide, thus justifying the revamping, modernization, and upgrading of UN forces.

To implement the proposed “reform,” the Secretary General would need, according to the report, “one or a combination of the following: a) standing reserves of military, civilian police, and civilian expertise, matériel, and financing; b) extremely reliable standby capacities to be called upon on short notice; or, c) sufficient lead-time to acquire these resources, which would require the ability to foresee, plan for, and initiate spending for potential new missions several months ahead of time.” The panel’s report notes that there has been resistance to the establishment of “a standing United Nations army,” and related financial expenses until the Secretary General has been authorized to do so. “Under these circumstances,

the United Nations cannot deploy operations ‘rapidly and effectively’ within the timelines suggested,” it objects. Therefore, “at least some of these circumstances must change.”

The panel included among its recommendations, the following: First, deployment timelines should be 30 or 90 days, according to the nature of the operation. As for military personnel, member-states should join, within the context of the United Nations Standby Arrangements System (UNSAS), “to form several coherent brigade-size forces, with necessary enabling forces, ready for effective deployment” within 30 or 90 days of a resolution. The Secretary General should be authorized to canvass member-states regarding their contributing troops, and should dispatch a team to confirm their readiness. Furthermore, “a revolving ‘on-call list’ of about 100 military officers [should] be created in UNSAS to be available on seven days’ notice to augment nuclei of DPKO [Department of Peacekeeping Operations] planners with teams trained to create a mission headquarters for a new peacekeeping operation.” In addition, member-states are to “establish a national pool of civilian police officers,” and to “enter into regional training partnerships for civilian police.” As with the military, “a revolving on-call list of about 100 police officers and related experts” is to be created for deployment within a week’s notice. Parallel arrangements are to be made for “judicial, penal, human rights, and other relevant specialists, who with specialist civilian police will make up collegial ‘rule of law’ teams.” Regarding transitional civil administration, the Secretary General is asked to “invite a panel of international legal experts . . . to evaluate the feasibility and utility of developing an interim criminal code . . . for use . . . pending

the re-establishment of local rule of law and local law enforcement capacity.”

Regarding “peace operations and the information age,” a new entity is to be set up, the Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat (EISAS), under the Executive Committee on Peace and Security (ECPS). The EISAS would support analysis and information needs of ECPS. Furthermore, “EISAS, in cooperation with the Information Technology Services Division, should implement an enhanced peace operations element on the current United Nations Internet and link it to the missions through a Peace Operations Extranet.” And: “Peace operations could benefit greatly from more extensive use of geographic information systems technology, which quickly integrates operational information with electronic maps of the mission area, for applications as diverse as demobilization, civilian policing, voter registration, human rights monitoring, and reconstruction.”

Orwell, Anyone?

It should come as no surprise, that those who hailed the Brahimi report the most enthusiastically in their speeches to the summit, were political leaders of the “Gang of Five,” the Anglo-American grouping which includes the United States, Great Britain, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada. President Clinton, who opened the summit following Annan’s remarks, focussed on the “stark, collective challenge” presented by the proliferation of “internal wars.” While respecting sovereignty and territorial integrity, Clinton said, we must “protect *people* as well as *borders*.” Drawing the lessons from the past century, that “the international community must take a side” in the clash between good and evil, Clinton highlighted two “tests”: “We faced such a test—and met it—when Slobodan Milosevic tried to close the century with a final chapter of ethnic slaughter. We have faced such a test for ten years in Iraq: The UN has approved a fair blueprint,” he said, referring to a recent resolution, “spelling out what Iraq must do. It must be enforced—for the credibility of the UN is at stake.” He cited two cases of UN peacekeeping, East Timor and Sierra Leone, where the UN did not have the tools it required. Therefore, he said, “let us equip the UN to do what we ask. We need better machinery to ensure UN peacekeepers can be rapidly deployed, with the right training and equipment, the ability to project credible force, and missions well-defined by a well-functioning headquarters.”

British Prime Minister Tony Blair was even more outspoken and direct. Applauding the work of the British forces deployed into Sierra Leone outside the UN system, Blair outlined what is required for the UN. “We need: UN forces composed of units appropriate for more robust peacekeeping that can be inserted quickly, rather than whatever the Secretary General’s staff has been able to gather from reluctant member-states.” He went on, “This means a new contract between the UN and its members. We must be prepared to commit our forces to UN operations. The UN must alter radically its

planning, intelligence, and analysis, and develop a far more substantial professional military staff. When the moment comes, a field headquarters must be ready to move, with an operational communications system up and running immediately rather than weeks into the deployment.” In sum, he said, “The Brahimi report is right. We should implement it, and do so within a 12-month time scale.”

Two Blair spokesmen on background, briefed the press on the Prime Minister’s idea, stressing the need for more people in the department of peacekeeping, and more programs for training and peacekeeping leadership. The British, one spokesman said, would be happy to provide the leadership. In fact, Blair offered to host a peacekeeping training institute, in his meeting with Annan. His spokesman referred to the Staff College, for this. Furthermore, he said, the Blair government is putting together a new Conflict Prevention Fund, and urged others to follow suit.

When the British offer to provide “leadership” for “peacekeeping”—grab your gun! From Bosnia and Croatia to Liberia and Sierra Leone, the British role has been to keep “internal wars” raging, backing each side in a conflict against the other, in the time-tested imperial strategy of “divide and rule.”

The Blair government’s eagerness to provide the military training and leadership for the new rapid deployment forces, coheres with the strategy outlined on April 22, 1999 in Chicago by the Prime Minister, when he said that Britain would determine world politics by using the leverage it has in various international organizations, first and foremost, the UN (see “British War Schemes, Big Lies Rebuked at NATO Summit” and “Blair’s Redcoat Invasion Flops,” *EIR*, May 7, 1999).

Australian Prime Minister John Howard played up the success of his country’s participation in the peacekeeping mission in East Timor, while New Zealand’s Prime Minister Helen Clark said such missions were “a priority” for her government. Canada’s Prime Minister Jean Chrétien announced that Ottawa, “with the support of interested foundations, is leading the establishment of an independent International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty,” not further defined.

Africans Call the Bluff

Africa occupied a special place in the UN summit. Annan’s report had highlighted the special plight of African nations, which are the most impoverished, overburdened by debt, and most severely afflicted by the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Not coincidentally, Blair’s second, and only other point in his speech, was Africa. Without further specification, he called for starting the process of “agreeing [on] a way forward for Africa.” The multiple ills besetting the continent, he attributed to “bad governance, factional rivalries, state-sponsored theft, and corruption.” In a roundtable session, where Blair apparently patted himself on the back for Britain’s supposed generosity in debt relief, Ethiopian President Meles Zenawi asked bluntly, “Where’s the debt relief?”



Australian peacekeeping forces in Dili, East Timor, September 1999, under a UN mandate. The proposals to beef up UN peacekeeping operations amount to a renewed assault on the nation-state by the British-steered financier oligarchy.

It was, in fact, leaders from African nations, who called the one-worldists' bluff. Most direct were President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe and President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa.

Mbeki stepped outside the unspoken rules of UN protocol, by delivering a condemnation of the current world order and globalization in particular, followed by an impassioned plea for the international community to respond to the suffering of the poor, for their own sakes as well. Saying that the billions of people represented by their leaders at the summit expect a message of hope from it, he stated, "It must be that we will have to jostle with various pagan gods at whose feet we prostrate ourselves, over all of whom tower the gods of inertia, the market, and globalization." Reviewing the man-made acts of violence in the second millennium, from slavery to colonialism, to world wars and the Holocaust, followed by the Rwandan genocide, he said, these dead have been forgotten. The living, however, have not; and it is they, he said, who have given the mandate to leaders gathered at the summit, to address their problems. "The poor of the world stand at the gates of the comfortable mansions occupied by each and every king and queen, President, prime minister, and minister privileged to attend this unique meeting. The question these billions ask is—what are you doing, you in whom we have placed our trust, what are you doing to end the deliberate and savage violence against us that, every day, sentences many of us to a degrading and unnecessary death!"

Mbeki stressed the moral failure of developed nations in

the past century, which, though possessing the material means, did not apply them "to end the contemporary, deliberate, and savage violence of poverty and underdevelopment." "The offense is that our actions communicate the message that, in reality, we do not care. We are indifferent. Our actions say the poor must bury the poor." He said that the fundamental challenge facing the summit, is to demonstrate the will to end this misery, and he compared the kind of will required, to that demonstrated by "those who died in the titanic struggle to defeat Nazism and fascism." In short, he was saying that the world order which has produced this misery, is equivalent to fascism.

"I, like the poor at the gates," he concluded, "ask the question—will we, at last, respond to this appeal? All of us, including the rich, will pay a terrible price if we do not, practically, answer: Yes, we do!"

Unfinished Business

Zimbabwean President Mugabe lamented the fact that Africa is still burdened with "the unfinished business of the 20th Century," including the "color line." For example, he cited the control, by a white 1% of the population, of 70% of his country's arable land, while the black majority is congested on barren land. To rectify this wrong inherited from British colonialism, his government had proceeded with a land reform and resettlement program. The response, he said, "has been staggering beyond description. My country, my government, my party, and my person are labelled 'land grab-

bers,' demonized, reviled, and threatened with sanctions in the face of accusations of reverse racism." Despite this, he pledged, "We will not go back."

Mugabe struck at the heart of the problem, condemning globalization per se, and challenging the UN to recover its own more noble tradition of the past. "The question my compatriots and I face in Zimbabwe, the question put to me by a peasant who is my neighbor, is about when this globalized environment will spare him a patch of land to till. He asks when the ugly anomaly which history gave him in respect of land ownership shall be resolved to enlarge his own freedom so he can begin to be like the rest of mankind. He asks why a predatory political economy that the United Nations rejected and helped fight in the 1960s, throughout the '70s and '80s now has once again found so many globalized protectors. He wants to understand why a system which is at the center of poverty; at the center of race relations; at the center of denying developing countries their sense of sovereignty and democracy, is made to appear so right, just, fair, and a damning standard."

The Zimbabwean President concluded by laying bare the ultimate aim of those controlling the UN: "We are either makers of a new world based on new democratic principles of economic and social justice, or we remain in the old world with some conquering nations still set on old agendas of shrinking the rights of some nations as they enlarge their own conquest, sanctifying this under the cover of good governance, transparency, anti-corruption, democracy, human rights, and digital technology." Giving a warning of things to come, Mugabe concluded, "if the new millennium, like the last, remains an age of hegemonic empires and conquerors doing the same old things in new technological ways; remains the age of the master race, of the master economy, and master state, then I am afraid we in developing countries will have to stand up as a matter of principle and say, 'Not again.'"

HIV/AIDS and Debt

Other African leaders added their voices, to unmask the fraud of the new order being proposed by the Anglo-American cabal at the UN. They focussed on the issue of HIV/AIDS and the foreign debt. Although virtually all African leaders referenced the AIDS pandemic ravaging the continent, it was Botswana President Festus Mogae who formulated the most dramatic appeal. Presenting himself as having "the dubious distinction of being leader of a country most seriously affected by HIV/AIDS in the whole world," he characterized the fight against the disease as "the challenge of the millennium." He depicted the tragedy in vivid images of "elderly mothers mourning the untimely deaths of their beloved children, babies born today only to be buried the next day, and a growing population of orphans yearning for parental love and care." He related how his country, having enjoyed a period of economic growth, now finds itself blocked, as the economically active population, "our most precious resource, is being deci-

mated," and life expectancy has been reduced from 67 to 47 years. Half of those infected are under 25 years of age. Mogae acknowledged the Secretary General's call for halting and reversing the AIDS pandemic, but pointedly noted, "To achieve this target, we will need an infusion of tangible and adequate resources," which had not been identified in the report.

President Joachim Alberto Chissano of Mozambique also denounced globalization, which has "exposed poor countries to powerful external forces and has driven them to marginalization and exclusion." He warned, "If the scourge of underdevelopment is not addressed, it can shake the very foundations of the international system," and he seized on the debt issue as exemplary. While welcoming the Group of Seven's initiatives at their 1999 Cologne summit, to relieve some debt for the Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC), he said, "We believe that unconditional debt cancellation could enable us to redirect resources to poverty eradication, including the improvement of social sectors and rehabilitation of basic infrastructures."

The same point was driven home by Dr. Bakili Muluzi, President of the Republic of Malawi, who, paying lip service to the HIPC initiative, stated, "We remain convinced that only total debt cancellation would help us much better." He went on to say, "The money used to service these debts, which were inherited from an earlier generation of leaders, would best be used in our poverty reduction programs, such as education, health, sanitation, and infrastructures." Bluntly, he said, "There is much talk at this forum about poverty reduction, but there cannot be any poverty reduction if the children of Africa remain heavily indebted even before they are born."

The same point was reiterated by Nigerian President Olu-segun Obasanjo, who called for the cancellation of all foreign debts, as well as by Sudan's President Omar Hassan Ahmed al-Bashir, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, and Qatari head of state Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani. As Bouteflika stressed, in a report to the press on a roundtable discussion he had chaired, there had been "the most passionate discussion I've been in on," regarding globalization, peace and security, UN reform, the future role of the UN, and particularly, debt. "One problem that frequently came up," he said, "was that of debt. One delegate said, given the legacy of the past, and North-South relations over centuries, and given the future as it looms, with dazzling technology confronting countries that do not even have telephones or a literate population, should we not ask the question, regarding debt: " 'Who owes what to whom?' It is not a question of rescheduling."

In answer to a question from *EIR*, President Bouteflika elaborated, saying, "When the question is asked, 'Who owes what to whom,' we took into account five centuries of colonization, pillory of resources, acculturation of populations, wars of liberation, sacking of wealth, the brain drain, and so forth. I believe that even on the metaphysical level, the question must be asked."



A Tanzanian woman whose husband died of AIDS, with three of her five children. Botswana President Festus Mogae characterized the AIDS epidemic as “the challenge of the millennium.”

Similar demands were echoed by leaders of Ibero-America, especially Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, as well as Asian leaders, such as from Vietnam, and those from eastern Europe, such as Georgia. Chinese President Jiang Zemin said, “Effective measures should be taken to reduce or exempt the debts of developing countries and to increase official aid to them *without any conditions attached*” (emphasis added).

Vatican Secretary of State Cardinal Angelo Sodano, representing the Holy See, told the summit that preserving and promoting “peace throughout the world,” is the first duty of the UN, because “peace is always fragile and it is important to try to forestall outbreaks of conflict, as well as to keep them from spreading. This is why the UN needs to develop its capacities in the area of preventive diplomacy. . . .

“The second duty of the UN is the promotion of development. Even today a significant part of the world’s population lives in conditions of poverty which are an offense to human dignity. This is all the more unacceptable when, at the same time, wealth is rapidly increasing and the gap between rich and poor is growing wider, even inside the same country.

“Furthermore, other evils, such as war, the destruction of the environment, natural disasters, and epidemics are often exacerbated by the presence of poverty. How can we not draw attention to the fact that the majority of these scourges affect Africa in the first place?

Cardinal Sodano continued, “The present situation calls for a moral and financial mobilization, directed to precise objectives, and with a view to obtaining a drastic reduction of

poverty. Among these objectives, there is the introduction of incisive measures for the cancellation of the debt of poorer countries, the increase of development aid, and wider access to markets.”

Although it did not emerge in the open sessions, it is clear that there was considerable behind-the-scenes discussion on the question of overall reform of the world monetary system. In answer to questions from *EIR* regarding this point, both Algerian President Bouteflika and South African President Mbeki acknowledged that such proposals were under discussion. Had they been brought into open debate, as concrete proposals, had any one speaker proposed the creation of a new monetary system, a New Bretton Woods, the entire shape of the summit would have been different.

Albright’s Come-Uppance, or, No to Anglo-American Hegemonism

Although there were no references in the Secretary General’s report to the “club of democratic states,” or similar noxious notions which U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright has championed in international forums, there were several strong statements rejecting the notion outright. Most forceful was the statement by Aleksandr Lukashenka, President of Belarus, which has established a union with the Russian Federation. Lukashenka, who, lauding the UN’s elimination of discrimination of nations, between subjects and objects, said, “The Belarussian people have made more than a weighty contribution to the establishment of this just system. And we cannot put up with attempts to dictate to us how we



Chinese President Jiang Zemin expressed the optimism that, through a dialogue among civilizations, “the world of ours will eventually attain a civilization of a higher level and make progress in all areas.”

should live and who we should make friends with. Having sacrificed the lives of one-third of its citizens to the cause of victory in the war against fascism, Belarus is capable of determining its own destiny.” He made clear what he was referring to: “Lately the efforts have been made to create a sort of club of the chosen, which excludes the majority of the world’s nations. This arrogant attempt to divide the peoples into ‘teachers’ and ‘pupils’ can do no good for the real encouragement of democracy and human rights.” He ended with a scathing attack on the use of military force, decided outside the Security Council, which had aggravated, not solved, problems.

This issue merited special treatment by the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, which have been victims of the Anglo-American go-it-alone military-strike policy, in the Balkans, Iraq, and elsewhere. Russian President Vladimir Putin hammered away at the theme in a press conference on Sept. 8, repeating that the Security Council had the exclusive right to authorize the use of force, and that only if the use of force were so decided, could it be presented as in the name of the international community. Chinese President Jiang Zemin addressed the problem in his speech, saying, “Hegemonism and power politics still exist.” Putin put his finger on the problem: He said, “In handling international affairs, no country or group of countries should

take an attitude of ‘using the United Nations when it is needed and abandon it when it is not.’ ”

Dialogue, Not Confrontation

In place of hegemonism and power politics, it is dialogue which the vast majority of nations represented at the summit endorsed. Not dialogue intended as a pluralistic everything and nothing, but dialogue as defined, whereby each specific language culture, addresses the issues of the world, from its informed cultural heritage, from the standpoint of the universal principles pervading every civilization. The “dialogue of civilizations,” which Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami presented (see text, below), and which has been adopted by the UN for the year 2001, constituted a true breakthrough in conception, at the UN summit, as it provided the highest possible conceptual and moral framework for defining international relations. It is no coincidence, that every head of state or government who voiced opposition to the arrogant hegemonism of the Anglo-American elite, endorsed the concept of the dialogue of civilizations as an alternative — from Zimbabwe, to Algeria, to Bosnia-Herzegovina, Lithuania, and countless more.

China’s President Jiang Zemin, for instance, stated, “The world is diverse and colorful. Just as there should not be only one color in the universe, so there should not be only one civilization, one social system, one development model or set of values in the world. Each and every country and nation has made its own contribution to the development of human civilization.” Jiang Zemin illustrated this, saying, “Chinese civilization is one of the most ancient civilizations in the world. It has added to the splendor of human civilization.” Expressing optimism that such an approach can usher in a new era in international relations, he concluded, “I am convinced that in spite of difficulties and twists and turns that might occur in the course of evolution of the world situation and the development of human society, the world of ours will eventually attain a civilization of a higher level and make progress in all areas.”

‘The New Name for Peace Is Development’

Pope Paul VI made history in 1967, when he challenged world leaders, from the podium of the United Nations, to inaugurate a new era in international relations, by recognizing that “the new name for peace is development.” Although, regrettably, the intellectual and moral thrust of this year’s Secretary General’s report and speech fell short of this mark, yet, in an important sense, the spirit of Pope Paul VI, could be perceived between the lines in many speeches and bilateral agreements. Ironically, in addition to the Holy See’s representative of the Holy See, it was the Chinese, the Iranians, the Russians, and others, who most forcefully put this forward. Jiang Zemin lamented that “the unfair and irrational old international political and economic order has yet to be replaced. There is still a long way to go before the two strategic issues

of peace and development are solved and a fair and equitable new international and political order is established.”

In a press conference, Russian President Putin stressed that “economic projects are the basis for solving political problems.” He was referring to a Siberian Energy Institute

project for energy integration, embracing Russia, China, North and South Korea, and Japan. Putin said that it was difficult to determine who would benefit most from the cooperative effort, and hailed the North Korea/South Korea dialogue as the precondition for realizing such mutually benefi-

Russia's Putin Promotes New 'Atoms for Peace'

Russian President Vladimir Putin came out with the following “Atoms for Peace” initiative, as an addendum to his speech to the UN Millennium Summit:

“Initiative of the President of the Russian Federation on energy supply for sustainable development of mankind, radical solution to problems related to non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, and global environmental improvement.”

We have lived to see the turn of the millennium. Crossing the border of centuries, let alone millennia, is not a chance open to every generation.

Unfortunately, the 20th Century is leaving behind a backlog of cardinal problems, including the vital challenge of preventing military conflicts. The situation is aggravated by the sprawl of weapons of mass destruction, and first of all nuclear arms, which remains a serious threat to mankind.

Another threat comes from man's technological activities with the ensuing environmental impacts. Greenhouse gas emissions associated with energy production are increasingly causing ecological degradation. The situation can hardly improve in the near future as the developing countries, where the most rapid energy production growth will take place in the next century, are not in possession of modern technologies requiring large investments, and will rely on more readily available energy sources, to wit, coal and hydro, which are causing the greatest damage to the environment.

Do we see answers to these challenges today? We believe so.

The 20th Century witnessed the advent of nuclear energy both as a weapon and as a new energy source. Military technologies were adapted to peaceful nuclear energy uses, but their inherent dualism will not allow ruling out all possibilities for accumulation and separation of weapon-grade materials, thus adding to the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation.

The policy of restrictions on nuclear technology transfers to other countries and the enhanced international con-

trol proved to be insufficient to bar nuclear proliferation.

Russia repeatedly came out with proposals aimed at curbing the nuclear arms race and was the first to suggest that nuclear weapons should be eliminated and their production abolished forever. Regrettably, this initiative has never found support from other nuclear states.

Though compelled to maintain nuclear parity, Russia nonetheless did not perform as many tests as did, for instance, the United States. Russia was the first to declare unilaterally a moratorium on nuclear tests, and has been unwaveringly keeping to it since. Our country has ratified the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty.

Today, Russia is coming out with a new initiative for drastically improving the effectiveness of the nuclear non-proliferation regime. We deem it essential to phase out the main weapons materials—enriched uranium and plutonium—from use in the peaceful nuclear power sector. It is also necessary to put an end to the build-up of plutonium stockpiles, resulting from irradiated fuel reprocessing, while its already existing inventories should be returned to the nuclear fuel cycle.

Some serious investigations carried out in Russia testify to the feasibility of nuclear power development without these weapons materials. Moreover, it becomes possible to burn the natural radiation equilibrium of the planet. Such an approach can arrest the adverse environmental impact of the power production industry, and would pave the way for final solution of the radioactive waste problem.

Large-scale power industry growth on the basis of new nuclear technologies would allow saving the global fossil reserves for non-energy uses by the present and future generations, stabilizing and then diminishing the greenhouse effect, and providing for the ever-increasing global energy consumption in an economically and environmentally optimal way.

Any state would find it extremely difficult to attain these objectives single-handedly. We suggest that all countries concerned join their efforts in an international project under the auspices of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Russia is prepared to cooperate with all countries along these strategic lines to ensure energy supply for sustainable development of humankind, radical solution of nuclear nonproliferation problems, and global environmental improvement.

cial projects.

Certainly the most significant concrete achievement on the sidelines of the summit, was the agreement struck by Putin and South Korean President Kim Dae-jung, for talks, later this month, on connecting the inter-Korean railroad with the Trans-Siberian Railroad system. The talks, to be held at the prime ministerial level, will also discuss construction of fiber optics telecommunications cables, energy and power supplies, as well as the development of Russia's Nakhodka industrial complex and Irkutsk gas field. South Korean Presidential spokesman Park Jun-young said, "The two leaders shared the opinion that the two Koreas and Russia will be able to maximize mutual benefits through close economic cooperation," and that, "on the basis of this agreement, regional economic cooperation involving China, Japan, and Mongolia will become possible."

The two Koreas are taking steps to restore two key railroads, one running from Seoul in South Korea, to the northwestern city of Shinuiju in North Korea, and then to China, and the second, from Seoul to the northeastern city of Wonsan in North Korea, and then to Siberia. President Kim Dae-jung was quoted telling Putin: "Once the Seoul-Wonsan line is linked with the Trans-Siberian Railroad, Asia will be connected to the European continent and this will add momentum to the prosperity in East Asia."

As Putin mentioned in his press conference, it is regrettable that the North Korean delegation was not able to attend the summit. This was due to the outrageous harassment, to which the delegation was subjected by American Airlines, at the Frankfurt Airport in Germany. Despite this sabotage, significant progress was made in North Korea's reintegration in South Korean/Russian economic projects, an important example of how, indeed, economic cooperation can solve political problems.

President Putin also presented an important proposal for the expanded use of nuclear power globally. Entitled "The Initiative of the President of the Russian Federation to Secure Power for the Sustained Development of Humanity, with a Fundamental Solution of the Problems of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Improving the Ecological Health of the Planet Earth," the proposal cites the need for developing countries to have cheap energy sources, and proposes international collaboration on improvements nuclear power technologies, the nuclear fuel cycle, and the use and disposal of radioactive wastes. Russia proposes "to unite the efforts of all interested countries, in an international project under the aegis" of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Putin said (see box).

Despite attempts on the part of the "Gang of Five" to impose an Orwellian new world order, a totally different paradigm has come into being, philosophically articulated as the "dialogue of civilizations," which is becoming manifest in a plethora of regional agreements which embody the notion that, indeed, the new name for peace is development.

Seyyed Mohammad Khatami

A Call for 'Dialogue among Civilizations'



The highpoint of the United Nations Millennium Summit was reached before the summit formally convened, at a conference on the Dialogue of Civilizations. The conference was cosponsored by the UN, UNESCO, and the Islamic Republic of Iran, which had proposed that the year 2001 be designated by the UN, the Year of the Dialogue of Civilizations.

The roundtable, on Sept. 4, was attended by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, as well as the Presidents of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Namibia, Nigeria, Mali, Algeria, Indonesia, Latvia, Qatar, Georgia, Mozambique, and the foreign ministers of Costa Rica and India.

The following speech, as reported by the Iranian News Agency, was delivered by Iranian President Seyyed Mohammad Khatami. It has been slightly edited, and subheads have been added:

The General Assembly of the United Nations has only recently endorsed the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran for dialogue among civilizations and cultures. Nevertheless, this proposal is attracting, day after day, increased support from numerous academic institutions and political organizations. In order to comprehend the grounds for this encouraging reception, it is imperative to take into account the prevailing situation in our world today, and to ponder the reasons for widespread discontentment with it. It is, of course, only natural for justice-seeking and altruistic human beings to feel discontented with the status quo. The Millennium Summit at the United Nations provides the international community with a unique and unprecedented opportunity to discuss political aspects of the calamities that afflict humanity in our day and age. Today, in this esteemed gathering, allow me instead to begin with certain historical, theoretical, and, for the most part, non-political grounds for the call to a dialogue among civilizations.

One of the reasons that I can only briefly touch upon today is the exceptional geographical location of Iran: a situation connecting various cultural and civilizational domains of Asia to Europe. This remarkable situation has