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## II. America and Russia Discuss the Coincidence of Opposites

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Schiller Institute International Conference  
June 26-27, 2021

### For the Common Good of All People, Not Rules Benefiting the Few!

*We present below key excerpts from Panel 4, “The Coincidence of Opposites: The Only Truly Human Thought Process.”*

Dr. Joycelyn Elders

### We Need Health Care Systems, Not Sick Care Systems

*Dr. Joycelyn Elders, M.D., served as the 15th U.S. Surgeon General. She is one of the co-founders of the Committee for the Coincidence of Opposites. This is an edited transcript of her remarks to the fourth panel, “The Coincidence of Opposites: The Only Truly Human Thought Process,” of the Schiller Institute’s June 26-27 conference, “For the Common Good of All People, Not Rules Benefiting the Few.”*



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Dr. Joycelyn Elders

disease from becoming an epidemic. It means preventing an epidemic from becoming a pandemic. It means guaranteeing that no human being, no matter how poor, no matter what country they live in, is left behind in the treatment and prevention of this virus.

Our progress has been substantial, with the rapid development and deployment of several vaccines in the United States and internationally. However, if we look around the world, the battle is not over. The virus is raging in Africa. And

Good afternoon! I’m very happy to be able to be joined by Dr. David Satcher this afternoon for this very important Schiller conference. Greetings to all of you from all over world who are assembled today to forge a future for the common good of all people.

Over a year ago, I was called upon by Helga and others to help initiate the Committee for the Coincidence of Opposites, to address the pandemic and famine crisis that’s going on all over the world. I stated at that time that the biggest problem, in my view, is that we have a *sick care system*, not a *health care system*. A health care system involves the prevention of disease. It involves preventing, through public health measures, a

nobody knows exactly what the figures are because there’s no testing. In South Africa, a third wave of infection has begun. In the last two weeks, it has doubled, going from 3,700 daily infections to over 7,500 daily infections, and deaths have increased 48%. In Brazil, more than 500,000 people have died of COVID. There are reports that the new delta variant that is sweeping the country is more than 10-20 times more infectious than previous strains.

This all illustrates what we said last year: This pandemic will not be defeated until the whole world is cared for; not just providing vaccines, but with a full modern health system in every nation. This emphati-

cally includes, as I've stressed in my past presentations with the Schiller Institute, that we must have water, food, and energy, as well as hospitals, skilled medical personnel, and community health care workers.

We *must* address the pandemic, but as the true mark of success, we must prevent future pandemics from occurring. To accomplish this, the whole world must come together now. We must engage young people in this mission. Let us all work together in the spirit of co-

operation, not confrontation. There is still a lot of work to be done, and we must try and get it done.

This virus has opened our eyes: We now have 20/20 vision. So, as we visualize the problem, conceptualize issues, and actualize the needs, to be done, let's get together and make it happen. Not watch it happen, or let it happen, but we must make it happen. We must get together: Let's start now. We've got to be successful: We can't afford to fail. Thank you.

Dr. David Satcher

## Let us Create the Conditions in which People Can Be Healthy

*Dr. David Satcher, served as the 16th Surgeon General of the United States, and before that, as U.S. Assistant Secretary of Health, and Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. This is an edited transcript of his presentation to the fourth panel, "The Coincidence of Opposites: The Only Truly Human Thought Process," of the Schiller Institute's June 26-27 conference, "For the Common Good of All People, Not Rules Benefiting the Few." Subheads have been added.*



Dr. David Satcher

I'll just say a word about some of the opportunities that I've had, to work in public health. I recently spoke to students at Harvard and at Drew University about the highs and lows of public health. Invariably, when I think about the high points of public health, I think about immunizations. I think about the common efforts that started really, I think, around 1796 and resulted in the eradication of smallpox in 1978. Then, of course, we have launched major efforts, as Dr. Elders pointed out, in terms of trying to eradicate

I'm delighted to be able to join you, and to be here with Dr. Elders and members of the Schiller Institute. I'm very impressed with your work, and what you're trying to do in the world to make the world a better place. I agree with Dr. Elders, that that should be built around public health. Medicine is very important. I've spent a lifetime in medicine, but I believe that the critical issue is how do we come together in public health.

### The Collective Efforts of Society

I like the definition of "public health" which says that "public health" is the collective efforts of a society to create the conditions in which people can be healthy. When you think about it, whether we're talking about COVID-19 or any other challenge to our health—including the epidemic of violence and famine—we have to somehow bring people together collectively, and work toward a common goal. That's what public health challenges us to do.

polio. I think we're on our way.

It is interesting, of course, that one of the barriers to eradicating polio has very little to do with medicine, and more to do with violence. As long as there is fighting in Afghanistan and Pakistan, we're not going to be able to eliminate polio from those areas, because we can't get vaccines to children there. So, it is true, as you pointed out Dr. Elders, there is a need for a coming together of people across political lines and the other things that we allow to divide us, and to work for the common good, especially of children.

Dr. Elders mentioned that when I was director of the CDC in the mid-1990s, before I became Surgeon General, we made a decision that we were going to launch a major effort to eradicate polio. We had seen the success of the eradication of smallpox around 1978, and we decided that it was time to take on polio. So, we set out. We targeted India and Africa. India, at the time, had the largest number of persons with polio, and Africa was very close.