Strictly Confidential

UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20520–7250

Oct 4

Dear Hillary –

What an event in Newark! So pleased to be asked to share it with you.

Per our discussion, attached are brief reports I did for Sec. Christopher on Beijing + the Orthodox Church. We can do some wonderfully creative follow-up.

Shall get you speech ideas on Beijing follow up in a couple of weeks. Let me know whenever we can help.

Best,

Strobe

United States Department of State

Under Secretary of State
for Global Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520-7250

October 11, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: See Attached Distribution List

FROM: G - Timothy E. Wirth

SUBJECT: Religious Convocation on the Environment

I recently participated in a remarkable Symposium: "Revelation and the Environment - AD 95 to 1995." Convened by Bartholomew I (the Ecumenical Patriarch of the Orthodox Church) and Prince Philip (Chairman of the World Wildlife Fund) the Symposium brought together 200 religious leaders, public policymakers and scientific experts to discuss global environmental concerns.

This event marked a new relationship between religious and scientific leaders, and between leaders of the Christian Church and their congregations. It was an important step in the long-running effort to unite religious and scientific leaders who share similar concerns about the environment, but whose historical antagonism often has blocked collaboration. The religious leaders in attendance were deeply committed to environmental protection as a major theme to emphasize in the years ahead and will be taking this message to congregations all over the world.

Eight years ago, then Senator Gore and I attended a first meeting of science and religious leaders, convened in Moscow by General Secretary Gorbachev to discuss the environment. Later, we helped to bring together a group at St. John the Divine in New York City to develop an American response. Senator Gore convened "The Joint Appeal" in 1992 to further illustrate and formalize the relationship and the urgency of the environmental crisis, and has since led many groups on this issue.

Now a powerful effort is being led for the first time by the leader of a very important church. The opportunities are significant and must be pursued:

1. Regional Environmental Efforts

Perhaps the most environmentally devastated area on earth is Central and Eastern Europe and large parts of Russia. Here is a potentially powerful ally in the battle to change behavior and development patterns and return to a greater sense of stewardship of God's Creation. We should search for ways we might help this effort, which includes the leadership of the Orthodox Church in Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Serbia, Finland, Georgia and Armenia. Targets of opportunity might include the Black Sea, the pending oil shipments, and the Eastern Mediterranean.

2. A Broader Ecumenicism

This enlightened Patriarch has the potential of alerting and energizing other leadership. In June he met with Pope John Paul II and together they appealed for "a determined effort to solve the current burning problem of ecology." His All Holiness Bartholomew hopes to visit the U.S. next year and at that time should meet with the Vice President and the leaders of the Joint Appeal.

3. Domestic Efforts

Use this momentum to further the work of the Joint Appeal in the U.S., to further engage committed communities of faith in a greater sense of urgency about the ecological crisis facing the world. Vice President Gore is spearheading much of this effort.

I will be exploring various ways in which we might be able to follow-up and would appreciate any thoughts or suggestions you might have. Your reference to the environment in your United Nations speech was welcome, and we are also working on other ways to increase your profile and that of the Department on this issue.

Attachments:

Tab 1 - Symposium Attendees
Tab 2 - Conceptual Background

Symposium Attendees Included:

- Patriarchs of most of the Orthodox Churches
- Cardinal and President of Papal Committee for the Jubilee of the Year 2000
- The Bishop of London
- Chairman of Religion Department, Columbia, representing the Dalai Lama
- The incoming Chair of the American Academy for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)
- The Chair of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)
- Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, Dokuz Eylul University
- Founder Director, New Zealand Natural Heritage Foundation
- Professor of Economics and Philosophy, University of Bristol
- President, Board of Directors, The Sierra Club
- Director, Ethiopian EPA
- Director, Ocean Resources, NOAA
- Professor of Medicine, University of Istanbul
- Chair, Organizing Committee for Habitat
- Professor of Law, Hebrew University
- Vice President, Western Samoa Umbrella for Women NGO's
- Metropolitan of Pergamum
- Vice Chair, IUCN Commission on National Parks and Protected Areas
- Chairman of the Board, Koc Holding (a Fortune 500 Company)
- Environmental Correspondent, Independent on Sunday
- Director, OECD Environment Programme
- Member of Jamaica Privy Council and Former Chair of the Group of 77
- Founder, Bulgarian "Blue Flag" Movement
- Member, Georgia Greens
- Chief Scientist, Center for Marine Conservation
- Director, Research Foundation, Dehra Dun
- And Many Others

Conceptual Background:

Ending at the small cave high on the island of Patmos where St. John wrote the Book of Revelation 1900 years ago, this pilgrimage of "modern day prophets" marked a new relationship between man and his environment, between religious and scientific leaders, and between leaders of the Christian Church and their congregations. Referring to the large roll-on, roll-off auto ferry on which the symposium was held as "a latter day Ark, the Patriarch (first among equals with all the Orthodox churches) warned that environmental destruction is a sin; we must revise our understanding of sin to include crimes against nature; and pollution, along with nuclear destruction, can be a possible cause of the end of the world:

> "We are use to regarding sin mainly in social terms. But there is also a sin against nature. Evil is not only a matter for human beings but affects the entire Creation. This morality still awaits to find its place in our Christian consciences."

> "The Book of Revelation is full of references to the consequences of evil for the natural environment. The ecological crisis, more than any other problem of humanity, reveals the truth that the world forms one unity and one community and that even the slightest violation of nature in one part of the world leads inevitably to consequence affecting the rest of the world."

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ADDRESS
OF HIS ALL HOLINESS THE ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH
B A R T H O L O M E W
UPON THE OPENING OF THE INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL SYMPOSIUM AT SEA

"Revelation and the Environment, AD 95 - 1995"

September 22, 1995

Welcome.

With the blessings of God, we have assembled like a scene from the Book of Revelation. We come from many cultural tribes, tongues, nations and faiths, but we share a common concern for the future of the planet and the quality of human life and relationships throughout the earth.

We are assembled on a kind of latter day ark, which is itself a symbol which would have delighted St. John. As we begin our voyage, the ship faces us with our essential interdependence. Here, in microcosm, is a truth which we need to bring to our thinking about the future of our world. If there should be a leak in steerage or distress in any part of the ship, the passengers dining in first class will not for long escape the consequences.

We shall be voyaging to Patmos on the sea of possibility from which life emerged. It is a time of profound cultural change and, at this moment we are mindful of the Spirit of God, which in the beginning moved upon the face of the waters and which continues to move.

We have been brought together by a memory. Nineteen hundred years ago on the island of Patmos, St. John received the Revelation which forms the final book of the New Testament. This is not intended, however, to be a simple anniversary or an academic conference about an ancient text. Revelation begins and ends with the good news of the *Parousia*, the coming of Christ. At the climax of the New Testament, there is no full stop, but an opening to the work of the Holy Spirit in the future and the promise of a new creation. A new heaven and a new

earth; a new community in a holy city; a river of life and a tree with leaves for the healing of nations. It seemed appropriate to celebrate this anniversary with a Conference about our common home. St. John's vision is of a united human family -- every nation and kindred singing a new song.

Much of the Bible is addressed to those with ears to hear, but the Revelation to John is also to those with eyes to see. The story is told in symbols and archetypes.

The root of the English word symbol is in the Greek idea of bringing together fragments of truth to achieve a more profound understanding than would otherwise be available by analysis. Symbols help us to comprehend the relations between our sometimes fragmentary and fugitive perceptions of reality.

The great symbols are not devised to illlustrate some thesis we wish to advance. They arise rather from some deep level of conciousness and are disclosed to our reason. They have the power to communicate in a way that generates energy. Two such symbols have been entrusted to our generation -- the Cloud and the Globe.

In this year of anniversaries, we are all deeply aware of the mushroom cloud which on the Sacred Feast of Transfiguration, August 6, 1945, opened a radically new chapter in human history. The cloud is a symbol known to the Bible, and although the mushroom cloud is reflective of man's transmutation, it should not be understood in an entirely negative way. For the first time in history, by unravelling some of the forces which lie at the heart of creation, we have acquired the power to destroy all human life on the planet. By the same act, the world community is under threat. The work which lies ahead for all those who love life is to translate this world community which exists as an object under threat, more and more into a subject of promise and hope.

In practice, of course, we extrapolate and anticipate in a single act which is one of the reasons why science and theology need to be in dialogue at this particular moment of transition. Symbols of the End-Time combine with what we consider possible to create a field of action and to fill it with either hope or despair. Science saves faith from fantasy. Faith generates the energy for a new world. We face a need to communicate in ways that release healthful energies for restraint and change. Moralising exhortations about the common good have limited usefulness. *"Mere appeals to ethical fraternity will never evoke in man that age old power which drives the migrating birds across the ocean."* (Jung)

I hope and expect that this Conference will increase our understanding of the various ways in which we may perceive and engage with the world around us. Together, as Orthodox Patriarchs, Metropolitans and Archbishops, we seek your expert counsel, suggestions and input so that Orthodox worldwide can better contribute to the common front being forged by intrepid scientists, environmentalists and theologians who desire not only a pollution free world -- but a *"healing of nations"* as well. Indeed, our common future depends on developing a way to perceive and participate in the world which will complement the analytical approach with an ecological awareness of entities in their various relationships.

The Statement of Orthodoxy and the Ecological Crisis published under the aegis of our predecessor of blessed memory, Patriarch Dimitrios, reaffirmed that the monastic and ascetic traditions of the Orthodox Church have important insights for us. They develop a sensitivity to the suffering and beauty of all creation. *"Love all God's creation"* urged Dostoevsky, *"the whole of it and every grain of sand. Love every leaf and every ray of God's light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything you will perceive the divine mystery in things."*

It is a life-creating tradition, which beckons all to become a new creation in Christ, by being born of *"water and spirit,"* so that all matter, all life, become sanctified. For sanctification, *theosis*, to become real, there must be a *metanoia*, a changing of the mind, reflective of the sanctity of tears. It is not a mere poetic coincidence, that a contemporary Christian poet describes the rivers, seas and oceans as *"a gathering of tears"* bearing witness to man's adventure and struggling journey. So too, the Fathers of the desert considered *"the baptism of tears"* as a lofty blessing empowering all men and women who seek *"to come to the knowledge of the truth."* Therefore, instead of asking for wisdom and strength and holiness, the angels of the desert asked for tears of repentence in their sojourn and struggle for salvation.

The ascetic tradition also offers a celebratory use of the resources of creation in a spirit of *"enkrateia"* and liberation from the passions. Within this tradition, many human beings have experienced the joy of contemplation which contrasts with the necessarily fleeting and illusory pleasure of relating to the world as an object for consumption.

At the same time, we would want to celebrate the resources offered by the international community of scientists and journalists. As we enter the Mediterranean, it is encouraging to recall the achievements of the Med Plan detailed by Peter Haas in his book Saving the Mediterranean (Columbia, 1990). It is easy to be cynical about the impact of scientific experts and communicators on the calculations of nation states, but the Med Plan and its development ought to reinforce the urgency with which we seek to build up a network of personal relationships at even higher levels. We hope that this Conference and its aftermath will serve as a major contributor to this growing family. The Orthodox Church is particularly well represented in parts of the world where *"the earth has been hurt,"* to use a phrase from Revelation. In a perversion of science, would-be God-slayers have laid waste to great tracts of territory. In these countries, the experience of the martyrs which St. John describes is also very contemporary. We pray that the energy which comes from giving up life for the sake of God and His Church will flow into a life-giving stream for the benefit of the entire community of mankind.

Another symbol has been given to us which points in this hopeful direction, although being more recent it has sunk more profoundly into human consciousness. The earth-rise photograph taken in 1969 from the Apollo spacecraft shows the entire planet sapphire blue and beautiful as no human being since the dawn of history had seen it. This angelic view is foreshadowed and enlarged in the Book of Revelation when John is shown the heaven opened and he sees a great multitude out of every nation, rejoicing before the throne of God.

It may be that the choice between life and death always being put to us by the spirit is in our day being translated into a choice between one world or none. Theology and science ought to be partners in this work. We ought not divide the one reality and seek--as one theologian has expressed it: *"peaceful co-existence at the price of mutual irrelevance."* (J. Moltmann, God in Creation)

We recognise however that many may have doubts about the possibility of traffic between the world view expressed in modern science and the visionary material in Revelation. How can Revelation's vision of hope, sustained in the midst of passages portraying terrible destruction, be distinguished from a rather unconvincing whistling in the dark to keep the spirits up in a time of danger and change?

One approach is to consider the various ways in which our languages enable us to contemplate the future in as many languages as possible. We must contrast between the **future**--that which is entirely constructed out of past and present. and

which will itself become past--and the **future** which, beyond our control, will come upon us. In Greek, *"ta mellonta"* is what will be and *"parousia,"* which is frequently used in the New Testament, suggests a future coming. There is a similar distinction in Latin languages derived from it between *futurus* and *adventus.*

"Futurus" suggests a future entirely constructed out of past and present and, as such, it is a stimulus to planning. Futurologists of this school are those who rely on extrapolations from present trends. Often, of course, the collision between trends makes exact predictions, but there is another problem with this approach to the future. Prolonging and projecting the present usually endorses present patterns of power and ownership and suppresses the alternative possibilities which the future holds.

"Parousia" alerts us to what is on its way to the present. In the Book of Revelation, Jesus Christ is hailed as "the one who is and who was and who is to come" when the series might logically have been completed by him who will be. A sense of the future as *"Parousia"* stimulates the anticipation by which we attune ourselves to something ahead, whether through fear or hope. These foretastes, symbolic sketches and attunements are part of every perception of the unknown which we explore by reference to ultimate criteria like happiness or unhappiness, life or death.

The climax of these celebrations will be the Holy Liturgy on Patmos. The liturgy is a work which binds human beings together in the Spirit of Our Lord Jesus Christ and liberates them to hope and work for His future coming in the world. Not everyone in this Symposium shares the Christian faith, but we trust that we are all here around a common table like the Symposiasts of ancient times, because we all know that we are on the threshold of a new day. Conscious of the threat of nuclear destruction and environmental pollution, we shall move toward one world or none. We hope that we are assembled as those who are weary of defining their own tradition principally by excluding others. For many generations the Patriarch of Constantinople has occupied what is known as the Ecumenical Throne. There is in that title a reaching forward to the End-Time of the healing of the nations, when there will be communion between God and human beings in a new heaven and a new earth *"and there shall be no curse anymore."* We pray that this Conference may make a contribution to mobilizing all people of good will in our world and bringing closer together the day foreseen in the vision of Patmos.

May God bless one and all! Thank you.

What Is At Stake - The Living Resources

Revelation and Environment: The Seas as a Paradigm
22-25 September 1995

Jane Lubchenco
Oregon State University
Corvallis OR, USA

(Draft for presentation)

The plants, animals and microbes of the oceans are rich beyond imagining. Life below the surface is wondrously diverse, exotic and marvelious. It used to be thought that the seas were so vast that little could affect the whole of them. The phrase "Dilution is the solution to pollution" captures the old general attitudes toward most acitivites affecting the ocean. The oceans are vast, bountiful and infinitely resilient -- or so we thought.

A series of recent events has revealed how misplaced these attitudes are. We are learning that the oceans, especiallly coastal areas, are under increasing and serious threat from multiple sources. We do not yet know the full extent of the probelms, but marine scientists are in strong agreement that we are faced with a crisis of unprecedented complexity, proportions and consequences.

We have witnessed multiple **SYMPTOMS** which reflect numerous problems. We know there are a number of activities which pose **THREATS** to life in the seas. We are beginning to discover the **CONSEQUENCES** of some of these activites and the **CHALLENGES** in dealing with them. Let me take each of these in turn: symptoms, threats, consequences, challenges.

THE SYMPTOMS - There are clear signals that we are faced with multiple problems. I'll briefly mention the most serious of them.

1. The seventeen major oceanic fisheries are all now being fished at or beyond capacity and nine of them are in a state of decline. The world-wide seafood production per person from 1950 to 1988 increased by 128% but from 1988 to 1993 decreased by 9%.
2. Non-commercial gleaning of seaweeds, shellfish and fish from local shores which provides a significant amount of the nutrition to many peoples around the world is also declining precipitously.
3. Unexpected, dramatic mass mortalities of many marine species are reported:marine mammal die offs, fish kills, mass mortality of sea urchins, abalone, seagrasses and others.
4. The incidence of coral reef bleaching appears to be increasing.
5. Water quality in coastal regions is seriously impaired and in many places represents a critical human health hazard.
6. Increases in litter and trash, especially plastics, are obvious to most everyone.

7. There appear to be an increase in blooms of toxic algae, such as those producing red tides, specifically increases in the magnitude, frequency and extent of these blooms. The consequences range from human health hazards such as paralytic shellfish poisoning to aquacultural die-offs to reduced mortality of fishes and marine mammals.

These symptoms vary considerably in space and time; some are well documented; others less so.

These symptoms are of obvious concern. Most of the world's population lives within 80 km of the coast. Coral reefs, estuaries, kelp forests and rocky shores are among the most productive ecosystems on Earth. Coastal fisheries are the richest in the world, with 75% of the world's fish catch coming from coastal waters.

Both land-based and ocean-based activities are concentrated at the coastal margins: tourism, recreation, fishing, mariculture, domestic and industrial waste disposal, military activities, transportation, mining, and energy industries.

This plethora of **activities**, the increasing **migration** of people around the world to coastal regions, the explosive **growth** of the human population and the **overconsumption** of resources are causing the changes we see reflected in the symptoms.

THE THREATS What are the most serious threats? A number of recent scientific assessments list the following most important agents of present and potential change. (The order below does not imply relative importance among the threats.)

1. fisheries operations
2. chemical pollution
3. eutrophication
4. alteration of physical habitat (e.g., from trampling, trawling, dredging, drilling, dynamiting, building and dumping)
5. invasion of exotic species
6. global climatic change
7. increases in UV-B radiation as a result of stratospheric ozone depletion.

Of these threats, pollution and climatic change have received much attention. There is no doubt that both of these are of critical importance. At the same time, overfishing, habitat destruction and introduced species are in some places more serious or more immediate.

The magnitude of the problem of introduced species is only recently becoming known. Some species are transported around the globe in the ballast water of ships. It has been estimated that more than 3000 species a day are in motion inside the giant aquaria that serve as ballast tanks in ocean-going vesssels. These introduced species have the potential to completely alter the trophic

structure and ecosystem dynamics of bays and estuaries into which ballast water is discharged.

I draw your attention specifically to the loss of biological diversity resulting from habitat destruction and introduced species. Loss of biodiversity is of particular concern because it is irreversible and because people are so dependent upon the living resources of the ocean.

THE CONSEQUENCES. You have heard seven major symptoms and seven major threats. What are the likely consequences of these problems?

Marine life has already been altered to a large extent, sometimes with dramatic consequences.

In considering consequences, we tend to focus primarily on alterations to the **GOODS** which we reap from the oceans,. Changes in the **ECOLOGICAL SERVICES** provided by ecosystems are also of great importance. Let me explain:

Ecological systems provide **GOODS** such as food, fiber, fuel, medicines, chemicals and genes which people use or trade. Ecological systems also provide **SERVICES**, for example:

* kelp forests and estuaries provide habitats and nursery areas for many economically important fishes
* oysters filter and cleanse the water of bays and estuaries
* kelp forests, mangroves and coral reefs protect coastal shores from erosion during storms
* some phytoplankton may play a key role in regulating climate.

These ecological services, also called ecosystem services, are provided free of charge. They are largely outside our systems of economic valuation. They are of critical importance to us, but are largely unappreciated.

A recently completed international scientific assessment called the Global Biodiversity Assessment and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme, draws attention to the links between biodiversity and the continued provision of these ecosystem services. This is an exciting new area of research with much promise for providing useful information for policy and management.

The suite of activities mentioned earlier is threatening both the ecological goods and the ecological services of the seas. Even fisheries that were once thought to be inexaustible, for example, on he Georges Banks or the Grand Banks, are collapsing. Oyster populations in the Chesapeake Bay that once filtered the entire Chesapeake estuary once a week now filter it only once a year. Stock depletion from overfishing and disease have taken their toll not only on the food provided by oysters but the services of water filtration and cleansing which they provide.

CHALLENGES. In light of these consequences, what are the challenges?

The changes we are precipitating are unprecedented in their magnitude, kind and rate. Making predictions about likely outcomes of different possible management or policy options is extremely dificult. This uncertainty, coupled with incomplete baseline information about many systems presents enormous challenges. I echo and emphasize Professor Norman Myers' earlier points about the future holding surprises and uncertainty. This uncertainty and the likelly irreversible consequences of many paths should make us much more careful and cautious.

The best possible scientific information should be readily available and easily understood by a wide variety of possible users. In some cases, we have insufficient scientific information to make informed decisions. Research to obtain urgenly needed information is appropriate. In many other cases, sufficient information exists but is not communicated adequately or is not used. New mechanisms are needed to disseminate scientific information more efficiently and effectively and to utilize it more appropriately.

Relative to scientific knowledge of the oceans, it would be useful to have a comprehensive, international scientific assessment of the state of the world's oceans. Such an assessment could be quite useful in providing a consensus statement to ground discussions about a wide variety of the topics considered above. We might even be so bold as to suggest it be named OIKOS for Our International Knowledge of the Ocean State. ("Oikos" of couse is the root for our words for "ecology" and "economics.")

CONCLUSIONS. I have tried to summarize some of the symptoms, threats, consequences and challenge concerning the living resources of the seas. I was asked to address the question: "What is at stake?" My answer is, very simply, "Our future, and that of our children and grandchildren. Why? Because a sustainable biosphere requires a living ocean.

Moreover, it is clear to me that

the seas are loved by many,
needed by all but
cared for by none.

Thus far, we have failed to be good stewards of the oceans. Based on the knowledge summarized above, we have an urgent responsibility to work together to be better stewards, in short, to act.

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Note: The *Global Biodiversity Assessment* is published by Cambridge University Press and is due to be available in late 1995.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION AND THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

By Metropolitan John of Pergamon

INTRODUCTION

Ninenteen hundred years have passed since , according to tradition as well as scientific research , the book of the Apocalypse was written at the island of Patmos by St. John. During this long period of time this book has never ceased to exercise fascination over the minds of its readers, both within and outside the Church. This is due to the style as well as the content of the book. The style is marked by heavy and complex symbolism, which lends itself to uncountable interpretations allowing human imagination to "get wild" and often beyond control , while the content refers to such upheavals and radical changes in the existing historical as well as natural order , that speaking of "Apocalypse " has become identical with uttering the name of the worst catastrophe that we can refer to.

All this explains a great deal of what Church history tells us about this book . The hesitation of the official Church to include it in the Scriptural Canon for many centuries is one of the notable facts . The other is the remarkable silence imposed on this book as is evident from the lack of Patristic commentaries on it for about 8 centuries. Finally, the sudden and widespread exploitation of the book for the support of all sorts of religious ideas, usually marked with fanaticism and extraordinary psychological manifestations in the MIddle Ages, particularly in the West , has given this book a mysterious character. Even among the Orthodox of our time, in spite of the true spirit of Orthodox tradition to be found in the Greek Fathers, a fanatical rhetoric is being spread among the faithful, particularly in connection with the symbolism of the number 666, that makes of the Apocalypse an almost terrifying and in some cases irrational text.

As an alternative to this frenetical approach Biblical scholarship in the last few decades has enabled us to look at this book with more socer eyes. Thus, with

regard to its symbolic images we know that they all come from Jewish prophetic and apocalyptic language and they are meant to cover up references to contemporary historical realities - especially the ones related to Rome and the Roman empire and its persecutions of the early Christians - so that the book might not provoke the wrath of the civil authorities . These symbolisms were, therefore , not meant to be "mysticall" and "apocryphal" in a religious or " Pythagorean" sense, but vehicles of communication among the faithful of the early communities versed in the Jewish tradition and in its later apocalyptic imagery.

The other important point that has emerged from the Biblical scientific research is that the main symbolic imagery of the book comes from the liturgical experience of its readers, particularly in the form of the Eucharist. One can say without exaggeration that the book of the Apocalypse is a eucharistic liturgy or a conmmentary on such a liturgy. Without the liturgy this book remains incomprehensible or is totally and seriously misunderstood.

Finally, it must be noted and underlined that it is the theology of the book that matters in the end, not the symbolisms and the imagery it uses. The book must be approached hermeneutically, i.e. with reference to its diachronical existential significance. The book intends to put forward a message or messages of an ultimate significance for the life of the world, and it is to these messages that we must turn our attention.

This last point introduces us into our specific subject. What does the book of the Apocalypse have to tell us about the ecological crisis of our time? What is the message or the messages it brings to us, as we read it in the actual existential context in which we find ourselves? We can only answer this question if we try to dig deep into the theology of the book. And we can only do that in the limited space at our disposal by bringing out and briefly discussing some of the fundamental theological principles underlying this book. Such principles bearing directly on ecology are in my view the following.

I. <u>History must be viewed eschatologically</u>

This principle is manifold. One of its aspects is that all historical reality has or must have some kind of <u>ultimate</u> significance. Nothing is or should be wasted in history. Even evil contributes, albeit negatively, to the final purpose of

history. It is a fundamental Biblical belief shared also by the author of the Apocalypse that Satan is a servant of God's purposes; he is used by God to bring about the fulfilment of His will (cf. the story of Job). Later on in the Patristic period and under the influence of Platonism evil came to be regarded as μή όν, i.e. a mere negation or absence of the good. But even then the faith survived that all that happens in history, whether good or evil, forms part of a purpose which is to be revealed in the end. The prophet - and John certainly claims to be a prophet - is given by God the charisma to unveil before us the ultimate significance of actual historical events. Prophesy makes no sense without history, since it is nothing but a commentary and an interpretation of actual, contemporary history. Equally, history ceases to be history unless it has a meaning and a future, i.e. unless it is somehow linked with prophesy.

This eschatological approach to history, therefore, involves an apocalypsis. The word in Greek means uncovering, unveiling, no doubt of the ultimate significance of historical events. Why did the term "apocalypsis" acquire the meaning of "catastrophe"? Simply because the uncovering of many historical events , notably those of an evil , i.e negative and destructive character , will be marked with the " revelation " of the negativity of these events and their failure to survive eternally. Apocalypsis is therefore the final attempt of evil to impose itself on history as a meaningful reality. It is this that makes evil so powerful and so threatening and horrible at the "apocalyptic" time. The uncovering or "apocalypsis" of evil, which in history is very often mistaken for good, is a necessary aspect of eschatology due to the factor of freedom that lies behind all evil. This makes apocalypsis take the form of a clash between good and evil, a real battle between God and Satan.

This means that history, viewed eschatologically, requires and calls for purification, for a krisis. Here again we have a Greek term with a double meaning. Krisis means passing judgement, i.e. uncovering or revealing evil for what it trully is, but it also significantly enough means what in English came to be called crisis, i.e. a dangerous and difficult moment in life and history, something negative like the word "apocalypse". Apocalypse and crisis, both form part of the eschatological view of history, because such a view consists basically in the understanding of history as a meaningful reality, the realm of exercise of freedom and a movement towards a peras, an end.

Now, the purpose of prophesy is not simply to satisfy foreknowledge, but to call us to repentance so that by knowing already now what the final outcome of evil will be, we may prevent evil from deceiving us to mistake it for good, and treat it already now as a negative and destructive force. Prophesy in the Bible is not meant to provide us with knowledge, but to make us act, by changing our attitudes and behaviour ; it is like all other charisms for the edification, i.e. the building up of the community (Paul's I Cov. 12-13) of the Church and the world at large. Certainly this is the intention of the author of the book of the Apocalypse. It was meant to edify the community of the Church and through it the world as a whole.

II. History must be viewed cosmologically.

One of the novelties of the book of the Apocalypse is that it introduces cosmology into eschatology. It is commonly accepted that the Hebrew mind was conditioned historically, while the Greeks took on the whole a more cosmological interest in their way of thinking. The Semitic mind was inclined towards the observation of the historical events (God's acts in history) whereas the Greek mind was shaped by the observation of nature. With all the qualifications that one should add to this general and generalized thesis its main claim remains true. Judaism in its eschatology was interested basically in the final outcome of the history of Israel - and the "nations" that were expected to be incorporated into it - and not so much in the final outcome of the natural world. The author of the Apocalypse, although brought up in the spirit of Judeo-Christian apocalypticism is also interested in the natural world, not only as a source from which to draw his symbolisms but also as a reality in itself. He describes the effect of the last days on the natural elements and he speaks of a "new heaven" and a "new earth" as part of the eschatological vision. This is extremely important. It introduces - for the first time - what we may call cosmological prophesy as part of the Judeo - Christian prophetic tradition. A Christian is now called to think of the Kingdom of God not only in terms of the salvation of the human being, but also in terms of the survival and well being of the entire creation. This did not prove to be an easy matter in the course of Church history. Already in the 3rd century AD Origen had put this eschatology into doubt by teaching that the material creation has been the outcome of the fall , and that it is the spiritual world that will finally survive. Methodius of Olympus in the beginning of the 4th century wrote a treatise to refute this view and stressed the belief that God created the material world not in order to let it perish in the end but in order to see it survive and live forever. Yet, about a

century later in the West the great theologian Augustine saw the kingdom of God as a place where only human souls would exist, and the following he has enjoyed in this position of his has been persistent throughout the rest of Christian history, at least in Western Christianity. This anthropocentricism (we could call it anthropomonism) in Christian eschatology must have contributed a great deal to the appearance of the ecological problem. The cosmological dimension of anthropology was stressed by theologians such as Maximus the Confessor in the East (7th century AD) , but the tendency to think anthropocentrally has been also observable in that part of Christianity , even up to our own time. One of the hardest things that our Christian tradition is called to do is to replace its anthropomonism with a cosmologically conditioned view of the human being . This is of paramount importance for ecology.

If we take seriously the cosmological propheticism of Apocalypse , we shall realise that evil is not only a matter for the human being but affects the entire creation. To be sure, evil presupposes evil and as such it can only be generated by free persons. Yet, once it comes into effect evil permeates and upsets the whole of the created order. It is this that makes Paul write the well - known " ecological " words in Romans 7 : " Creation groans and suffers together with us awaiting the glory of God's children ". The book of the Apocalypse is full of references to the consequences that evil has for the natural environment. Decay and death as well as sorrow , pain etc are experienced by <u>all</u> creatures together with humans. Equally the overcoming of such evils is expected to affect all creatures , and not just human beings. Any pain or suffering inflicted upon non- human beings is no less evil than it is when applied to humans. Cosmological prophesy and cosmological eschatology involve an understanding of evil that embraces nature ; they lead to <u>a new concept of morality</u> that goes well beyond what we are normally accustomed to regard as moral and immoral. This morality still awaits to find its place in our Christian consciences .

III. <u>History as well as cosmology have a universal character</u>

One of the basic characteristics of the text of the Apocalypse is its <u>universalistic eschatology .</u> By the term " universalistic " we do not wish to refer to theories of universal salvation or <u>apokatastasis</u> , but to the simple fact that the author of the Apocalypse sees the ultimate significance and culmination of history as involving all nations and peoples of the world. The

Lamb of God , i.e the ultimately victorious " servant of God " of the book of Isaiah , identified in Christian faith with our Lord Jesus Christ, is presented by John as the only person worthy to unseal the book of history and reveal its ultimate meaning " Because he was slain and bought us for God in his blood from every race and language and people and nation " (5,9) . (The 7 Churches of Asia Minor to which the book is addressed are also regarded as representing the Church universal).

The importance of this universal eschatology for our subject hardly needs to be stressed. The ecological crisis more than any other problem of humanity reveals the truth that the world forms one unity and one community , and that even the slightest violation of nature in one part of the world leads inevitably to consequences affecting the rest of the world. All peoples and all nations are bound up with the same fate from the point of view of ecology. The book of Revelation with its universal eschatology unveils before us the ultimate solidarity of the human race and calls us to common action for the protection of the natural environment regardless of national , racial , social etc . differences. In the end we shall all be one because the world in which we live is one.

IV . The world is a Liturgy

The book of the Apocalypse is a liturgical book. By " liturgical " we mean that it takes a view of the world which bears the following characteristics :

a) it is a movement , a dynamic reality. It is not a static reproduction of a fixed prototype as it was conceived by classical Greek philosophy , particularly of the Platonic type. It is not recycled and reproduced eternally . Like the Byzantine Eucharistic liturgy , it is a movement towards an end , a final purpose . Its natural resources are neither inexhaustible nor purposeless ; They are " sacred " in that they have a sacred purpose for which they exist. Each of its elements, no matter how small, is sanctified through the sacred purpose that lies within it.

b) It is a relational reality. No part of this world can be conceived in itself apart from its relation with the other parts. The world is like a picture, this is how St.

John sees it in the Apocalypse, particularly in chapters 4-5. if you remove or destroy one bit of it, you destroy the whole picture.

c) The world needs a priest, someone who will freely unify it aand refer it back its Creator. Man is the "priest of creation", the one who is called to treat the world not only with respect but also with creativity so that its parts may form a whole and this whole may transcend its boundaries by being brought into relationship with God. This makes the hman being indispensable for creation. The axiom promoted by most ecologists that Man needs nature, but nature does not need Man does not have a place in a liturgical view of the world. On the contrary if we take seriously what natural science implies today in the what it calls "The Anthropic Principle" we must give to the human being an indispensable role in creation. This is in fact what accounts for the great responsibility that the human being has vis-à-vis creation. It is a responsibility not only for preservation but also for cultivation so that the ultimate meaning and purpose of creation may be revealed (apokalypsis) and fulfilled through the human being. Ecology must pass from the passive role of preservation to the active contribution to culture and science. This is a difficult task particularly in our time when Art as well as Science seem to show disrespect for nature in the tendency to draw the maximum out of nature for the sake of the welfare of the human being. And yet, ecology must seek ways of harmonizing itself with what is going on in Art as well as Science, just as the reverse should be the case, namely Art and Science must try to think and behave ecologically. This is what emerges from a liturgical view of the world, such as the one presented by the book of the Aopcalypse.

CONCLUSION

These are a few observations submitted to your attention by one who approaches the sacred book of the Apocalyspe with a theological interest and an ecological concern. They are not meant to exhaust a vast subject like the one indicated by the title of my paper. They are intended simply to underline some basic principles of the theology of the book of Revelation, which in my view are of special importance to those wishing to approach the ecological problem not at the surface but at its deepest level. For it is my firm conviction that the solution of the ecological problem is not simply a matter of

management and technicalities, important as these may be. It is a mattrer of changing our spiritual attitudes, indeed of changing our very world-view. For it is a certain world-view that has created and continues to sustain the ecological crisis, and not just a kind of behaviour that could be changed through ethics. The ecological problem is to a very great extent a theological matter involving religious beliefs and cosmological outlooks that need to be reviewed . The book of the Apocalypse points to such assumptions in a pertinent way.

In the first place Revelation calls us to think eschatologically. Unfortunately in our culture the eschatological outlook has been replaced by a present-dominated mentality. We have expelled the future from our way of thinking and we tend to exhaust our interest in what the world can offer us now. We even ignore and disregard the consequences that our actions may have for the next generation, not to speak of a further historical perspective. Apocalypse calls us to become future-oriented in our culture. This is extrermely important for ecology.

Secondly, Revelation calls us to become conscious of the crisis, the apocalyptic aspect of what is awaiting us. We tend to be complacent and to push to our subconscious the crisis that the world can face if it does not chnage its course. The author of the Apocalypse tells us that evil is a very serious matter and can lead to catastrophe. Repentance is needed, if the catastrophe is to be avoided.

Thirdly, the cosmological outlook which Revelation introduces into its concept of history calls us to revise our understanding of sin. We are used to regard sin mainly in anthropological or social terms. But there is also sin against nature, since evil upsets the created order as a whole. Cosmology must enter our ethic, and this calls for a revolution in our education, our sermons and our textbooks.

Fourthly, Revelation calls us to realize the universal character of the world's fate. The world is a unity and humanity is in the end but one. The slogan "one world or none" is supported by the theology of the Apocalypse.

Finally, the book of Revelation invites us to acquire a liturgical ethos in the broad sense of the term. We must behave "liturgically", i.e. treat the world as a sacred reality possessing ultimate meaning and entrusted to us not for

consumption but for cultivation and projection of this ultimate meaning. We are priests and not lords or even managers of creation.

This is "what the Spirit says to the Churches" at a time of ecological crisis. On our way to Patmos let us listen to the voice of the Apocalypse carefully . It is particularly relevant to our contemporary problems.

The Mediterranean Sea: A Microcosm That Presages the Future of Earth's Marine Realm

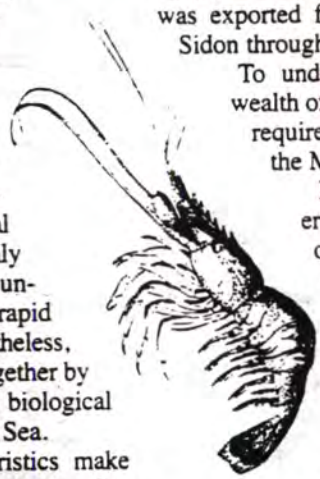
by E.A. Norse and S.A. Earle

If scientists and decision makers want to know the future condition of the world's marine environment, there is no better place to look than the Mediterranean Sea. Indeed, the Mediterranean typifies the prospects for and impediments to effective stewardship of the world's seas and oceans. Civilizations developed on or near its shores some 5,000 years ago, so whatever effects humankind has on the world—due to logging, hunting, agriculture, water projects, cities, industry, trade, and warfare—there has been an especially long time for the impact to be felt in the Mediterranean region.

Moreover, the Mediterranean basin—home of the first nation states—is now divided into nations with widely divergent peoples and cultural values. Some nations are highly industrialized while others are undergoing, or seek to undergo, rapid economic development. Nevertheless, all of these states are bound together by their common interest in the biological integrity of the Mediterranean Sea.

These and other characteristics make the Mediterranean a microcosm that presages the future of the marine realm as a whole. If the region can transcend sovereignty disputes and antagonisms that have long divided its peoples, it could become a paradigm of cooperation that is crucial for maintaining the biological diversity and productivity of this troubled sea and for the seas and oceans worldwide.

Although agriculture was long the dominant occupation of Mediterranean peoples, the Sea has been important to them for millennia. Octopuses, fish, and dolphins were common motifs in ancient Mediterranean art, indicating their importance in people's minds. Fish such as pilchard (*Sardina pilchardus*), dusky grouper (*Epinephelus guaza*) and pompano (*Trachinotus ovatus*), mussels (*Mytilus* spp.), octopus (*Octopus vulgaris*), and scampi (*Nephrops norwegicus*) have long been highly prized Mediterranean seafoods. Pearls and cameos from marine mollusks, precious coral (*Corallium rubrum*) and bath sponges (*Spongia* spp. and *Hippospongia* spp.) were collected and traded widely in the region. Tyrian purple, a dye made from the Mediterranean *Murex* snail, *Bolinus brandaris*, that was used to color the robes of Roman patricians, was held in such high esteem that it was exported from Phoenician Tyre and Sidon throughout the Mediterranean.



To understand the future of the wealth of Mediterranean marine life requires insight into what makes the Mediterranean unique.

Human populations are generally highest at the interface of land and sea, a tendency that is evident throughout the Mediterranean region. Whatever happens in coastal lands "spills over" into neighboring seas. Moreover, where uplands are drained by rivers that empty into the sea, these effects can extend far—even thousands of kilometers—beyond the coastal regions. In general, the greater the degree of enclosure and the greater the amount of precipitation on land, the greater the terrestrial influence on the marine ecosystem.

Although all Earth's oceans and seas are bordered by land, the Mediterranean Sea is the largest of the world's highly enclosed seas. A telling indication is its name, "Mediterranean," which comes from Latin for "in the middle of land." As traditionally defined by cartographers, the Mediterranean occupies an area larger than Egypt, Turkey, France, and Spain combined. It fills the lowest portion of a topographically complex basin that is naturally connected with the Atlantic Ocean through the Strait of Gibraltar in the West and with the Sea of Marmara, Black Sea, and the Sea of Azov in the Northeast and has a more tenuous and recent connection with the Red Sea through the Suez Canal in the Southeast.

Biogeographically, the Mediterranean Sea is a slightly impoverished, warm temperate province of the Atlantic Ocean, with an added component of several hundred Indo-West Pacific species—aptly named "Lessepsian migrants"—that journeyed since the last century through the Suez Canal from the Red Sea's Gulf of Suez. As a coherent ecological unit, including the area that drains into it, the Mediterranean extends far beyond its cartographic borders, aquatic connections, and coastal surroundings to lands not normally thought of as "Mediterranean," such as Switzerland, Germany, Russia, Burundi, and Tanzania.

A Geochemical Sink

The fact that the Mediterranean is connected with the Atlantic and with wetter lands so far from its shoreline has profound implications for its management. In addition to being affected by sewage disposal from Maghreb cities, fishing by Sicilians, and factories in Israel, the Mediterranean is affected by shipping and fishing in the Atlantic and by farmers, loggers, herders, builders, manufacturers, and refiners throughout the Rhône, Danube, and Nile basins. Added to the oil washed from tankers' ballast tanks and debris tossed directly into the sea are sediments from construction sites, fertilizers from wheat fields, fungicides from orchards, PCBs that settle on the land from factory exhausts, and motor oil from roads, all wending their way inexorably through rivers and impoundments to the Mediterranean.

Exposure to pollutants is increased by the long residence time (nearly a century on average) of water in the Sea. Because evaporation is so high from its surface, most of the wastes discharged or carried into the Mediterranean by riverine flow remain in the Sea and are not flushed out into the Atlantic. This makes the Mediterranean a geochemical sink for a vast area of Africa and a substantial portion of Europe and western Asia and hence, the long-term or ultimate resting place for wastes produced by hundreds of millions of people.

Troubled Waters

Not surprisingly, after thousands of years of accumulating the effluents of affluence and poverty alike, the Mediterranean is in trouble. However, the most serious deterioration has occurred within the last century, a reflection of increasing population and use of technology that has accelerated the pace of change. Pollution, overexploitation of marine life, physical alteration of its shoreline, and introduction of alien species have combined to place it near the top of the list of the world's most stressed seas.

Because of the naturally low nutrient concentrations in shallow waters with high oxygen content (oligotrophic) and corre-

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spondingly low phytoplankton populations, the Mediterranean has been celebrated for its clarity and deep blue color at least since the time of Homer. Historically, nutrients (such as nitrogen and phosphorous) that enter from the Atlantic and via runoff throughout the basin are naturally used by phytoplankton that are, in turn, eaten by zooplankton, which produce fecal pellets that sink into the lightless depths below the thermocline. There the nutrients are sequestered in sediments or carried out in particulate or dissolved form over the sill at the Strait of Gibraltar into the Atlantic.

In recent decades, this situation has changed substantially. Large areas are now so polluted with nutrients from municipalities (a half billion tons of sewage yearly, at least 80 percent of it untreated), factories, and agriculture that they are choked by phytoplankton blooms. The waters off Barcelona, the Gulf of Lion, eastern Ligurian, western Adriatic and Aegean seas, off the Nile Delta, and in many embayments now support high phytoplankton production,

Regrettably, a growing portion of Homer's "wine-dark sea" is beginning to resemble a cesspool.

reflecting high nutrient loading which, in turn, causes episodes of low oxygen concentration (eutrophication). This favors species that thrive in such conditions at the expense of those adapted to oligotrophic conditions.

So little is known about the species composition and ecology of most of the marine ecosystems in the Mediterranean that it is impossible to fully evaluate the extent of losses caused by recent environmental change. There is no question that ecosystems have been drastically altered, however, and it is likely that species have been lost as their habitats have changed.

The loss of the Mediterranean's pristine nature has exacted a high price. Eutrophicated areas are a growing deterrent to tourism along the Sea's heavily visited beaches. The problem is compounded by the appearance of debris along the shore, the result of disposal of items in the sea ranging from unwanted automobiles to garbage thrown from cruise ships. Plastics are especially durable and conspicuous. Bags, cups, lids, straws, bottles, and lost fishing gear are washed ashore in windrows while more accumulates unnoticed on the sea floor. Marine pollution is a major economic concern in a region that benefits from the spending of more than 100 million tourists annually. Regrettably, a growing portion of Homer's "wine-dark sea" is coming to resemble a cesspool.

The harm extends well beyond the tourism industry, with the biota showing many effects of unsustainable practices within the Mediterranean basin. In 1990, some 600 dead or dying striped dolphins (*Stenella coeruleoalba*) washed ashore in the northwest Mediterranean. They were infected with distemper virus (morbillivirus) similar to the one that caused a mass mortality of harbor seals (*Phoca vitulina*) in the North Sea two years earlier. Pollutants that accumulate in species at higher trophic levels may have damaged their immune systems, making them vulnerable to infection. This does not bode well for other species whose diets depend heavily on Mediterranean fish.

What is put into the Mediterranean Sea is not the only source of trouble; other problems are caused by what is taken out.

Overfishing has stripped many species of fish from reefs and other habitats and has caused severe stress to stocks of many larger, longer-lived species, including sharks, megrim (*Lepidorhombus whiffiagonis*), hake (*Merluccius merluccius*), conger eel (*Conger conger*), groupers, tunas, and swordfish (*Xiphias gladius*). Ironically, some scientists suggest that small, fast-reproducing, planktivorous fishes, such as anchovies and sardines, might be more abundant now as a result of increased phytoplankton and zooplankton availability stimulated by eutrophication, but this may be a gross oversimplification of how natural systems actually work. (Phytoplankton favored by eutrophication may not be acceptable to the zooplankton favored by anchovies and sardines.) One thing is certain: meaningful population assessments in the marine environment are difficult to acquire, and it is therefore impossible to provide accurate data on the present status of most species—let alone suggest how many there were prior to the use of the sophisticated fishing techniques introduced during recent decades. There is no doubt, however, that populations of many species, commercially valuable and otherwise, have declined.

The Mediterranean monk seal, *Monachus monachus*, one of three monk seal species, is an obvious example. Whether the Mediterranean monk seal survives will be determined by what happens in the near future. Either actions will be taken now to give this species a chance or, through neglect, it will be lost. The largest of the scattered populations that remain are in Greece, where fishers still kill them as "competitors" and where government protection has been inadequate. To survive, these seals must overcome some formidable challenges: loss of their pupping habitats on beaches now crowded with people, overfishing of species they depend upon for food, and pollution. They also must be able to find one another in a sea where their numbers are frighteningly few. The Mediterranean monk seal is a litmus test: we will know that there is hope for the Mediterranean Sea if Mediterranean nations can protect and restore seal populations.

"Mare Nostrum"

Sixteen hundred years ago, the Romans ruled the lands ringing the Mediterranean, calling it *"Mare Nostrum"* or "Our Sea." Not since then has there been a single governing entity capable of managing it in a coordinated way. As the Sea's integrity deteriorates, the challenge that needs to be faced is finding ways to act in a unified manner in the face of diverse interests and ways of thinking among nations along its shores and throughout its basin.

One impediment to effective management of the Mediterranean is the differences in the scale of natural and human processes. Pollutants and the planktonic larvae of marine organisms can move hundreds of kilometers from their origins, freely crossing national boundaries that humans created. How can Tunisia manage a population of groupers in its waters when their larvae might travel through the waters of Italy, Spain, and Algeria as well?

Policymakers recognize that nations in the Mediterranean region are connected by mutual interests in resources such as fresh water: they need to realize that the integrity of the Mediterranean Sea depends even more on their ability to cooperate across borders.

One encouraging sign that the health of the Mediterranean Sea is being addressed is reflected in a growing number of protected areas established by many of the bordering nations. Fifty-three areas have been established, ranging from some small sites such as the 1,000 ha Scandola Nature Reserve adjacent to a rugged, mountainous part of Corsica to larger areas such as the 4,700 ha Tunisia, Zembra, and Zembretta National Park in the Gulf of Tunisia.

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United States Department of State

Under Secretary of State
for Global Affairs

Washington, D.C. 20520-7250

MEMORANDUM

October 19, 1995

TO: U.S. Delegation to Fourth World Conference on Women

FROM: G - Timothy E. Wirth

SUBJECT: Beijing: Fourth World Conference on Women

As I reflect on our time in Beijing, I wanted to share with you some of the thoughts and impressions about the conference that I outlined in a memo to Secretary Christopher shortly after my return:

Setting

Of all the conferences with which I have been involved, this was certainly the most complicated, operating on a number of levels:

- the document itself and the negotiations leading up to its successful conclusion
- the unfortunate way in which the Chinese handled the planning and logistics of the conference and the NGO forum
- U.S.-China relations, which were never far below the surface
- the relationship between the UN and the host country, especially with respect to coordination activities, and its impact on the conference
- Congressional criticism of the Administration, our foreign policy and the UN throughout preparations for and during the conference

Each of these agendas played out over the duration of the conference and the world might simply remember the conference for one or another of these disparate themes were it not for a remarkable performance by the First Lady.

Hillary Rodham Clinton

By force of a superb speech and powerful presence over two days, Hillary Clinton brought the conference and its purpose back into focus, left all of us and the delegation in particular, beaming with pride and she transfixed anyone in China or around the world

who was watching or listening. As the New York Times editorialized, it was her finest hour.

Outcome

The result of the conference was a strong Platform for Action that met the US government's goals (reaffirm important commitments made at previous international conferences, including human rights of women in reproductive health and rights; highlight the issue of violence against women; reinforce the essential role of women in the economy.) Thematically, I think two deep veins were mixed:

1. Women As Agents of Change. At the extraordinary NGO Forum, networking and reinforcing among women from around the world accelerated the promise of deeper engagement by women in all aspects of contemporary and future life, including politics, the environment and communication. This bodes well for the kinds of progressive institutional change we should constantly advocate.

2. The Force of NGOs. As the world decentralizes and new mechanisms of government are developed, the promise of NGOs becomes clearer and clearer. The Platform for Action is strong because the NGOs had significant influence on the outcome of the government conference. The challenges to this Administration and to the Department of State are to reach out, to be attuned and to work seriously from the grassroots up; that is likely to be the key to future successes.

The Delegation

The U.S. delegation, while smaller than many others, was certainly the best organized, thanks to the superb stewardship of our leadership team throughout the preparation process and the conference itself. You are an outstanding group of people and we melded into a powerful and coherent force that served the U.S. extremely well.

Follow-Up

We have a superb opportunity to build a broad, grassroots coalition to follow up on the commitments of the conference. The inter-agency task force will be truly successful when it reaches across the country in a broad, decentralized effort. Planning for this is underway and your assistance and advice are critical to its success.

Internationally, we can help women in other countries bring home the message of empowerment from Beijing. Based on the highly impressive work of African delegates to the conference, Africa is the beginning focus of our efforts at the Department of State.