

SUMMARY of UNITED NATIONS SEMINAR Nov. 3, 2007

### **United Nations Seminar Attracts Over 100 Participants**

The fifth annual UN Seminar took place Saturday, November 3, at the ultra-modern Cable Center, 2000 Buchtel Blvd. in Denver. Over one hundred participants joined featured speakers in considering the topic, "UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY AND THE UNITED NATIONS: CONFLICT OR COOPERATION?"

Co-chair of the Seminar, Lorie Young, introduced keynote speaker DAVID HARWOOD of the United Nations Foundation. He stressed the need for the United States to broaden its approach to global problems. He described American exceptionalism and its foreign policy designed primarily to promote economic growth. He suggested the present may be a "teachable moment" for the United States to realize that planetary challenges require multilateral cooperation. He acknowledged that the UN, as a sixty-year-old institution, can and should be updated and renewed in various ways.

Senator GARY HART, Scholar in Residence at the University of Colorado and Distinguished Fellow at the New America Foundation, discussed the Middle East Today, in place of ailing Bruce Finley. He stated that the Middle East has been one of the most volatile regions of the world for a long time. He said the world today is revolutionary on multiple levels: the erosion of past borders due to globalization and the information revolution which is transforming how we communicate, learn, work and compose. In addition, there is the erosion of the sovereignty of the nation state and its ability to protect its citizens as evidenced by the events of September 11, 2001. The nature of warfare has also been transformed. The United States is increasingly vulnerable in the Middle East due to its dependence on foreign oil. He supported a leadership role for the United States in seeking Middle East peace. He suggested the US needs to understand today's world and define more broadly its new role in that world.

The third morning speaker was Professor KELECHI KALU of the University of Northern Colorado and the University of Denver's Graduate School of International Studies. He described American national interest in Africa as based on four P's: power - to protect American security; prosperity - to provide American access to foreign markets and to protect American products from foreign competition; principles - to promote democratic ideals and a free market economy; and peace - to back multilateral efforts to resolve African conflicts. Through the Millennium Challenge Account the US has begun to provide aid for health and education needs in Africa, although Dr. Kalu quoted an American ambassador as saying "Trade is the best aid." Dr. Kalu noted that the US has traditionally regarded Africa as Europe's problem and has concentrated more on North Africa as a balance in the Middle East. He said multilateralism in Africa has worked for the US on an ad hoc basis with the United Nations as the proper vehicle.

Seminar founder Ruth Purkapple introduced luncheon speaker DR. THOMAS ROWE of DU's Graduate School of International Studies. Dr. Rowe addressed various common

American misunderstandings about the United Nations. He said that it does need reform and strengthening, but that the UN does more, more effectively in more places than ever and is more important than in the past. He stated that the rest of the world views the UN as more vital than Americans do. He referred to polls indicating that Americans generally support the UN in its many different roles. However, he acknowledged there is in America a very small, very hostile minority which is very suspicious of the UN and very active. He urged American supporters of the UN to educate and mobilize citizens.

After lunch, DR. SAM ZHAO, DU Graduate School of International Studies, began his talk by pointing out that three of the four power centers in the 21st century will be in Asia: China, India and Japan. He wondered if the US is ready to face this reality. He said the most important relationship is between the US and China. He stated that America's role in the Asia Pacific region will be determined by how America deals with the rising power of China and how China uses its rising influence. The US wants China to be a responsible stakeholder in the region and to work within the international system. China wants to be treated as an equal power in a multi-polar world. It is focused on economic development and political stability rather than human rights and fighting terrorism. Dr. Zhao described the US-China relationship as difficult and complicated, dependent on the long-term intentions of both powers.

The last speaker of the afternoon was DR. LORING ABEYTA, Colorado School of Mines. Her theme in discussing American foreign policy in Latin America was 'The more things change, the more things remain the same.' She noted the remarkable cadre of new Latin American presidents and the collaborations emerging in the region. She referred to the continuing US isolation of Cuba and movements toward national free trade agreements. She emphasized the need for the US to understand the history of the indigenous component in Latin American development. She stressed understanding the history of American attitudes and involvements in the area over time. She suggested that UN Millennium Development projects could serve as a basis for conversations with the US. She believed they could serve as valuable educational tools and provide beneficial lessons learned.

The closing reception was hosted by Seminar co-chair Don Bossart. Representatives of the Seminar's sponsors presented opportunities for international involvements through their organizations or institutions. The Seminar was sponsored by the UNITED NATIONS ASSOCIATION/USA/COLORADO, the LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF COLORADO, the INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION, and the UNIVERSITY OF DENVER GRADUATE SCHOOL OF INTERNATIONAL STUDIES and the CENTER FOR TEACHING INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. Cooperating sponsors were Iliff School of Theology's Justice and Peace Studies and the University Park Methodist Church.

Lorie Young, Co-chair  
UN Seminar