



# ACTION FOR UN RENEWAL

Reforming the United Nations  
Promoting peace, development, human rights and environment  
Upholding the UN Charter and international law

97 Commercial Road, London E1 1RD  
Tel: 020 7377 2111 Fax: 020 377 2999

Email: vijay@vmpeace.org  
Website: action-for-un-renewal.org.uk

Winter

2008

## UN is much than just talk

**By Ban Ki Moon  
Secretary-General of UN**

Detractors often call the United Nations a "talking shop" of 192 nations where, it has memorably been said, "no issue is too small to be debated endlessly."

But the real UN, almost invisible to the general public, is the action-oriented UN. This real UN feeds 90 million people in more than 70 countries, forming a thin blue line between hungry people and starvation. It wipes out debilitating diseases like smallpox and polio and vaccinates 40 per cent of the world's children. It provides \$2 billion annually in emergency disaster relief and maintains the second-largest army in the world, a global peace-keeping force of 120,000 men and women who go where others can't or won't go.

In my travels, often to the world's most difficult places, I always try to meet the faces behind these facts and figures.

... Continued on page 7



**Tony Benn Speaks at Action for UN Renewal Meeting on 14th May Oxford Town Hall. John Tanner Mayor of Oxford and Vijay Mehta chair of Action for UN Renewal.**

(From left to right)

Veteran socialist politician Tony Benn was in Oxford on the 14<sup>th</sup> of May to take part in a debate about the controversial Iraq war.

The former MP for Chesterfield, 83, who in February, 2004 was elected the first President of the Stop the War Coalition, appeared at the Town Hall together with other anti-war protesters.

The event was organised by the London-based group Action for UN Renewal.

It involved a debate on the subject 'Five years of war in Iraq: What role can the United Nations play in building peace and security. Hundreds of people turned out to hear the debate by one of politics' most enduring figures.

Continued on page 8

## Atrocities in Hebron

**Report by Mairead Corrigan Maguire - Nobel Peace Laureate**

WHAT IS THE UK GOVERNMENT AND INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY DOING AS ISRAELI MILITARY TARGETS AND, DESTROYS MUSLIM CHARITABLE INSTITUTIONS IN HEBRON?



On 5th June, 2008 whilst attending Conference in Bil'in on Nonviolence, I Was invited by friends, who are members of Christian Peacemakers' team based in Hebron, to go with them to see what is happening in Hebron.

On arrival in Hebron we met with the Administrator of the Hebron Orphanages

Continued on page 3...

IN THIS ISSUE: • UN is much than just talk • 5 years of war in Iraq • Atrocities in Hebron • My Love Affair with India • The Sri-Lanka Conflict • Progress at NPT Geneva 2008 • Ice shelf sheds in Arctic • Ten stories the world needs to hear • Nuclear Proliferation in Asia • Book Review • Trade talks collapse in Doha • Forthcoming Events

## **My Love Affair with India**

### **Report by John Linton**

In October 1940 I got a call to join the army. As I was then living in Grantham I was recruited into the Lincolnshire regiment. After about a year in the army, The sergeant said hey: 'any volunteers for the Indian army? I raised up my arm and I was accepted. In December 1941, I boarded a troop ship in Glasgow. We sailed around the Cape, as the Suez canal was blocked by enemy action and arrived in Bombay in late January 1942.

My first experience of India was amusing, if rather grim. As official cadets we were not entitled to travel first class. The compartment of the train we boarded in Bombay had a notice saying 'suitable for seven horses or 40 troops'. However we managed to survive the 2 day journey to Bangalore. And reached the location of the officers training school.

I really like Bangalore as it was a hill station, 3000 ft above sea level, so it was not too hot. It had beautiful orange flowering jacaranda trees. And of course conditions at the school were a great improvement than the train! A part of the study course included a course in Urdu, a requirement for Indian army officer, and was taught to us by a 'munshi' (clerk) . I was one of the only two cadets to pass their examination at the end of the course.

Having ended the course, we got our commission as officers and could travel 1<sup>st</sup> class on the trains. I travelled by train to Madras, then to Delhi. We were allowed a fortnights ration before joining our visits, as I went with a friend up to a hill station known as Mussouri. This was my first experiences of the Himalayas, one to be repeated many times.

Everyone who could, went to the hills in the summer to escape the heat of the plains. Delhi is the hottest capital city in the world with a average of temperature in May & June of 106°C. After my leave I headed for my posting at 8/8<sup>th</sup> Punjab regiment, based at Bengal. After a few weeks I was enrolled to the intelligence school in Karachi 2000 miles to the west. At the end of my course, I was recommended for an appointment in the general army Headquarters in New Delhi.

This I eventually took up in December 1942. I was promoted to the rank of captain, a secret in the intelligence directorate. After some time I was given the task of writing the weekly report on political intelligence. After my first report I was congratulated by my major saying 'please congratulate captain Linton for his excellent report'. I was to carry on writing these reports for the next 3 years. I eventually attained the rank of a major. The 4 years spent in Delhi 1942-46 are perhaps the most interesting and enjoyable years of my life. I was of course lucky to be 1000 miles away from fighting. I lived comfortably, and came to have Indian friends. if you said you sympathised with their desire for independence, they immediately welcomed you.

I met my first wife Zoe who had a Russian background in Delhi and a son was born in Simla (hill station, summer capital of British Raj in India).

On return to England on the recommendation of a testimonial brigadier I got the job of BBC Indian program organiser, fixing responsible broadcasts in Indian languages. Any important Indian crossing to London would come to my studio and record his impressions of Britain.

After 12 years, I resigned the BBC job in order to live with my second wife Erica who had a German-Jewish background as Quaker international representative, based in Delhi. This, though less prestigious was much more interesting than the BBC job. Quakers were popular in India, as they had supported india's desire for independence for many years. However some English prominent Quakers, like Horace Alexander and Charlie Andrews became Gandhi's best friends.

We eventually retired from the Quaker job in 1975. Erica, died in 1981 but I have visited India several times, once with my partner Ruth Barker. If people ask what is my favourite country, I reply 'my own, of course, but after that it is India' .

*John Linton is at 96 Action for UN's long standing member and supporter. This article does not directly relate to UN but we thought we had to make an exception.*

...Continued from page 1 *Atrocities in Hebron*

He explained that the Israeli army is threatening to close 14 schools and orphanages in the Hebron district. Eight of these schools and orphanages belong to the Islamic charitable society (ICS).

Charitable Society, while the remaining six belong to the Muslim Youth Society. (On 26th February the Israeli army forces handed over military orders of closures and confiscations of two bakeries, administrative buildings, a warehouse, three schools and two orphanages. All of these owned by the ICS.)

He took us to see a newly built school owned by ICS, (cost of one million) which was due to be opened in August, but is now closed. The Israeli Military has welded the gates of the school closed and the reason given, as for all these closures are, 'security'. Beside the school we visited a large warehouse and met the caretaker. He explained that in March the Israeli Military arrived at 3 a.m., and left at 9 a.m., they tied him up and proceeded to pack and removed all the food and clothing in the Warehouse and destroy the interior of the buildings, smashing everything in sight. The contents of the warehouse were for the orphans and the poor and the premises run by Islamic Charitable Society. We then visited a burnt out bakery (there was another destroyed Bakery but time did not permit a visit). Again the Israeli military destroyed the entire interior, burning completely the huge baking oven. This bakery cooked over 3,000 loaves of bread, and were subsidized by charity, to feed the orphans and poor. The jobs created by these Islamic Charitable projects, are gone and in the short time not able to be replaced. We also visited a Boys' and Girls' Orphanage both under military orders of closure. The ICS will challenge these closures in court, but in the meantime the Israeli military are systematically during the night, raiding and destroying the buildings. The fear now is that the Orphanages and school will be raided and destroyed. In an attempt to stop this Islamic Charitable Society have invited people, including Internationals to sleep overnight in these buildings in the hope that the presence of Internationals might deter the Israeli military nightly raids of destruction. I join 4 friends in sleeping overnight in the Girls' Orphanage, and

we were alone in this building, as the children have gone to friends for the Summer school period. Luckily the Army did not arrive, but what

Will happen when there are no internationals to sleep over? And the world sleeps While this destruction takes place. Before our sleep-over we met local Muslims and were hosted to a beautiful meal and great kindness and gratitude for our presence.

The outside world, for the most part, is unaware of this Israeli Government's Policy of demonization, wilful destruction, of the Muslim Institutions, one by one, in an Attempt to destroy the spirit and resilience of the Muslim Communities, not only in Hebron but throughout the illegally occupied Palestinian territories. It was for me horrific to witness, the Israeli Government, (and the USA/UK Governments' War on terrorism), come to be played out on the streets of Hebron, against Orphan children. Continued on page 4

(If the schools and orphanages continue to be closed down, and the military continue to destroy completely these institutions, then 7000 children will be without school and 4,500 children will be without homes). The excuse given is that these Islamic Institutions are a front for 'hamas' but the Islamic Charitable Society was established

In 1962, and all their financial dealings and accounting are completely open.

The money for the school and orphanages comes from local investments (they have their own businesses) from donors abroad and from Arab and Western countries (Prince Charles, through a UK Trust has donated towards these orphanages).

I was shocked and horrified to see the destruction of these Islamic Institutions.

The threats of the Israeli Army (and Government) against Orphans must be loudly Resisted by all of us concerned for a violent free and peaceful world for Muslim

Children, indeed all our children. This behaviour is immoral, unethical and illegal

And the Israeli Government should be held accountable, by the International Community, for its abuse of the rights of the children to safety and education. As occupiers of this country they

...Continued from page 3 *Atrocities in Hebron*

have legal obligations to protect the occupied, especially women and children.

The United Kingdom has many questions to answer here too. Tony Blair is based in East Jerusalem, (a few hours from Hebron, so he is well aware of this systematic Wilful destruction of Islamic charitable institutions) and his brief is to help Palestinian economic reconstruction. How ironic whilst he is suppose to be helping businesses etc., the Israeli military are in the dead of night, spreading terror and destruction of the Islamic communities. What is Mr. Blair and the UK governments doing about this?

One of the things that struck me during my visit to the illegally occupied territories Was the courage, friendliness and resilience of the Palestinian people. But I was Also conscious of the fact that so many of them are traumatized by what is happening, and in bewilderment that the outside world, is silent and inactive in face of their Tremendous suffering, and blatant dispossession and persecution. The World must act against this ongoing destruction by Israel of the Palestinian people and their institutions, and by Israeli racist and apartheid policies, in the villages and cities of occupied Palestine, including the siege of Gaza.

All Occupations come to an end, as this one surely will, but if this occupation continues, it will begin to destroy the very soul of the Jewish people, and leave a legacy of anger and resentment within some the Arab people, especially the young, which will take generations to heal.

It behoves the Israeli (and International community) to awaken now to the urgency of Justice for the Palestinians, by ending the Siege of Gaza, the Occupation of Palestine, And moving to build justice and reconciliation, whilst there is still time to turn this around, and before more blood of Israeli/Palestinians brothers and sisters is shed.

Hebron, in the Palestinian occupied territories.  
www.peacepeople.com 5 June 2008

Mairead Maguire (Nobel Peace Laureate) will be delivering next years Erskine Childers Lecture on 17<sup>th</sup> of September 2009 at Friends House

---

## THE SRI-LANKA CONFLICT

Report by Noel Hamel

V. A. Singam's article (summer 2008 Action for UN Renewal Issue) about the Sri Lankan conflict is interesting but, for whatever reason, important parts of the story are missing. Competing explanations for the troubles include political manoeuvrings by various individuals and parties. Not unlike Northern Ireland, legitimate grievances and problems were sometimes met with indifference or worse; feelings escalated and eventually violence resulted; with either side blaming the other; but:

In British colonial times there were broadly three groups of Tamils:

- Tamil itinerant workers without rights, imported by plantation owners, living and working on the estates and receiving little more than subsistence;
- and those Tamils, part of an elite elevated to positions of power and esteem by the British.

The British used tried and tested techniques to control the peoples of many conquered countries. They elevated a minority, preferably not indigenous, who thus owed allegiance to their British masters. In return the chosen minority enjoyed power, prestige, and wealth. The majority population was considered dangerously subversive because, of course, their interests were in their own country. This sly and clever trick had, for colonies granted independence, disastrous consequences since the civil service, judiciary, trade; etc, etc... The official languages were Tamil and English. Government changed it to Sinhalese and English which created considerable bad feeling, and set the tone for ensuing conflict. The Tamil Tigers and their guerilla war are certainly not universally supported by all Tamils, but in the conflict situation many attract suspicion, including many who had lived peaceably for generations with Sinhalese neighbours in what had been a multi-ethnic society for thousands of years. Till recently, Tamil Tiger suicide bombers outnumbered all other suicide bombers worldwide. ...continued on page 5

...continued from page 4 – The Sri-Lanka

The rebels want a separate Tamil homeland in the North; an eco from the 16th century when the country was in a state of turmoil; but clearly the recent conflict originated from a sense of grievance. The "Tear-Drop of India", as it is sometimes called, is wonderfully verdant. Coconut palms spring up and fruit and spices abound. Despite ups and downs, invasions, and contested thrones, the traditions of Buddhism permeate every aspect of Sri-Lankan culture, typically expressed in tolerance and co-operation. Norwegian mediators have been attempting reconciliation for decades, whilst arms company sales have remorselessly increased. Tolerance and co-operation are always preferable to conflict where all are losers. Every country that was colonised and had its independence restored has a difficult period of adjustment, particularly where conquerors have cynically manipulated the social and cultural fabric for their own self-interest.



---

## UN is much more than just talk

...Continued from page 1

At a film festival in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, I recently introduced a few of them to Hollywood screenwriters and directors who wanted to learn more about the UN.

One was a young Canadian woman from UNICEF; the UN agency dedicated to the protection, well-being and rights of children the world over. Her name: Pernille Ironside. Her job: to go with a small team into the eastern wilds of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

There she confronts warlords and demands that they give up their "child soldiers," boys and sometimes girls as young as 8 or 10 who have been recruited or kidnapped to fight in the country's long-running guerrilla wars. Often as not, she succeeds. Over the past few years, the UN mission in the DRC has secured the release of 32,000 of an estimated 35,000

such children. Pernille hopes to win back the rest by the end of this year.

Another was Kathi Austen, a UN arms-trafficking expert who has spent much of the past decade tracking illegal weapons smugglers operating in the DRC and other conflict zones across Africa. Partly as a result of her dogged efforts, the alleged leader of one of the world's largest trafficking networks, Victor Bout, was recently arrested on terrorism charges in Thailand.

Ishmael Beach, a UNICEF advocate for children affected by war, told of his life as a child soldier during the decade-long civil war in Sierra Leone. Thanks to a UN rehabilitation program, he not only survived but thrived, eventually finding his way to America where he attended Oberlin College and wrote a best-seller about my experiences.

A young woman from Sierra Leone, Mariatu Kamara, told her story, as well. At the age of 12, rebels killed her parents and, as happened to many thousands of other children, cut off both her hands. With the UN's help, she too survived.

She is now living with an adoptive family in Toronto and going to college. She returns periodically to her homeland to share her story and raise awareness about the work Unicef does around the world. In my job I meet many other faces of this real UN, seldom so famous but no less selfless or dedicated. Indeed, our most important work is often the least visible.

Visiting West Africa this spring, I saw UN teams in Liberia struggling to help the government restore the most basic social services after years of war: electricity, water, sanitation, schools. In Ivory Coast, I met with UN advisers helping a nation divided by conflict to hold elections and usher in an era of genuine and enduring democracy.

In Burkina Faso, just south of the advancing generators to rural villages without power. The machines are used to grind grain, alleviating hunger; they can recharge cell phones, allowing farmers to be in touch with regional markets and help them decide what and when to plant. Usually these small enterprises are run by women's collectives, giving them new authority and status in their communities. Through such small actions we change the world.

Sometimes, I wonder how it is that I, growing up as the poorest of Korean young sters in a village destroyed by war, not always knowing where my family's next meal would come from, could one day be part of this noble enterprise.

As for the Talk Shop on Turtle Bay, site of UN headquarters in New York, let us remember that talking sometimes achieves things, too.

It's the talk that put UN peacekeepers on the ground in 18 countries on four continents. It's the talk that

*Continued on page 6*

...continued from page 5

raises the money and mandates the programs that feed so many of the world's hungry. It's the talk that marks the world's first steps toward dealing with climate change, the global food crisis and a daily array of humanitarian crises.

The convening power of the UN is the ultimate "soft power" on the globe.

## **Progress at Geneva 2008 ? Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference PrepCom**

### **Report by Vijay Mehta and excerpts from reaching critical will**

The 2008 Preparatory Committee (prepCom) of the 2010 Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), met at the UN in Geneva April 28 - May 9 2008. International NGOs lobbied delegates for progress on the treaty, critical for future global peace and security. Several state delegations made key proposals for its strengthening and implementation.

The overwhelming majority of delegations argued that the 13 practical steps, unanimously adopted at the 2000 Review Conference, still constitute the roadmap for implementing Article VI. Japan's working paper on nuclear disarmament, aspects of Germany's "New NPT Implementation Baseline," and France's "action plan" for nuclear disarmament all reflect and build upon elements of the 13 steps. Streuli suggested that bolder bilateral reductions along with commitments by all nuclear weapon states to a moratorium on the development of nuclear weapons would go a long way. Many delegations called for nuclear weapon states to reduce the operational status of their nuclear weapons as an interim step to disarmament. Increasing transparency through reporting. A number of delegations increased their calls for a standardized reporting mechanism as a means to creating "an environment more suitable for nuclear disarmament" by raising the level of transparency, accountability, and trust among NPT states parties.

Recommended action: States parties should consider these suggestions at the next PrepCom session and seek to adopt a legally-binding reporting mechanism at the RevCon.

Implementing the 1995 resolution on the Middle East

To some states, establishment of a nuclear weapon free zone in the Middle East constitutes a fourth pillar of the NPT. In WP.20, which appeared to interest even some of the nuclear weapon states, Egypt presented a non-exhaustive list of concrete measures aimed at operationalizing the 1995 Middle East resolution. Recommended action: The 2010 Review Conference would be the perfect time to give the NPT the structural support it needs and deserves.

Disarmament and non-proliferation education was considered to play an important role in disarmament and should be included in the roadmap for implementing NPT

For more NPT Statements, reports, working papers, and documents

<http://www.reachingcriticalwill.org/legal/npt/2008index.html>

---

from page 1 Tony Benn speaks in Oxford

Mr Benn studied at Oxford's New College, where he read philosophy, politics and economics. He was also elected president of the Oxford Union and is a regular visitor to the city.

Mr Benn was joined in the debate by John Tanner, whose last day as Lord Mayor of Oxford is tomorrow. Vijay Mehta was the chair and he thanked Tony Benn and the Lord Mayor for the lectures and thought provoking debate afterwards.

Report from Oxford Mail

### Ice Shelf Sheds Huge Chunk in Canada's North

A seven-square-mile chunk of ice has broken off a Canadian ice shelf in the Arctic, scientists said Tuesday.

Derek Mueller, a researcher at Trent University in Ontario, was careful not to blame global warming but said the event was consistent with the theory that the current Arctic climate isn't rebuilding ice sheets.

"We're in a different climate now," he said. "It's not conducive to regrowing them. It's a one-way process."

### TEN STORIES THE WORLD MAY WISH TO HEAR MORE ABOUT

In its continuing efforts to highlight important issues and developments that sometimes do not receive sufficient attention, the UN's Department of Public Information has released the fourth annual list of stories it feels the world's public and media may wish to find out more about.

"The media are our partners in getting the word out about what needs to be reported. But we all work with constraints and are guided by different priorities. I believe we can help highlight stories that may otherwise be forgotten," reminds Kiyoko Akasaka, Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. "So when we talk about the fight against malaria, for example, we are not discounting the importance of AIDS or tuberculosis -- but since we hear more about those diseases, we could also try and raise the profile of the strides made to eradicate malaria, an entirely preventable and curable



Picture and report from Associated Press

for example, we are not discounting the importance of AIDS or tuberculosis -- but since we hear more about those diseases, we could also try and raise the profile of the strides made to eradicate malaria, an entirely preventable and curable disease." The list is not meant to be representative of the spectrum of issues the United Nations is involved in -- nor does it reflect the Secretary-General's priorities as such. The stories are intended to engage a global audience in further inquiry, with a view to promoting a better understanding of how some issues might be given greater exposure. As in previous years, there are dimensions of conflicts that are neglected (Southern Sudan and Afghanistan) -- or a phenomenon that has been somewhat overlooked (suffering of girl soldiers or the work of human rights rapporteurs). In other instances, inadequate attention may have been paid to the progress made in resolving crises (Northern Uganda) and pandemic preparedness (bird flu). All of these stories are featured on the UN website: [www.un.org/news/](http://www.un.org/news/).

## **Nuclear Power and Nuclear Proliferation**

At the Spring conference 2008 of World Disarmament Campaign, Vijay Mehta shared the platform with Edward Davey, MP, Liberal Democrat and Frank Barnaby nuclear scientist to discuss Nuclear Power and Nuclear Proliferation

**Vijay Mehta's** contribution was on **proliferation in Asia** a shorter version of which is below:

Vijay Mehta looked at proliferation from the perspective of India and Pakistan. India detonated what it called a 'peaceful nuclear device' in 1974. In May 1998, India announced five more nuclear tests and declared that it possessed nuclear weapons. The same month, Pakistan announced six nuclear tests. Both countries currently maintain unilateral nuclear-testing moratoria, but are continuing their efforts to develop and produce nuclear weapons and their delivery vehicles.

It is considered to be 'macho' to possess nuclear weapons in India and Pakistan, giving rise to nuclear proliferation and tensions. A constant worry is who has practical control of Pakistan's nuclear weapons and how secure are they. India is not part of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) or a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). It is sourcing uranium in Africa for its nuclear reactors.

The US is pressing India to have nuclear capabilities as a counter weight to China's huge nuclear arsenal as currently they are spending \$60-80 billion in modernising nuclear hardware. While on tour to India, Gordon Brown sidestepped India's reluctance to sign up to the NPT but stated that they would assist India in carrying forward the agenda of nuclear disarmament. Once again the double standards of nuclear weapons states who preach nuclear disarmament to other countries while trying to replace their old nuclear weaponry with new systems, like the replacement of Trident in the UK, are clear. So long as any state has nuclear weapons, others will want them. Nuclear, biological and chemical arms are the most inhumane of all weapons. They are rightly called

weapons of mass destruction and weapons of terror.

Vijay concluded by asking: Can South Asia and the Middle East be free of nuclear weapons? India, Pakistan, Iran and Israel (who also possess nuclear weapons) need to work on promoting measures such as comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty, an end to the production of fissile material, further reduction in the nuclear stockpile, the establishment of nuclear-weapons-free-zone, prevention of an arms race in outer space, and the abolition of nuclear weapons through a verifiable treaty or a package of treaties. But India and Pakistan and their political parties have no policies or intentions for carrying forward the reduction and the eventual abolition of nuclear weapons. Instead they are developing new and more powerful nuclear weapons.

Report by FRANK JACKSON a full report of the conference is available at World Disarm journal issue 90 or can be sent if requested.

### **Book Review:**

The book **Sacrificing the WHO to the highest bidder**

Prof (emeritus) **Theodore McDonald**

This remarkable book offers enlightening reading for everyone interested in international law, human rights, global health, public health and health promotion. Public health and health promotion professionals, including international healthcare organisations, care agencies, and international charities will find the analysis illuminating. It is also of great interest to policy makers and shapers in communities and government, political activists and all those with an interest in equality and globalisation.

David Player writes in his foreword as follows 'Provocative and well-researched. A brilliant and thoroughgoing analysis. Truly educational at every stage. Coherently argued. Extraordinarily insightful.'

The book can be purchased from Radcliffe publishing Ltd.  
e-mail: [orders@radcliffemed.com](mailto:orders@radcliffemed.com) Tel: 01235 528 820

## After 7 Years, Talks Collapse on World Trade

Stephen Castle and Mark Landler

GENEVA — World trade talks collapsed here on Tuesday after seven years of on-again, off-again negotiations, in the latest sign of India's and China's growing might on the world stage and the decreasing ability of the United States to impose its will globally.

Skip to next paragraph Pascal Lamy, director general of the World Trade Organization, could not bridge differences between a group of newly confident developing nations and established Western economic powers. In the end, too few of the real power brokers proved committed enough to make compromises necessary to deliver a deal.

The failure appeared to end, for the near term at least, any hopes of a global deal to further open markets, cut farm subsidies and strengthen the international trading system. "It is a massive blow to confidence in the global economy," said Peter Power, spokesman for the European Commission. "The confidence shot in the arm that we needed badly will not now happen."

After nine consecutive days of high-level talks, discussions reached an impasse when the United States, India and China refused to compromise over measures to protect farmers in developing countries from greater liberalization of trade.

Supporters of the so-called Doha round of talks, which began in 2001, say a deal would have been a bulwark against protectionist sentiments that are likely to spread as economic growth falters in much of the world.

The failure also delivers a blow to the credibility of the World Trade Organization, which sets and enforces the rules of international commerce. It could set back efforts to work out other multilateral agreements, including those intended to reduce the threat of global warming.

The collapse of the talks will not bring an end to world trade, of course, which will continue under current agreements, many of which are between two or more countries rather than under the W.T.O.

But it is a big setback, particularly to the hopes of smaller and poorer developing countries, which were counting on gaining greater access to consumers in the United States, Europe and Japan.

Economists and trade experts predicted that negotiators, having come this close, might not find the conditions for a broad deal among the 153 members of the trade organization for years, if ever again.

Deep skepticism about the advantages of free trade was on vivid display during the Democratic primaries and it is growing in Europe, particularly as France, Italy and other countries have fallen into an American-style economic malaise.

"It's important to move forward when the world is in a slowdown and is tempted to think of protectionism rather than opening up," said Norbert Walter, the chief economist at Deutsche Bank.

He said soaring food prices provided another rare opportunity for a deal, since European and American farmers are prospering. It may never be easier to reduce farm subsidies, one of the most delicate issues in trade talks.

"The feeling went from 'Who cares?' to a surge of excitement and sense of breakthrough to 'Oh, no, not again,'" said Rory Macrae, a partner at GPlus Europe, a

communications consulting firm in Brussels, who was on the sidelines of the negotiations in Geneva.

He said the sticking point this time was countries like China and India, which have become more aggressive in advancing their interests. "Maybe they're now thinking, 'We're big enough that we don't even need the process,'" Mr. Macrae said.

Like the United States and Europe, he said, China and India might find it more advantageous to negotiate bilateral agreements in which they can apply more pressure on a single trading partner.

On Tuesday night, ministers were still discussing whether any of the agreements reached in principle could be salvaged.

But there seemed little prospect for that any time soon, in part because the presidential campaign in the United States will make it all but impossible for Washington to take part until a new administration takes over.

Talks foundered on the right of India and other developing nations to protect sensitive agricultural products from competition in the event of a surge of imports that would make their own farmers less competitive. The United States argued that such protection, which is not permitted now, would mean moving backward on current world trade commitments.

Mari Elka Pangestu, the Indonesian trade minister, said the failure of the talks reflected the inability of the rich industrial powers to deal with the growing influence of China, India and Brazil in the global economy.

She complained that what she called "a reasonable request" had been blocked because the United States "is not going to show flexibility."

Susan C. Schwab, the United States trade representative, challenged assertions by some developing countries that the United States had been the chief obstacle to sewing up the deal. She added, "The U.S. commitments remain on the table, awaiting reciprocal responses."

She said, "It is unconscionable that we could have come out with an outcome that rolled the global trading system back not by one year or 5 years but by 30 years."

Ms. Schwab said it would be possible to help developing nations address surges in imports in ways that could not "be used as a tool of blatant protectionism."

One official said that the relatively technical nature of the cause of the breakdown underlined a lack of political will to reach an agreement that would be a tough sell to voters in many countries.

The Indian trade minister, Kamal Nath, in a briefing with reporters, said he was "very disappointed" but that developing countries were "deeply concerned about issues which affected poor and subsistence farmers."

Washington's negotiating team was also under pressure from the country's powerful farm lobby, and the European Union was under pressure from its own.

Lourdes Catrain, a trade partner at the law firm Hogan & Hartson, said the real danger created by failure after getting so close was "that the seven years of hard negotiations will be lost and there will be no guarantees on the starting point of a future round."

"There are people who argue that no Doha outcome is better than a weak Doha outcome."

## Forthcoming Events

September 2008

### Annual Erskine Childers Lecture 2008

*Who rules the world?  
Global challenges and the  
role of the UN in  
peacekeeping, human rights  
and international law*

**Lord Hannay of  
Chiswick  
Chair UNA UK and  
Former UK  
Ambassador to the  
United Nations**

**Chair: Rita Payne Chair:  
Commonwealth Journalist  
Association, and Former  
Asia Editor, BBC World  
TV**

Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
Friends House,  
173 Euston Road,  
London, NW1 2BJ

Public meeting  
7.00 – 8.30 pm

October 2008

### Date to be announced

**House of Lords  
Awakening the Global  
Conscience**  
*Military Intervention or  
International Diplomacy?  
What is right? What is just?*

Speakers invited: Sir Hugh  
Beach, David Ramsbottom,  
Lord Peter Archer, Ed Davey,  
Mary Kaldor.

8<sup>th</sup> November 2008

WDC Annual conference.  
10.30 – 5.00pm  
Wesley Chapel, 49 City Road,  
London EC1Y 1AU

### **Theme: World Shortages & Global Security**

Speakers invited: Ken  
Livingstone, Naomi Klein, Will  
Hutton, George Monbiot.

February 2009

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009

**“Saving succeeding  
generations from the  
scourge of war”**

*Building a non-killing,  
non-violent culture for the  
human family*

Keynote Speaker:

**Mairead Corrigan  
Maguire**  
Nobel peace Laureate

Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2009  
Friends House,  
173 Euston Road,  
London, NW1 2BJ

Public meeting  
7.00 – 8.30 pm  
Free. All welcome.

### **Action for United Nations Renewal**

Patrons: Tony Benn, Bruce Kent,  
Caroline Lucas MEP.

Chair: Vijay Mehta  
Vice-chairs: Ailsa Moore, Prue  
Wendt.  
Secretary: Jess Blijkers  
Membership & Treasurer: Carol  
Langdon  
Website organiser: Karl Miller,  
Mohammed Miah

Committee members:  
Rosemary Addington  
Gordon Glass  
Donald Prentice  
Maureen O'Mear

Join Action for UN Renewal now. Email:  
carolangdonuk@yahoo.co.uk

Annual subscription: £10.00; unwaged £5.00; groups  
£10.00;

Action for UN Renewal enquires to Carol Langdon  
(membership and treasurer)  
Address: 97 Commercial Road, London, E1 1RD

Your suggestions for topics, speakers and comments on  
the newspaper are welcome and can be emailed to:  
info@action-for-un-renewal.org

Newspaper committee: Vijay Mehta  
Abdul Muhib