



*Embracing Democracy for Humane Action*



**HR** | HIGH ROAD *for*  
**HR** | HUMAN RIGHTS

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438 East 200 South | Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 | (801) 364-3560

[www.highroadforhumanrights.org](http://www.highroadforhumanrights.org)

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# VISION AND STRATEGY

*By Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson*

*Reach Beyond  
Yourself*

*Become  
Empowered*

*Help Others  
Who Are  
in Need*

*Make a  
Difference*

How often have you learned of a terrible injustice, but felt unable to do anything about it?

Have you wanted to help bring about change in our world, but believed it was too difficult or too big for you to tackle?

Do you wonder where the leaders are – why so many people are suffering, yet no one is leading the way toward effective solutions?

Have you said to yourself, “I feel strongly about genocide, human trafficking, global warming, torture, and other human rights violations, but what can *I* do about any of it?”

Now, there is an effective channel for your caring, your passion, and your desire to make a positive difference in our world.

**High Road for Human Rights** is unique in its approach, as it brings together compassionate people throughout the United States to effect change.

Imagine the power of a citizen’s lobby – people throughout the nation who together achieve specific, effective, humane changes in public policy.

Ross C. “Rocky” Anderson, founder of High Road for Human Rights, served as Mayor of Salt Lake City for eight years. He was President of the Boards of Guadalupe Educational Programs, Inc. and ACLU of Utah, founded and served as President of the Board of Citizens for Penal Reform, and served on the Boards of Planned Parenthood Association of Utah and Common Cause of Utah. Anderson is the recipient of the EPA’s Climate Protection Award, the League of United Latin American Citizens’ Profile of Courage Award, and Sierra Club’s Distinguished Service Award. He was named by the Human Rights Campaign as one of the nation’s top ten straight advocates for the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community. Prior to his election as Mayor, Anderson practiced law for 21 years, winning major victories in the areas of consumer protection and civil rights, and establishing important new case law as lead counsel in *Bradford v. Moench*, 809 F. Supp. 1473 (D. Utah 1992), and *Bott v. DeLand*, 922 P.2d 732 (Utah 1996). Anderson is well known for the ground-breaking climate protection and restorative justice programs instituted when he was Mayor. He has also been a vigorous advocate against torture and for the restoration of the rule of law.





During the early stages of the genocide in Rwanda, a human rights activist urged President Clinton's National Security Advisor to take urgent action. He said that people were not calling on the telephone to express their concerns and that no action would be taken unless people made "more noise." Senator Paul Simon thought one hundred letters to each person in Congress could have spurred the action necessary to stop the genocide. However, the American people remained silent. Letters were not sent, phone calls were not made, people did not demand action by their congressional representatives or the President. As a result, 800,000 men, women, and children were brutally butchered. The United States and the international community did *nothing* to stop the atrocities.

## *Let us never be silent again.*

Organizing together, we *can* make a difference. We can make more noise. We can join in calling for humane action. We can live our lives knowing we did what we could.

This is a unique, effective approach to building a better, safer, more compassionate world.

### **IMAGINE:**

- At every town meeting held by every member of Congress, several members of **High Road** attend, demanding effective action by the United States, working with the United Nations, to stop mass atrocities like the on-going genocide in Darfur. We don't stop with one demonstration, with one meeting, or with one letter-writing campaign. We keep acting, tenaciously and with one voice nationwide, until effective change is achieved.
- Numerous members of **High Road** relentlessly make telephone calls and send letters from every congressional district, week after week, demanding a moratorium on the construction of atmosphere-destroying coal-burning power plants and a commitment to the utilization of clean, renewable sources of energy.
- **High Road** organizes a sustained public information campaign, enlisting people nationwide in a persistent call for major economic sanctions against nations that condone slavery.
- Members of **High Road** make an end to kidnapping and torture by the United States a major electoral campaign issue.





Automobile manufacturers have their lobbyists who have succeeded for decades in stopping legislation requiring greater fuel efficiency.

Drug manufacturers have their lobbyists who make sure Americans pay outrageous prices for drugs.

Arms manufacturers have their lobbyists who push enormously expensive and unnecessary weapons programs through Congress.

Now, compassionate American people have *their* organized lobbyists to persuade Congress and the President to undertake humane policies toward our brothers and sisters throughout the world, including later generations. Those lobbyists are *us*. Each of us. Working together. Embracing our democracy for compassionate change.

### **High Road for Human Rights**

- Identifies a limited number of precise human rights issues and proposed concrete solutions.
- Develops a strategy for informing and organizing people – just like you – who can, together, effectively push for humane change.
- Supports and coordinates efforts in local communities throughout the United States to bring about major changes to save and improve lives and build a better world.

Join a unique grassroots nationwide organization of people who care – people who are committed to bring about positive change in our world.

Join **High Road for Human Rights** in organizing thousands of people who will lead toward change. We will make our voices be heard, and we will make certain our elected officials **never again** use as an excuse for inaction the absence of a call by the American people for positive change.

We have all experienced frustration and a sense of powerlessness in knowing that people are unjustly suffering and that our planet is becoming a place that may not be able to sustain life. Until now, there has not been a continuous grassroots organizing mechanism available to provide unique ways of acting with others to bring about change. **High Road for Human Rights** brings together people in partnering for a better tomorrow. Working with **High Road**, you will be part of an historic new movement, embracing our democracy to bring about a safer, sustainable, more compassionate world.

*Just imagine . . .*







# RISING TO THE CHALLENGE

***In this country, you and I and the President and the Congress and the State Department are accessories to the crime and share Hitler's guilt. . . .What has come over the minds of ordinary men and women that makes it seem normal and indeed inevitable that this country should stolidly stand by and do nothing in the face of one of the world's greatest tragedies?***

— Editorial by Freda Kirchwey in *The Nation*, March 13, 1943

***Silence in the face of evil is itself evil: God will not hold us guiltless. Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.***

— Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran executed by hanging, by direct order of Heinrich Himmler

***The problem is immediate. The problem is essentially a humanitarian one. . . . It is . . . a problem for enlightened civilization. We have talked; we have sympathized; we have expressed our horror; the time to act is long past due.***

— United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Senate Report No. 625 (December 20, 1943), discussing the Nazi campaign to annihilate European Jewry

***The corpse of a people lies on the steps of civilization. Behold it. Here it is! And no voice is heard to cry halt to the slaughter, no government speaks to bid the murder of human millions end.***

— Final passage of “We Will Never Die” pageant, presented in several major US cities to raise public consciousness about the Holocaust and to motivate action





***The genocides of the 1990s in Bosnia and Rwanda succeeded not because they were unstoppable, but because international opposition was almost nonexistent.***

— Peter Maas, “Paying for the Powell Doctrine,” *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention* (edited by Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner) (New York: Basic Books, 2002)

***We haven’t heard much about what is happening in Darfur recently. The killing and raping continues, but the Sudanese regime has changed tactics. It no longer needs to use its air force to bomb its own people because it has achieved its racist aim: 90% of the black African villages have been destroyed. Now the Sudanese are using their proxies, the Janjaweed militia, to rape women whenever they venture out for firewood. Khartoum has rightly guessed that the international community is not going to take them to task over the daily suffering of hundreds of thousands of women who cannot bear to talk about their ordeal. Is this our response?***

— Glenys Kinnock, Member of the European Parliament, “The Rape of Darfur,” *Guardian Online*, January 18, 2006

***The vice trade is one which people can, if they wish to, turn a blind eye to, but I fail to see how we as a mature society can turn our backs on people.***

— Chief Superintendent Simon Humphrey of Scotland Yard (quoted in Victor Malarek, *The Natashas – Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003)

***Evidence of government complacency is staggering. International studies and reports are replete with examples of blatant and overwhelming insensitivity. Yet despite the damning reports detailing what’s been occurring openly throughout the Western world year after year, and despite the tragic testimonials of thousands of victims, the prevailing attitude among the very people who should know better crosses into the realm of criminal neglect.***

— Malarek, *The Natashas – Inside the New Global Sex Trade* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2003)







***Further warming of more than 1°C will make the Earth warmer than it has been in a million years. “Business-as-usual” scenarios, with fossil fuel CO<sup>2</sup> emissions continuing to increase ~2%/year as in the past decade, yield additional warming of 2 or 3°C this century and imply changes that constitute practically a different planet.***

***The special interests seek to maintain short-term profits with little regard to either the long-term impact on the planet that will be inherited by our children and grandchildren or the long-term economic well-being of our country.***

***The public, if well informed, has the ability to override the influence of special interests . . .***

— James E. Hansen, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, December 6, 2005

***Climate change threatens the basic elements of life for people around the world – access to water, food, health, and use of land and the environment. . . . The consequences of climate change will become disproportionately more damaging with increased warming. Higher temperatures will increase the chance of triggering abrupt and large-scale changes that lead to regional disruption, migration and conflict. There is still time to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, if we take strong action now.***

— The Stern Review: The Economics of Climate Change, Sir Nicholas Stern, Head of the UK Government Economics Service and Adviser to the Government on the economics of climate change and development, October 30, 2006

***In the end, we will remember not the words of our enemies, but the silence of our friends.***

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

***You shall not stand idly by as the blood of your brother is being spilled.***

— Leviticus 19:16

***To see what is right and not to do it is want of courage.***

— Confucius, *The Analects, Book IV, Chapter xvi,*





*... Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. ... Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me.*

— St. Matthew 25: 40, 45

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.*

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

*To be one of those who believe and urge each other to steadfastness and urge each other to compassion. Those are the companions of the Right.*

— Koran, Surah XC, Surat al-balad 17-18

*If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?*

— Rabbi Hillel, Mishna Avot 1:14

*Compassion is one of the principal things that make our lives meaningful. It is the source of all lasting happiness and joy. And it is the foundation of a good heart, the heart of one who acts out of a desire to help others. ... Love for others and respect for their rights and dignity; no matter who or what they are: ultimately these are all we need.*

— His Holiness the Dalai Lama, *Ethics for the New Millenium* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1999)





***The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who, in a period of moral crisis, maintain their neutrality.***

— John F. Kennedy, remarks at the signing of the charter establishing the German Peace Corp, June 24, 1963

***Oppression can only survive through silence.***

— Carmen de Monteflores

***Make more noise!***

— National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, two weeks after the beginning of the Rwanda genocide, advising Alison des Forges of Human Rights Watch what needed to happen if US officials were to support intervention

***Don't waste any time in mourning. Organize!***

— Joe Hill, union organizer, before he was executed





# INTRODUCTION

The people of the United States are caring and generous, with a desire to help those who are in need. We expect our government to act compassionately and to be a world leader in helping those who are in need, particularly victims of heinous human rights abuses.

The American people mean it when we say, “Never Again” – never again will we stand idly by while people are slaughtered during genocides; never again will we allow our government to ignore the enslavement of men, women, and children; never again will we be complicit in rendering Earth a far more dangerous place because of catastrophic climate change; and never again will complacency be our response to state-sponsored kidnapping, torture, rape and murder.

When we learn of tragedies experienced by others, we have a compassionate instinct. We care and we want to help . . . but we are often baffled as to what we can do. Upon learning of the atrocities being committed during the genocide in Darfur, the slavery of millions of men, women, and children in dozens of nations, mass starvation and the destruction and displacement of entire communities resulting from climate change, or the horrendous torture of people, the common response is, “These are terrible things happening to people. I care and I want to help. But what can *I* do?”

Too often, no course of action to help bring about change is offered to caring people – so we go about our usual daily business, feeling frustrated and powerless. The American people want to contribute to a solution, but often do not know how. Absent an organizing mechanism like **High Road for Human Rights**, people feel isolated and impotent to effectively work for humane change.

Effective public organization and grassroots advocacy has been missing. Even those organizations that provide vital information concerning the human rights situations in many countries have not engaged, and it is often not their mission to engage, in aggressive grassroots organizing efforts to bring sufficient political pressure to bear on government officials. For instance, Human Rights Watch provided exceptional intelligence concerning the 1994 Rwandan genocide and engaged in one-on-one lobbying, but it lacked the grassroots organization and





advocacy to bring sufficient public pressure to bear on President Clinton, his foreign policy advisers, and Congress. (Samantha Power, *“A Problem from Hell” -- America and the Age of Genocide* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 377.) It is that grassroots organization and advocacy that **High Road for Human Rights** will facilitate.

Grassroots organizing of people who can join together to effectively bring sufficient pressure for change is a rarity in the United States today. Particularly in a democracy where freedoms of speech, press, and assembly are preserved, people have an immense, yet usually overlooked, power to make an enormous difference.

We are fortunate to live in a democracy, where people responsible for making our laws, as well as the heads of the Executive Branch, are elected by the people. However, that is only the beginning of our potential power as citizens in a democracy. Organizing together, we have the power to influence elected and other government officials to act decisively and compassionately.

Too often, however, the people of the United States do not express their desires and expectations in ways that will lead to change. As a result, our elected officials do not act and our nation turns a blind eye to tragedies that could be prevented.





*To understand why the United States did not do more to stem genocide, it is not enough, of course, to focus on the actions of presidents or their foreign policy teams. In a democracy even an administration disinclined to act can be pressured into doing so. This pressure can come from inside or outside... Unfortunately, although every genocide generated some activism within the U.S. foreign policy establishment, civil and foreign servants typically heeded what they took to be presidential indifference and public apathy...*

*The executive branch has also felt no pressure from the second possible source: the home front. American leaders have been able to persist in turning away because genocide in distant lands has not captivated senators, congressional caucuses, Washington lobbyists, elite opinion shapers, grassroots groups, or individual citizens. The battle to stop genocide has thus been repeatedly lost in the realm of domestic politics. Although isolated voices have protested the slaughter, Americans outside the executive branch were largely mute when it mattered. As a result of this society-wide silence, officials at all levels of government calculated that the political costs of getting involved in stopping genocide far exceeded the costs of remaining uninvolved.*

— Samantha Power, “A Problem From Hell” – *America and the Age of Genocide*, pp. 508-09

Organizing people in a national network of local communities, galvanized around a few select issues, will make the crucial difference between action and inaction. Acting together in a highly focused, sustained, vigorous manner will result in grassroots pressure that will force government officials to act.

*[T]he most realistic hope for combating [genocide] lies in the rest of us creating short-term political costs for those who do nothing.*

— Samantha Power, “Raising the Cost of Genocide,” *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention*, (edited by Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner) (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 73





# THE TRAGIC PROBLEM

Mass murder, torture, rape, sexual slavery, ethnic cleansing, and catastrophic global warming,<sup>1</sup> have occurred, and continue to occur, in many areas of the world. These tragic human rights abuses and assaults on the global climate are preventable, yet the United States government and the international community (which is heavily influenced by what the United States does or does not do) traditionally fail to take effective action to rescue the millions of people who suffer, and who are at risk of suffering, from these abuses.

Governmental inaction – the complacency and complicity of governmental officials – leads to, and is fostered by, inattention and inertia on the part of the media and the public. As the public, the media, and governmental officials remain mute and indifferent, we betray the commitments embodied in the phrase “Never Again”. Instead, we allow, through our inaction and absence of democratic activism, the worst sorts of abuses toward our brothers and sisters throughout the world, now and in the future.

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1 Although climate change has not commonly been included among the categories of human rights abuses, there is no question about the tragic human impacts caused by global warming. Because of the increase in the elevation of oceans, caused by global warming, due primarily to the burning of fossil fuels, people are being displaced from coastal area homelands. Hundreds of millions more are likely to be displaced from their homes in the future, creating the largest refugee population in history. Compounding the human tragedy, which is appropriately classified as a consequence of the violation of human rights, will be huge droughts, floods, destruction of species, loss of water supplies from melting glaciers, increased diseases, and killer heat waves caused by increasing global temperatures.







# HISTORY OF INACTION

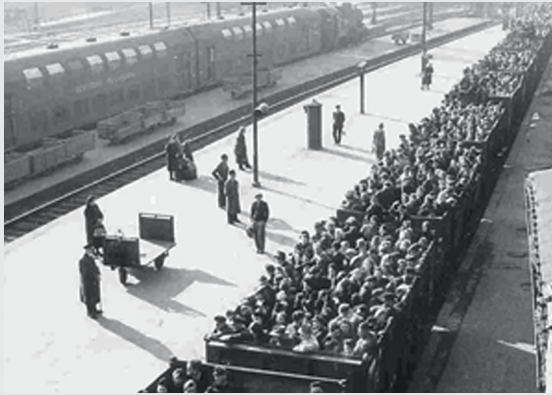
A Partial History of United States and International  
Complacency and Complicity Through Inaction







## THE HOLOCAUST



*One day I was instructed to drive my truck outside the town. I was accompanied by a Ukrainian. It must have been about 10 o'clock. On the way there we overtook Jews carrying luggage marching on foot in the same direction that we were traveling. There were whole families. The further we got out of town the denser the columns became. Piles of clothing lay in a large*

*open field. These piles of clothing were my destination. The Ukrainian showed me how to get in there.*

*After we had stopped in the area near the piles of clothes the truck was immediately loaded up with clothing. This was carried out by Ukrainians. I watched what happened when the Jews – men, women and children – arrived. The Ukrainians led them past a number of different places where one after the other they had to remove their luggage, then their coats, shoes and overgarments and also underwear. They also had to leave their valuables in a designated place.*

*There was a special pile for each article of clothing. It all happened very quickly and anyone who hesitated was kicked or pushed by the Ukrainians to keep them moving. I don't think it was even a minute from the time each Jew took off his coat before he was standing there completely naked. No distinction was made between men, women and children. . . .*

*Once undressed, the Jews were led into a ravine which was about 150 meters long, 30 meters wide and a good 15 meters deep. Two or three narrow entrances led to this ravine through which the Jews were channeled. When they reached the bottom of the ravine they were seized by members of the Schurzpolizei and made to lie down on top of Jews who had already been shot. This all happened very quickly. The corpses were literally in layers. A police marksman came along and shot each Jew in the neck with a sub-machine gun at the spot where he was lying.*





*When the Jews reached the ravine they were so shocked by the horrifying scene that they completely lost their will.*

*There were only two marksmen carrying out the executions. One of them was working at one end of the ravine, the other at the other end. I saw these marksmen stand on the layers of corpses and shoot one after the other.*

*The moment one Jew had been killed, the marksman would walk across the bodies of the executed Jews to the new Jew, who had meanwhile lain down, and shoot him. It went on in this way uninterrupted, with no distinction being made between men, women and children. The children were kept with their mothers and shot with them.*

— Ernst Klee, Willi Dressen, and Volker Riess, eds., *“The Good Old Days”: The Holocaust as Seen by Its Perpetrators and Bystanders* (1998; reprint, New York: Free Press, 1991), pp. 63-67, quoted in James Waller, *Becoming Evil – How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 89-90.

Much could have been, but was not, done by the US to save millions of Jews killed during the Holocaust. For instance:

- The War Refugee Board (WRB), finally authorized by President Roosevelt during January 1945, resulted in the rescue of approximately 200,000 Jews. (David S. Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust 1941-1945* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), p. 285.) Had the WRB been formed in 1942, as had been advocated by a few courageous, tenacious activists, and had it received more money, greater powers, and the extent of support by government agencies called for by executive order, millions of lives might have been saved. (See, e.g., Wyman, pp. 285, 331.)
- The United States government prevented Jews from immigrating to the US, resulting in them being among the millions killed during the Holocaust. The US also put pressure on Latin America to restrict the immigration of Jews, and it set the precedent for other governments to refuse a safe refuge for Jews. (See, e.g., Wyman and Medoff, *A Race Against Death: Peter Bergson, America, and the Holocaust* (New York: The New Press, 2002), pp. 6-7; Wyman, p. 332.)





- Pressure could have been applied to neutral countries, such as Spain, Portugal, Turkey, Switzerland, and Sweden, to allow the immigration of Jews. The US also could have provided assurances of postwar removal of immigrants, which would have encouraged Switzerland to accept thousands of children.<sup>2</sup>

The complicity in the Holocaust of the US and individual citizens, through their complacency, was well summed up by Freda Kirchwey, editor of *The Nation*:

*In this country, you and I, the President and the Congress and the State Department are accessories to the crime and share Hitler's guilt. If we had behaved like humane and generous people instead of complacent cowardly ones, the two million lying today in the earth of Poland . . . would be alive and safe. We had it in our power to rescue this doomed people and yet we did not lift a hand to do it – or perhaps it would be better to say that we lifted just one cautious hand, encased in a tight-fitting glove of quotas and visas and affidavits and a thick layer of prejudice.*

Freda Kirchwey, “While the Jews Die,” *The Nation*, March 13, 1943, p. 366.

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<sup>2</sup> For a description of several other things that may have been done by the US to save hundreds of thousands, and perhaps millions, of Jews from untold suffering and death during the Holocaust, see Wyman, pp. 331-340.





# KHMER ROUGE IN CAMBODIA

*Khmer Rouge soldiers would rape a Vietnamese woman, then ram a stake or bayonet into her vagina. Pregnant women were cut open, their unborn babies yanked out and slapped against the dying mother's face. The Yotheas also enjoyed cutting the breasts off well endowed Vietnamese women. Vietnamese fishermen who fell into the hands of the Khmer Rouge were decapitated.*

— N. Sihanouk, *War & Hope: The Case for Cambodia* (New York: Random House 1980), pp. 83-84, quoted at Karl D. Jackson (ed.), *Cambodia 1975-1978 – Rendezvous with Death* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 238.



*I was the first one to be tied up tightly by the soldiers with one of the strips. I was stunned and quite terrified. I began to resist a little. After a few blows to the head with rifle butts, I could only let them do as they pleased with*

*me. My head began to bleed from a wound. I was still semi-conscious – I could feel the pain and blood flowing down on my face. They were using me as an example of what one would get if they got any kind of resistance. They quickly tied the rest of the group without any problems. By this time it was totally chaotic as people continued to plea for their lives. . . . I was numb with fear.*

*I was beyond horrified when I heard the clobbering begin. Somehow, I knew that this was it. Oum's elderly father was next to me and his upper torso contracted several times before he fell on me. At that moment, I noticed a small boy whom*



*I knew well get up and start to call for his mother. Suddenly there was a warm splash on my face and body. I knew it was definitely not mud – it was the little boy’s blood, perhaps his brain tissue scattering from the impact. The others only let out short but terrifying sputtered sounds. I could hear their breathing stop cold in its tracks. . . .*

*The faint light of a new dawn broke through the sky, revealing my shriveled, blood-soaked body in the mud. . . . I pushed myself to sit up by supporting myself on the pile of dead bodies. . . . My eyesight was also back, but I wished then that I was blind after seeing the scattered bodies laying at every direction. Some of them were beyond recognition.*

— “From Sideshow to Genocide: Stories of the Cambodian Holocaust,”  
quoted at Waller, pp. 172-73.

Effective intervention was possible in Cambodia, but it was not attempted. In 1978, Senator George McGovern called for military intervention, but was rebuffed by nearly everyone in Congress. “Do we sit on the sidelines and watch a population slaughtered or do we marshal military force and put an end to it?” he asked. “One would think the international community would at least condemn the situation and move to stop what appears like genocide.” (Quoted by William Shawcross, “Lessons of Cambodia,” Mills & Brunner, *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 40.)

A year earlier, William F. Buckley, Jr., proposed international military intervention. He asked, “Why doesn’t Congress authorize the necessary money to finance an international military force to overrun Cambodia?” He proposed that a force of military units from Malaysia, Thailand, Japan, the Philippines, and Vietnam “go there and take power away from one, two, three, perhaps as many as a half-dozen sadistic madmen who have brought on their country the worst suffering, the worst conditions brought on any country in this bloody century.” (Samantha Power, *A Problem From Hell* – *America and the Age of Genocide*, p. 134.)

Instead of intervening, the US and the international community did nothing beyond a little hand-wringing, allowing Pol Pot’s Khmer Rouge to kill approximately two million Cambodians, including all but a thousand of 60,000 Buddhist monks in the country. (Power, p. 143.)







# SADDAM HUSSEIN IN IRAQ

## Failure to Sanction, and Rewarding, Saddam Hussein After His Genocidal Use of Chemical Weapons



*Halabja quickly became known as the Kurdish Hiroshima. In three days of attacks, victims were exposed to mustard gas, which burns, mutates DNA, and causes malformations and cancer; and the nerve gases sarin and tabun, which can kill, paralyze, or cause immediate*

*and lasting neuropsychiatric damage. Doctors suspect that the dreaded VX gas and the biological agent aflatoxin were also employed. Some 5,000 Kurds were killed immediately. Thousands more were injured. . . .*

*Halabja was the most notorious and the deadliest single gas attack against the Kurds, but it was one of at least forty chemical assaults ordered by al-Majid. A similar one followed that spring in the village of Guptapa. There, on May 3, 1988, Abdel-Qadir al-'Askari, a chemist, heard a rumor that a chemical attack was imminent. He left the village, which was situated on low ground, and scrambled up a distant hilltop so he might warn his neighbors of imminent danger. When he saw Iraqi planes bombing, he sprinted back down to the village in order to help. But when he reached his home, . . . nobody was inside. He remembered:*

*"I became really afraid – convinced that nobody survived. I climbed up from the shelter to a cave nearby, thinking they might have taken refuge there. There was nobody there, either. But when I went to the small stream near our house, I found my mother. She had fallen by the river; her mouth was biting into the mud bank. . . . I turned my mother over; she was dead. I wanted to kiss her but I knew that if I did, the chemicals would be passed on . . . I continued along the*





*river. I found the body of my nine-year-old daughter hugging her cousin, who had also choked to death in the water. . . . Then I went around our house. In the space of 200-300 square meters I saw the bodies of dozens of people from my family. Among them were my children, my brothers, my father, and my nieces and nephews. Some of them were still alive, but I couldn't tell one from the other. I was trying to see if the children were dead. At that point I lost my feelings. I didn't know who to cry for anymore and I didn't know who to go to first."*

— Kanan Makiya, *Cruelty and Silence: War, Tyranny, Uprising, and the Arab World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993), pp. 137-38, quoted at Samantha Power, "A Problem From Hell" - *America and the Age of Genocide*, pp. 189-90.

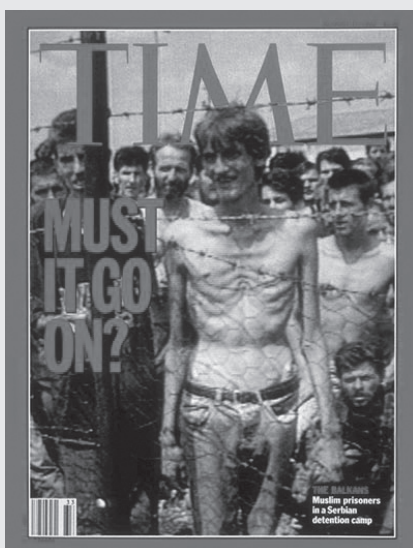
During the administration of George W. Bush, the US invaded Iraq under the pretense of protecting the world against Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. However, Iraq, having disarmed following the first Gulf War, had no weapons of mass destruction at the time of the invasion. Ironically, when Iraq *was* utilizing chemical weapons – first against Iranians 195 times between 1983 and 1988, then against the Iraqi Kurds commencing in 1987 (Power, pp. 178, 186) – the US, under the administration of President Reagan, condoned it by defeating a proposed sanctions bill.

Reagan's policy of overlooking Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons was perpetuated by President George H.W. Bush. Secretary of State James Baker rationalized the cozy relationship with Hussein as follows: "Had we attempted to isolate Iraq, we would have also isolated American businesses, particularly agricultural interests, from significant commercial opportunities." (Power, p. 233.) Hussein was rewarded by the US with an additional \$1 billion in agricultural credits and became a "favorite with Midwestern farm-state politicians." (*Id.*)

Instead of effective sanctions to stop Hussein's genocidal terror, he was befriended and rewarded by the US. Senator Bob Dole even assured Hussein that President Bush would veto sanctions legislation if it passed Congress. Samantha Power describes the sum total of the final US response to Saddam Hussein's use of chemical weapons when he actually had them: "U.S. government-guaranteed loans had totaled \$5 billion since 1983. The credits had freed up currency for Hussein to fortify and modernize his more cherished military assets, including his stockpile of deadly chemicals. American grain would keep the Iraqi army fed during its occupation of Kuwait." (Power, p. 236.)



# THE BOSNIAN GENOCIDE



*Ordered to get off the bus, the men filed into a filthy room, small and slippery with mud. The guards, cradling AK-47s, screamed at them – Put your hands over your heads! – and pushed them up against the wall, legs apart. They grabbed one man and beat him savagely. When he finally slumped over like a floppy doll, he was dragged outside. A scream; a shot was fired. Hamdo recoiled.*

*Daily, it would prove, Omarska echoed with such screams: the screams of those being “interrogated” by Serb camp guards determining who took part in the “Muslim rebellion.” Those targeted for the worst treatment were the rich, the political leaders, and the intelligentsia. The guards would call out their victim’s name, drag him out of the room, and then beat him: with wooden batons, metal rods, rifle butts, knives, hammers, pipes filled with lead, and long lengths of thick industrial cable with metal affixed on both ends. Hamdo kept waiting for his name to be called, for the blows to fall on his neck and shoulders, to hear the sound of the rifle shot aimed at his back. But after the first day, when he was questioned about whether he had weapons, the names called out were those of other Muslims from Kozarac and Prijedor. Some returned, broken, forced into signing false confessions; others never returned.*

*Tadić, however, wasn’t a guard at Omarska. He was one of the gangs of local riffraff who seemed to have permission to come to the camp at will to deal out punishment. Such power allowed violent payback for old rivalries, whether over a girl or a karate match. Mehmedalija Huskić, who had known Tadić for twenty*



years, was brutally pistol-whipped by him. Mehmed Alić of Prijedor, who knew the Tadić family well, heard his son Enver being dragged off shouting “Dule, brother, how have I wronged you; why do you beat me?” Fikret Harambašić was beaten until he was naked and bleeding; Tadić then ordered another prisoner to bite his testicles off.

— Elizabeth Neuffer, *The Key to My Neighbor’s House – Seeking Justice in Bosnia and Rwanda* (New York: Picador USA, 2001), pp. 40-42.

Beginning in 1992, Serb nationalists, led by Slobodan Milosevic, carried out a campaign of “ethnic cleansing” against non-Serbs – Muslims and Croats – to run them off from their homeland in Bosnia. That campaign included mass murder, rape, incarceration in detention camps, torture, and destruction of most cultural and religious sites to eliminate any signs of a Muslim or Croat presence or history. (See, e.g., Power, pp. 249-51; James Waller, *Becoming Evil: How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 259.) Neither the US nor the international community did anything to stop the genocide. “[D]espite unprecedented public outcry about foreign brutality, for the next three and a half years the United States, Europe, and the United Nations stood by while some 200,000 Bosnians were killed, more than 2 million were displaced, and the territory of a multiethnic European republic was sliced into three ethnically pure statelets.” (Power, p. 251.)

Although the US was well informed of the atrocities, including the establishment of rape camps, nothing was done by the George H. W. Bush Administration to stop them. According to National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft, about once a week, during a time when some 70,000 Bosnians had been killed in seven months, President Bush would turn to Scowcroft and say, “Now tell me again what this is all about?” (Power, p. 287.) Had the people of the US tenaciously demanded action, President Bush would not have been asking that question of his National Security Advisor. We could have made certain he knew the answer.





Things did not get any better under the Clinton Administration, until, in mid-1995, action was finally taken by the US to deter the Serbs from their ongoing genocide. There is no doubt that much of the tragedy could have been prevented had the US and the international community intervened. (Margaret Thatcher was so distressed at the US passivity regarding the Bosnian genocide that she wondered aloud whether she should get into the “rent-a-spine business.” (Power, p. 301.))

In fact, the options for effective intervention to stop the genocide were so clear to many long-time foreign policy experts that they resigned in protest of US inaction, both during the Bush and the Clinton administrations. In 1992, George Kenney, the acting Yugoslav desk officer, resigned from the State Department, stating, “I can no longer in clear conscience support the Administration’s ineffective, indeed counterproductive, handling of the Yugoslav crisis.” (Power, p. 286.)

A year later, during the Clinton administration, a group of State Department officers resigned because of the passivity and failure of US policy toward the former Yugoslavia. Marshall Harris, the Bosnia desk officer, wrote, “I can no longer serve in a Department of State that accepts the forceful dismemberment of a European state and that will not act against genocide and the Serbian officials who perpetrate it.” (Power, p. 313.)



# THE SREBRENICA MASSACRE



*When the trucks stopped, we immediately heard shooting outside. . . The Chetnicks told us to get out, five at a time. I was in the middle of the group, and the men in front didn't want to get out. They were terrified, they started pulling back. But we had no choice, and when it was my turn to get out with five others, I*

*saw dead bodies everywhere . . . . They ordered us to lie down, and as I threw myself on the ground, I heard gunfire. I was hit in my right arm and three bullets went through the right side of my torso. I don't recall whether or not I fell on the ground unconscious. But I remember being frightened, thinking it would soon be all over. While lying there I heard others screaming and moaning. . . . The man next to me was moaning, and one of the Chetniks ordered the others to check and see what bodies were still warm. "Put a bullet through all the heads, even if they're cold." Another Chetnik replied, "Fuck their mothers! They're all dead!" Only one Chetnik came over to the pile and shot the man next to me, and I felt stones hitting the upper part of my right arm. He continued his job until he was done.*

— Jan Willem Honig and Norbert Both, *Srebrenica: Record of a War Crime* (New York: Penguin, 1996), p. 56, quoted at James Waller, *Becoming Evil – How Ordinary People Commit Genocide and Mass Killing* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 261.



In 1993, Srebrenica, a Muslim town in eastern Bosnia, was home to approximately 30,000 refugees seeking to escape Serb assaults. The Serbs pounded Srebrenica, confident the world would tolerate its continued genocide since nothing had been done by the international community up to that point to deter the Serbs.

During April, 1993, the Security Council of the United Nations passed a Resolution demanding that all sides to the conflict treat Srebrenica as a “safe area” and that the Serbs stop their attacks and withdraw from the area. Refugees counted on the “safe area” designation, not aware that the United Nations and its member states were unwilling to actually do anything to back up the demands of the Resolution.

On July 6, 1995, the Serbs, emboldened by the passivity of the international community, engaged in the worst war crime since World War II. “While the world stood by and watched, Serb forces advanced into the ‘safe area’ and rounded up tens of thousands of refugees. Some 23,000 Muslim women and children were separated from the men and deported. The women were ‘reassured’ that everyone would be bussed out and safely reunited. . . . Over the next several days, the Serb forces executed between 5,000 and 8,000 unarmed Muslim men and boys (some as young as ten years of age) . . . on football fields, in gymnasiums, and in abandoned factories and warehouses. The bodies of the victims were then bulldozed into mass graves.” (Waller, pp. 259-60.)

The pathetic failure of the US to act in Bosnia was eloquently summed up as follows:

*The United States seems to be taking a sabbatical from historical seriousness, blinding itself to genocide and its consequences, fleeing the moral and practical imperatives of its own power. . . . You Americanize the war or you Americanize the genocide. Since the United States is the only power in the world that can stop the ethnic cleansing, the United States is responsible if the ethnic cleansing continues.*

Leon Wieseltier, “Accomplices to Genocide,” *The New Republic*, August 7, 1995, p. 7.





# THE RWANDA GENOCIDE



*It was around the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 1994 that we started to spend the night in sorghum fields and in the woods. People were being pursued during the day, killed or tortured. When I saw this, I put my little brother on my back, for Mama was pregnant. The killers found me in the forest and beat me on the feet. The girls with me were raped. It was useless to hide. We knew we had to die. . . .*

*Our clothes were taken. We were told to pray, for it was our last day. After our prayer, they began to beat the old, for, they said, the old ones knew the whole history of the Inkotanyi [Rwandan Patriotic Front]. They took our grandfather . . . and his sons, three in number, and beat them to death with nail-studded clubs. They attacked everyone, even the little boys.*

— Bernardine Nirirora, “Bearing Witness,” *The New Killing Fields: Massacre and the Politics of Intervention* (edited by Nicolaus Mills and Kira Brunner) (New York: Basic Books, 2002), p. 101.

In April 1994, a systematic campaign began in Rwanda to kill Tutsis and those who objected to the killing. Mostly by means of hacking people to death with machetes, Hutus slaughtered some 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus in 100 days. The US and the UN could have prevented the genocide, but did nothing. In his book, *Shake Hands With the Devil: The Failure of Humanity in Rwanda* (Toronto: Random House Canada, 2003), Roméo Dallaire, the UN military commander in Rwanda, has described in detail “how the international community, through an inept UN mandate and what can only be described as indifference, self-interest and racism, aided and abetted these crimes against humanity.” (*Id.* p. 5.) Dallaire summarizes the situation as follows:



*[T]he root of it all... is the fundamental indifference of the world community to the plight of seven to eight million black Africans in a tiny country that had no strategic or resource value to any world power. An overpopulated little country that turned in on itself and destroyed its own people, as the world watched and yet could not manage to find the political will to intervene.*

Dallaire, p. 6.

Dallaire describes the simple steps that could have been taken, particularly by the US, France, and the UN, to prevent the genocide, or at least stop it soon after it began:

*Could we have prevented the resumption of the civil war and the genocide? The short answer is yes. If UNAMIR had received the modest increase of troops and capabilities we requested in the first week, could we have stopped the killings? Yes, absolutely. Would we have risked more UN casualties? Yes, but surely soldiers and peacekeeping nations should be prepared to pay the price of safeguarding human life and human rights. If UNAMIR 2 had been deployed on time and as requested, would we have reduced the prolonged period of killing? Yes, we would have stopped it much sooner.*

*...I truly believe the missing piece in the puzzle was the political will from France and the United States to make the Arusha accords work and ultimately move this imploding nation toward democracy and a lasting peace. There is no doubt that those two countries possessed the solution to the Rwandan crisis.*

Dallaire, p. 514.





Linda Melvern details how the US, other nations, and the United Nations could have made an enormous difference in preventing or stopping the Rwandan genocide, and of their failure to act:

*As permanent members of the UN Security Council, the UK and the US could have taken action in accordance with the Convention, “to call upon the competent organs of the UN to take action under the Charter”. They chose not to do so.*

*Instead, they undermined international law over Rwanda and made a mockery of the Convention. Both states resisted even using the word genocide, which would appear to indicate that they were aware that it carried some form of obligation to act. They showed deeply troubling indifference to genocide and a willful neglect of the obligations enshrined in law. In both London and Washington, and at the UN in New York, there were politicians and civil servants who took decisions that cost the lives of an incalculable number of people.*

Linda Melvern, *Conspiracy to Murder: The Rwandan Genocide* (London, New York: Verso, 2004), p. 263.

*Major-General Dallaire was, in his own words, “left to hang out and dry” by those countries who were in positions of power in the Council, with the means to help, and yet who refused to do so. Both Britain and the US possessed the military and logistical capabilities that could have made a significant difference. Instead policies were adopted that did not impede the genocide and then helped to prolong it.*

Melvern, p. 260.





# HUMAN TRAFFICKING



*I met Sahana when she was nineteen years old. She was an illiterate Nepali woman who possessed two valuable qualities: she was young and she was pretty. Her face earned her family the equivalent of fifty pounds when she was sold, aged twelve, to a brothel in India. It also earned her ten customers a day and HIV. She no longer works as a prostitute. This is not because she has been rescued from prostitution, or because she has found a happier livelihood, but because she is going to die. She was ejected from her caged brothel in Mumbai because she had become too thin to attract the clients, and the brothel owner thought she was a bad advertisement for business.*

— Louise Brown, *Sex Slaves – The Trafficking of Women in Asia* (London: Virago Press, 2000), p. 1.

The trafficking in human beings, including the sexual slavery of millions of women and girls, is constantly increasing, due in large part to the absence of a compelling public call for governments to take effective measures to prevent the trafficking and to prosecute the traffickers.

*Trafficking in persons is considered to be one of the leading criminal enterprises of the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century, affecting every country around the globe. It is estimated that between 600,000 and 800,000 people are trafficked across borders each year. If trafficking within countries is included in the total world figures, official U.S. estimates are that 2 to 4 million people are trafficked annually. . . . The International Labor Office*

*(ILO) estimates that there are some 12.3 million victims of forced labor at any given time. Of these victims, 80% are thought to be women and some 50% are thought to be under 18 years old.*

*Traffickers acquire their victims in a number of ways. Sometimes women are kidnapped outright in one country and taken forcibly to another. In other cases, victims are lured with phony job offers. Traffickers entice victims to migrate voluntarily with false promises of well-paying jobs in foreign countries as au pairs, models, dancers, domestic workers, etc. Traffickers advertise these “jobs” as well as marriage opportunities abroad in local newspapers.*

*Trafficking victims are often subjected to cruel mental and physical abuse in order to keep them in servitude, including beating, rape, starvation, forced drug use, confinement, and seclusion. . . Victims are forced to have sex, often unprotected, with large numbers of partners, and to work unsustainably long hours. Many victims suffer mental break-downs and are exposed to sexually-transmitted diseases, including HIV and AIDS. They are often denied medical care and those who become ill are sometimes even killed.*

“Trafficking in Persons: The U.S. and International Response,” Francis T. Miko, Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Trade Division, Congressional Research Service, Updated July 7, 2006, CSR pp. 1, 3-4.

The hypocrisy and inaction of the United States – not uncharacteristic of the rest of the world – is made apparent from the following righteous pronouncement and the outrageous reality:

**PRONOUNCEMENT** (by President George W. Bush):

*Human trafficking is one of the worst offenses against human dignity. Our nation is determined to fight that crime abroad and at home.*

*It takes a special kind of depravity to exploit and hurt the most vulnerable members of society. Human traffickers rob children of their innocence, they expose them to the worst of life before they have seen much of life. Traffickers tear families apart. They treat their victims as nothing more than goods and commodities for sale to the highest bidder.*

*Worldwide, at least 600,000 to 800,000 human beings are trafficked across international borders each year. Of those, it is believed that more than 80 percent are women and girls, and that 70 percent of them were forced into sexual servitude. The*

*United Nations believes that the trafficking of human beings is now the third largest source of money for organized crime, after arms and drugs. We've got a problem; we need to do something about it.*

President George W. Bush, Tampa, Florida, July 16, 2004.

## **THE REALITY:**

*President Bush decided Wednesday [more than a year after the above-quoted pronouncement] to waive any financial sanction on Saudi Arabia, Washington's closest Arab ally in the war on terrorism, for failing to do enough to stop the modern-day slave trade in prostitutes, child sex workers and forced laborers.*

*In June, the State Department listed 14 countries as failing to adequately address trafficking problems, subjecting them all to possible sanctions if they did not crack down.*

*Of those 14, Bush concluded that Bolivia, Jamaica, Qatar, Sudan, Togo and the United Arab Emirates had made enough improvements to avoid any [sanctions], said Darla Jordan, a State Department spokeswoman.*

*Cambodia and Venezuela were not considered to have made similar adequate improvements. But Bush cleared them nonetheless to receive limited assistance . . . .*

*In addition to Saudi Arabia, Ecuador and Kuwait – another U.S. ally in the Middle East – were given a complete pass on any sanctions, Jordan said. . . .*

*That left Myanmar, Cuba and North Korea as the only nations in the list of 14 barred completely from receiving certain kinds of aid. . . .*

*The White House statement offered no explanation of why countries were regarded differently. Jordan also could not provide one.*

“Bush Waives Saudi Trafficking Sanctions,” Associated Press, September 21, 2005.

The absence of concrete data supporting the categorization of nations under US federal law has led some, including the Inter-American Dialogue and Human Rights Watch, “to suspect that the Tier 3 list [the list of nations that are purported to have the worst human trafficking problems] is shaped more by politics than reality.” (Katherine Stapp, “Human Trafficking Report Blames the Usual Suspects,” Inter Press Service News Agency, June 9, 2006.)



*No one believes that the laws of a single nation can halt the huge and lucrative trade in women, which ranks in dollar terms just behind drug smuggling and black-market weapons sales. The U.S. law with its stiff economic sanctions could have gone a long way toward sparing thousands of girls from a life of sexual slavery. But the fact remains that the trafficking situation is getting worse – far worse. And while those who should know better dance the diplomatic tango, tens of thousands of innocent young women and girls are ending up as sex slaves.*

*The U.S. government decided it would become the world sheriff. No one forced it to take on the role. Yet ever since it strapped on its six-guns, the actions of its senior deputies have trivialized the process by rewarding recalcitrance. The Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act was an extraordinary opportunity to promote actions that could save the lives and health of many women and girls. That opportunity has been largely squandered.*

Malarek, p. 208.

Complicity-through-inaction by national governments is largely responsible for the world-wide human trafficking tragedy. Those governments have failed to prevent trafficking and to prosecute traffickers largely because there has not been an effective demand by citizens for effective action.







# GLOBAL WARMING



*Climate change over the next 20 years could result in a global catastrophe costing millions of lives in wars and natural disasters.*

*A secret report, suppressed by US defence chiefs and obtained by The Observer, warns that major European cities will be sunk beneath rising seas as Britain is plunged into a 'Siberian' climate by 2020. Nuclear conflict, mega-droughts, famine and widespread rioting will erupt across the world.*

*The document predicts that abrupt climate change could bring the planet to the edge of anarchy as countries develop a nuclear threat to defend and secure dwindling food, water and energy supplies. The threat to global stability vastly eclipses that of terrorism, say the few experts privy to its contents.*

*'Disruption and conflict will be endemic features of life,' concludes the Pentagon analysis. 'Once again, warfare would define human life.'*

*The report was commissioned by influential Pentagon defence adviser Andrew Marshall, who has held considerable sway on US military thinking over the past three decades. . . .*

*Climate change 'should be elevated beyond a scientific debate to a US national security concern', say the authors . . . .*

— Mark Townsend and Paul Harris, "Now the Pentagon tells Bush: climate change will destroy us," *The Observer* (February 22, 2004).





The world is heating up rapidly as a result of deforestation and the enormous amount of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide and methane, being poured into the Earth's delicate atmosphere.<sup>3</sup> That warming has caused, and continues to cause, the melting of glaciers and ice caps, acidification of oceans, rising oceans, destruction of forests, extinction of species, droughts, floods, more intense hurricanes, killer heat waves, the introduction of disease-carrying insects to areas where they were previously non-existent, and destruction of communities and cultures. As more greenhouse gases are emitted into the atmosphere, and as the Earth warms even more, those consequences will become greater in number and more severe.<sup>4</sup>

The prospect of millions of people starving, being infected by mosquito-borne diseases, dying from heat waves, or being dislocated from coastal homes as a result of global warming renders efforts to radically reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and to prevent deforestation perhaps the most crucial measures that can now be undertaken to preserve fundamental human rights.

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3 The scientific consensus that our planet is rapidly warming and that human actions are causing the warming is overwhelming. The International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), in which thousands of scientists from over 100 countries have participated ("Overview of the Climate Change Issue," Sir John Houghton, St. Anne's College, Oxford, England, July 15, 2002; Ross Gelbspan, *Boiling Point* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), p. 24), was created in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environmental Programme. In its 2007 assessment, the IPCC concluded that the Earth's warming is caused by human activities, particularly the burning of fossil fuels and deforestation: "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observations of increases in global average air and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising global mean sea level. . . . Most of the observed increase in globally averaged temperatures since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic greenhouse gas concentrations. Discernible human influences now extend to other aspects of climate, including ocean warming, continental-average temperatures, temperature extremes, and wind patterns." (IPCC 2007 Report.)

The national scientific academies of at least 20 nations, including the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, China, and Japan, all agree that human activities are causing a dramatic increase in atmospheric greenhouse gases, leading to higher global temperatures. ("Joint Science Academies' Statement: Global Response to Climate Change," June 2005 ("[H]uman activities are now causing atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases . . . to rise well above pre-industrial levels. Carbon dioxide levels have increased from 280 ppm in 1750 to over 375 ppm today – higher than any previous levels that can be reliably measured (i.e. in the last 420,000 years). Increasing greenhouse gases are causing temperatures to rise . . . It is vital that all nations identify cost-effective steps that they can take now, to contribute to substantial and long-term reduction in net global greenhouse gas emissions."); "The Science of Climate Change," Joint Statement issued by sixteen national science academies, May 17, 2001.) "In recent years, all major scientific bodies in the United States whose members' expertise bears directly on the matter [e.g. National Academy of Sciences, the American Meteorological Society, the American Geophysical Union, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science] have issued similar statements." *Science*, December 3, 2004 (Vol. 306 no. 5702), p. 1686.

4 John Houghton, *Global Warming – The Complete Briefing* (Third Edition) (Cambridge: University Press, 2004), 143-90; Ross Gelbspan, *Boiling Point* (New York: Basic Books, 2004); Paul Brown, *Global Warming – Can Civilization Survive?* (London: Blandford, 1996); Tim Flannery, *The Weather Makers – The History & Future Impact of Climate Change* (Melbourne: Text Publishing, 2005), pp. 88-150.





# THE ROLE OF INDIVIDUAL INDIFFERENCE AND INACTION

## ABSENCE OF GRASS ROOTS ADVOCACY

### **An Essential, Yet Absent, Element in Effectively Addressing the Challenges: Grassroots Advocacy and Organizing**

Our elected officials and others in positions of power throughout the world historically have not provided leadership in initiating effective responses to major human rights abuses. History shows that, for them to take action, they almost always have to be led, usually by ordinary people who learn of the abuses or the prospect of abuses and who demand that something be done to stop or prevent them. These officials normally respond only when there is sufficient public and political pressure brought to bear – by the media (which has an abysmal record of reporting on many of the major human rights crises around the world) and by people who are aware and concerned enough to call for action. When the media and the public do *not* apply sufficient pressure for positive action, nothing is normally done – either by the US government or by the United Nations.

## MEDIA NEGLECT

### **Failure by the Media to Inform Has Contributed to the Failure by the United States to Effectively Respond to Major Human Rights Abuses**

The Jewish Labor Bund in Poland compiled a summary of verified massacres in May 1942, tracing the path of Nazi genocide through Poland, with compelling descriptions. The Bund report described the Chelmno killing center: “For gassing a special vehicle (gas chamber) was used in which 90 people were loaded at a time. . . . On the average, 1,000 people were gassed every day.” The Bund “estimated the number of Polish Jewish victims to be 700,000 already. Their conclusions: Germany had set out to ‘annihilate all the Jews in Europe’ and millions of Polish Jews faced imminent death.” (Wyman, p. 21.)





The US press responded anemically to this compelling evidence of the commencement of the Holocaust. Probably the first newspaper account of the Bund report was in the *Boston Globe* on June 26 – at the bottom of page 12. The *Seattle Times* published an article about the Bund report on page 30, under a small headline, “700,000 Jews Reported Slain.” The *New York Times* condescended to devote two inches to the Bund report on June 27, noting that 700,000 Polish Jews had been slain, quoting the BBC’s disclosure that “to accomplish this, probably the greatest mass slaughter in history, every death-dealing method was employed – machine-gun bullets, hand grenades, gas chambers, concentration camps, whipping, torture instruments and starvation.” Two inches to report “the greatest mass slaughter in history”! (On July 2, the Times did publish a thorough summary of the Bund report – on page 6.) (Wyman, pp. 22-23.)

In August of the same year, a World Jewish Congress representative learned of Hitler’s plan to systematically murder all European Jews. The State Department did not believe the report and asked American Jewry’s foremost leader, Stephen Wise, to withhold public comment until the information could be verified. Wise complied with the request. More than three months later, Undersecretary of State Sumner Welles informed Wise that the information was accurate. By that time, 2 million Jewish civilians had been killed. Wise released the information to the media.

*This historic announcement, informing the press for the first time of Germany’s campaign to exterminate the European Jews, appeared in The New York Times the next day in a seven and one-half inch report on page 10. The Washington Post allotted the news less than three inches, buried on page 6. Coverage in the rest of the American press was similarly sparse. . . . [A]s additional information became available in the weeks and months that followed, the press continued to treat the systematic murder of millions of Jews as though it were minor news. Information about the European Jewish catastrophe, though readily available, was almost never adequately covered in the American news media until the concentration camps were opened in the closing days of World War II.*

Wyman, pp. 29-30. See, also, Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (Cambridge: University Press, 2005).

During the bloodbath in Cambodia, when some 2 million people died as a result of Pol Pot’s brutality, in the *Washington Post* and *New York Times* “[o]nly two or three stories a year focused on the human rights situation under the Khmer Rouge.” (Power, p. 111.) And the television coverage was even worse. “Between April and June 1975, when one might





have expected curiosity to be high, the three major networks combined gave Cambodia just under two and a half minutes of airtime. During the entire three and a half years of KR rule, the networks devoted less than sixty minutes to Cambodia, which averaged less than thirty seconds per month per network. ABC carried one human rights story about Cambodia in 1976 and did not return to the subject for two years.” (*Id.*)

The same media passivity – one might characterize it as complicity – regarding genocide has been apparent for several years regarding the ongoing genocide in Sudan. “Today, while the crisis in the Sudan has escalated to full-throttle genocide, mainstream media still minimize and misunderstand genocide. . . . [T]he media has missed the story. During President Bush’s press briefing last week, not a single reporter raised the question of his administration’s inaction in the Sudanese genocide.” (Camille Jackson, “Media and Genocide: Burying the News?,” Tolerance.org, May 5, 2005.)

The news media’s coverage of global warming and the resulting catastrophic climate change has been abysmal – making the media an accomplice in the irresponsible inaction by the US federal government.

*Although the scientific community has known since 1995 that we are changing our climate, the U.S. press has done a deplorable job in disseminating that information, and all its implications, to the public.*

*Prior to his withdrawal from Kyoto, President Bush declared he would not accept the findings of the IPCC – because the organization represented “foreign science,” even though about half of the 2,000 scientists whose work contributes to the IPCC reports are American. Instead, Bush called for a report from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences that would provide “American science.”*

*Astonishingly, even as the Washington press corps reported this story, few – if any – reporters bothered to check the position of the NAS. Had they done so, they would have found that as early as 1992, three years before the IPCC determined that we are changing the climate by our burning of oil and coal, the NAS recommended strong measures to minimize climate impacts.*

*For many years, the press accorded the same weight to the “skeptics” as it did to mainstream scientists. This was done in the name of journalistic balance. In fact, it was journalistic laziness.*



*The ethic of journalistic balance comes into play when there is a story involving opinion. . . . But when it's a question of fact, it's up to a reporter to dig into a story and find out what the facts are. The issue of balance is not relevant when the focus of a story is factual. In this case, what is known about the climate comes from the largest and most rigorously peer-reviewed scientific collaboration in history.*

*Given the dramatic increase in extreme weather events, one might think that journalists, in covering these stories, would include the line: "Scientists associate this pattern of violent weather with global warming." They don't.*

*A few years ago, a top editor at a major TV network was asked why, given the increasing proportion of news budgets dedicated to weather disasters, the network news broadcasts did not make this connection. The editor said, "We did that. Once. But it triggered a barrage of complaints from the Global Climate Coalition to our top executives at the network." (The GCC was, at the time, the main fossil fuel industry lobbying group opposing action on global warming.)*

Gelbspan, pp. 68-70, 72-73, 79-80.

**High Road for Human Rights** will focus much of its effort on engaging the media's sustained attention on major human rights abuses. Such coverage will help mobilize the public to advocate for effective solutions and will also provide pressure upon elected officials to take necessary action.

**High Road** will organize local opinion leaders to meet with local news reporters, editorial boards, and news management to provide information and push for coverage of issues upon which **High Road** is focusing. Also, local events will be held that will attract news coverage. On a national level, **High Road** will monitor news coverage and push tenaciously for better and more frequent coverage of **High Road's** issues.

Although millions of men, women, and children are enslaved each year, many of whom are coerced to work in the sex trade, the media coverage is scant.

*[M]edia need to broaden the scope of reportage. The story of child sexual exploitation in general and its commercial aspects in particular is not being told in full.*

"Prime Time for Children: Media, Ethics and Reporting of Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children," Working Document for the World Congress Against Sexual Exploitation of Children (International Federation of Journalists, Brussels, June 15, 1996).



*“The public should recognise and use their power, as audiences and consumers, to affect media policy, for instance through lobbying and consumer boycotts.”*

Id.

## **PUBLIC SILENCE AND THE FAILURE OF LEADERSHIP**

### **The Absence of a Call to Action by the Public Leads to Inaction by Public Officials**

During the Holocaust, there was very little political pressure brought to bear by the public at large on the Roosevelt administration to rescue those who were otherwise doomed to almost certain death. Elie Wiesel describes the moral and political abandonment by the US as follows:

*Roosevelt’s politics was only part of the problem; the rest had to do with the particular mood of the country at that time. . . [A] few striking instances of it [were]: the Congress’s unequivocal opposition to immigration, the Christian churches’ near-silence, the press’s burial of news of the death factories in the back pages of their newspapers. It is all very clear: this open, generous country closed its doors and its heart to the European Jews of the ghettos.*

Wyman, p. ix.

The absence of a public call to action in the US with regard to the Rwanda genocide led to the Clinton administration’s and Congress’s failure to act to stop the atrocities.

*The phones in congressional offices were not ringing. Representative Alcee Hastings (D.-Fla.) later recalled, “. . . Africa seems so far away, and there is no vital interest that my constituency sees.” No significant Rwandan diaspora lived in the United States; few African Americans identify specific ancestral homelands and lobby on their behalf in the way Armenians, Jews, or Albanians might. On May 13 Senator Paul Simon (D.-Ill.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on Africa, and Senator James Jeffords of Vermont, the ranking Republican on the subcommittee, telephoned General Dallaire in Kigali and asked what he needed. A desperate Dallaire told them if he had 5,000 troops he could end the massacres. The senators immediately drafted and hand-delivered a note to the White House requesting that the U.S. get the Security Council to authorize the deployment of*



*troops. “Obviously there are risks involved,” the letter read, “but we cannot continue to sit idly by while this tragedy continues to unfold.” The senators got no reply. When they called to follow up ten days later, they were unable to reach National Security Adviser Lake but were told by another official, “We don’t feel there is a base of public support for taking any action in Africa.” . . . Simon believes public pressure might have altered the U.S. response. “If every member of the House and Senate had received 100 letters from people back home saying we have to do something about Rwanda, when the crisis was first developing, then I think the response would have been different,” Simon said.*

Power, pp. 376-77

Organized citizen advocacy, through a collaboration of religious and civic organizations, student groups, political associations, and thousands of individuals (including opinion-leaders), can cause government officials to take effective action to stop human rights atrocities. It happened in connection with the creation of the War Refugee Board during the Holocaust, however late it might have been.<sup>5</sup> In the absence of such advocacy, no humanitarian intervention occurred in Cambodia, Rwanda, or Srebrenica, and only after several years in Bosnia. For the past several years, genocide has been occurring in the Darfur region of Sudan, where hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children have been killed and more than a million people have been displaced from their homes as a result of orchestrated ethnic cleansing.

There is, and almost always has been, a missing link in what is required for effective action to bring about real results in stopping genocide and other tragic human rights abuses, as well as in doing what is required to protect the global climate. In most cases, information has been readily available to government officials regarding the commission of major abuses and the tragic results of continuing to emit into the atmosphere billions of tons of global warming pollutants every year.

By 1942, the US government knew of the Nazi campaign to annihilate European Jewry. The US government knew of the horrendous abuses, including gang rapes, torture, concentration camps, murders, and mass displacements, in Bosnia, Srebrenica, and Kosovo. The US government and the United Nations also knew of the highly-efficient, savage genocide carried out in Rwanda.

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<sup>5</sup> Will Rogers, Jr., a former member of the US House of Representatives, recalls the tenacious and effective advocacy of Peter Bergson and his associates during the Holocaust: “The major achievement of the Bergson group was making things so hot for the administration that they could no longer do nothing. There had to be some action. And so they did set up the War Refugee Board. And that was due to the actions of the Bergson committee.” Wyman and Medoff, p. 155.







We currently know that hundreds of thousands of people have died in Sudan as a result of the genocide there. We know that millions of people are enslaved each year, including girls and women forced into sexual slavery. We also know about the catastrophic consequences of continuing to build up the atmospheric carbon blanket by burning fossil fuels with reckless abandon. However, even with the knowledge regarding all of those human rights disasters, something has been missing that, had it existed, would have saved millions of lives and unimaginable tragedy.

Why has the knowledge of mass atrocities and disastrous global warming not led to effective action by our government or by the international community? The answer is remarkably simple: The President of the US, the foreign policy bureaucracy, and Congress have failed to respond absent a compelling demand by the public for action.

*[T]he members of Congress [are] the ones . . . who walk around town with their fingers held high in the air, having just licked them and put them up to see which way the wind is blowing. . . . The political leaders are really very good at figuring out the direction of the wind, and are quite used to quickly moving in that direction.*

*It's not a matter of malice for most of them. I've met quite a few politicians, and in fact many came to Washington because they truly wanted to do the right thing. But after a while, they get entrenched in Washington's ways, and change seems ever more distant. Power and wealth are the real governors here, and people adjust to those realities. Even the ones who still really want to make a difference will tell you they can't without public backing, and they don't often find it.*

*Many of us believe that by replacing one wet-fingered politician with another, we can change our society. But it never really works, and when it doesn't we get disillusioned. We then get tempted to just grumble, withdraw, or give up altogether on ever changing anything. But that's where we make our mistake.*

*The great practitioners of real social change, like Martin Luther King Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi, understood something very important. They knew that you don't change a society by merely replacing one wet-fingered politician with another. You change a society by changing the wind.*

Jim Wallis, *God's Politics* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005), pp. 21-22.





Writing about the seeming US indifference to genocide and the resulting lack of effective action to prevent or put an end to massive atrocities, Samantha Power explains how public apathy leads to governmental indifference and inaction, and how, in a destructive cycle, the lack of governmental leadership leads to public inattention and ignorance:

*. . . It takes political pressure to put genocide on the map in Washington. When Alison Des Forges of Human Rights Watch met with National Security Adviser Anthony Lake two weeks into the Rwanda genocide, he informed her that the phones were not ringing. “Make more noise!” he urged. Because so little noise has been made about genocide, U.S. decision-makers have opposed U.S. intervention, telling themselves that they were doing all they could – and, most important, all they should – in light of competing American interests and a highly circumscribed understanding of what was domestically “possible” for the United States to do.*

*In the end, however, the inertia of the governed can not be disentangled from the indifference of the government. American leaders have both a circular and a deliberate relationship to public opinion. It is circular because their constituencies are rarely if ever aroused by foreign crises, even genocidal ones, in the absence of political leadership, and yet at the same time U.S. officials continually cite the absence of public support as grounds for inaction.*

Power, p. 509.

The cycle of ignorance, indifference, and inaction *can* be broken. Grassroots organization, consciousness-raising, and advocacy can prevent or stop vast human rights atrocities. That is the purpose of High Road for Human Rights. With the help and participation of people throughout the United States, we can work together like never before to build a more just, safe, and compassionate world.





# RESPONSE LEADING TO EFFECTIVE ACTION

**High Road for Human Rights has a simple and effective three-prong strategy:**

- 1. TARGET ISSUES.** Target a small number of select issues, and concrete objectives, upon which High Road will focus with sustained, laser-like intensity. All High Road efforts, both nationally and locally, will be devoted to those precise issues and objectives.<sup>6</sup>
- 2. EDUCATE.** Educate and raise consciousness about the issues and objectives. Through those efforts, High Road will provide the information and motivation necessary for people to join in organizing to act for concrete change.
- 3. ACT.** Through an educated and motivated national and local network, create political pressure to force elected officials to take effective action.

We will provide principled, sustained public education, advocacy, and coordinated action through **High Road for Human Rights** to stop and prevent major human rights abuses. **High Road** will organize chapters in local communities throughout the country. Through those chapters, as well as the central national organization, **High Road** will work with civic and religious organizations, students, and a diverse group of other people to educate the public about major human rights and climate protection issues. **High Road** will organize effective action to stop serious human rights abuses and to protect the global climate.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, some of **High Road's** initial efforts may be focused on the concrete objectives of (a) the enactment of legislation prohibiting waivers of foreign aid penalties for countries that condone sexual slavery; (b) combating global warming by prohibiting the new construction of coal-burning power plants and requiring a certain percentage of electricity to be produced by clean, renewable sources such as wind, geothermal, or solar; (c) ending genocide in the Darfur region of Sudan by legislating effective economic sanctions to stop the Sudanese government from supporting the Janjaweed militias, supporting the prosecution of genocide perpetrators in the International Criminal Court, and joining in an international effort to stop attacks against native villagers; and (d) legislatively prohibiting torture and raising consciousness among the public about its use by US agents.



## Grass-Roots Strategies

Grass-roots strategies for raising the consciousness of people throughout the United States concerning crucial human rights and environmental issues, and subsequent effective measures to bring about positive change, will include the following:

- Meetings with editorial boards of local television stations and newspapers
- Presentations by local **High Road** members to church, school, and civic groups (e.g. Rotary and Kiwanis Clubs)
- Letters to, and meetings with, congressional representatives
- Ads on television and radio, and in newspapers

While the media was essentially ignoring the Holocaust, full page ads in newspapers, utilized by the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe to raise public consciousness about Hitler's campaign to annihilate European Jewry, were extremely effective, and helped lead the way to the creation of the War Refugee Board. (Wyman & Medoff, pp. 11, 40-41, 43-44, 65-66, 69, 73, 115-18; Wyman, pp. 143, 147.)

- Training of local chapter members in speaking on human rights and climate change issues, and in community organizing
- Preparation of compelling multi-media productions that can be replicated and presented by trained volunteers from the local community
- Development of elementary, middle school, high school, and college curricula on human rights and climate change
- Letters to the editor and op-ed pieces in local newspapers and magazines
- Attendance at town meetings of senators, representatives, and other government officials
- Organization of trips to the locations of human rights abuses and where climate change is vividly manifested for media representatives and community opinion leaders, leading to changes in public policy

In 1984 and 1987, in the midst of the US-sponsored Contra war in Nicaragua, I organized two trips to Nicaragua for groups of diverse people from Utah, including businesspeople, teachers, students, community activists, a television news team, and the editorial editor




for the largest daily newspaper in Utah. Many different initial viewpoints about US involvement in Central America were held among those who joined the delegations. Seeing what was occurring first-hand – much of which was far different than being represented by the Reagan administration and mainstream media – was extremely educational and motivating, leading to an eventual consensus among members of the groups about the disastrous and inhumane US policy in Central America. The trips generated significant shifts in individual and public opinion. Many of those who traveled to Nicaragua were moved to speak out in our community upon their return. The trips generated a three-part series in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, a several-part series on a major news station, and articles about those who traveled to Nicaragua and what they had learned, including a major newspaper profile of one of the trip participants, headlined “S.L. businessman works to educate public on Nicaragua.” (*Deseret News*, May 5, 1985.)

In 2006, the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives (ICLEI) sponsored a visit by approximately 30 US mayors to Anchorage, Alaska, to see first-hand the disastrous impacts of climate change in that area. Viewing rapidly melting glaciers and forests killed because beetles now survive warmer winters, and hearing from the mayor of an Inuit village being destroyed as a result of climate change, made an enormous impression on the mayors in attendance. This consciousness-raising experience led to commitments by mayors to implement major climate protection efforts in their cities.

- Documentary film showings, including human rights and climate change film festivals
- Organization of demonstrations
- Participation by local **High Road** members on radio and television talk shows
- Presentations at seminars, college classes, teach-ins
- Plays, concerts, festivals, and pageants

The pageant, “We Will Never Die,” presented in several large cities, helped to educate hundreds of thousands of people about the seriousness of the situation facing the Jewish people in Europe during the early 1940s and helped to mobilize political support for effective action to be taken to rescue Jews from the Holocaust. A Jewish columnist, Israel I. Taslitt, described the pageant as the “most powerful single weapon yet produced to awaken the conscience of America” about the Holocaust. (Wyman & Medoff, p. 36.)



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- Involvement in political campaigns, supporting candidates who pledge to effectively work to prevent and stop human rights abuses
  - Focus political campaigns on human rights and climate change matters
  - Solicitation of survey responses from candidates, seeking to elicit pledges to effectively work to protect human rights and the global climate
  - Sponsorship of candidate forums during political campaigns
  - Development of websites and blogs to maximize education, advocacy, and grassroots organization through the Internet
  - Development of effective messaging about human rights and climate change issues, utilizing focus groups, surveys, and proven marketing/branding techniques

These focused efforts will serve to educate and motivate. As more people are moved to action, **High Road** will provide a means of focusing their energy and actions toward constructive results.

For instance, in order to reduce the incidence of sexual slavery worldwide, High Road might identify as an effective objective the passage of legislation prohibiting the waiver of economic sanctions for nations that fail to effectively combat human trafficking. In order to achieve that objective, **High Road** could (1) generate op-ed pieces in local newspapers throughout the nation, as well as in national publications; (2) publish compelling ads in local and national publications informing the public about sexual slavery and demanding passage of the legislation; (3) organize the showing of films such as “The Day My God Died” and invite those who attend to join in the **High Road** grassroots campaign; (4) create a powerful multi-media presentation with a script to be utilized by a trained cadre of local-community speakers; (5) identify and provide support for members of Congress who will sponsor the legislation; (6) organize local speakers’ bureaus for presentations to faith groups, civic organizations, and schools; (7) organize people in every congressional district to attend every town meeting held by senators and representatives and demand support for the legislation; and (8) in every Senate and Congressional campaign, make support of the legislation a major issue by raising the topic at every possible debate and other campaign appearances.

Commonly, people learn of horrific tragedies and earnestly ask, “What can I do?” Too often, nothing is offered. **High Road** will be able to honestly respond, “There is plenty you can do – and it will make a real difference.” Unlike during so many tragic situations in the past, through **High Road’s** work the public will learn about what is occurring, many people will be motivated to take action, and there will be an organization to plan and execute public action to bring about positive change.



# CONCLUSION: NEVER AGAIN

*All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.*

After the Holocaust, many have proudly proclaimed, “Never Again.” However, because of the missing link of public education, advocacy, grassroots organization, and political pressure, our country and the international community have allowed genocide and other massive human rights abuses to be perpetrated with impunity – again... and again... and again.

This cycle of inhumanity, as well as the trend toward disastrous climate change, can be stopped with education, advocacy, organization, and political pressure. The unique approach of **High Road for Human Rights** will provide the means for people to join together, throughout the country, and effectively call for positive changes in national policies impacting human rights. In addition to addressing major human rights abuses currently being perpetrated, **High Road for Human Rights** will be capable of immediately mobilizing people when new challenges arise.

Imagine the lives that could have been saved, and the human misery avoided, had there been a nationwide organization in place that could have immediately mobilized to demand the expansion of immigration quotas when Hitler commenced his campaign to annihilate European Jews.

Imagine the positive difference that would have resulted around the world had people been organized, soon after scientists discovered the rapid human-caused warming of Earth, to effectively demand changes in national policies that would have reduced dependence on foreign oil and bolstered development of clean, renewable sources of energy.

Imagine what could have been done to save the lives of hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children in Rwanda. People in the US could immediately have been made aware of what was happening during the first days of the Rwandan genocide and been organized so they could effectively communicate to our federal government support for effective action to stop the butchery.

Imagine the human tragedy that could have been avoided had the people of the United States demanded the enactment and implementation of laws containing significant economic sanctions for those nations that condone slavery, including the trafficking of young girls and women who are forced to work in the sex trade.

Imagine the good that can result from caring people who raise their voices as one, demanding that our nation effectively respond to human rights abuses with compassion, consistent with our moral values.

*Imagine...*



HIGH ROAD *for*  
HUMAN RIGHTS  

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*Advocacy Project*

HIGH ROAD *for*  
HUMAN RIGHTS  

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*Education Project*



438 East 200 South | Salt Lake City, Utah 84111 | (801) 364-3560  
[www.highroadforhumanrights.org](http://www.highroadforhumanrights.org)

