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February 17, 2009

General James Jones, National Security Adviser  
The White House - NSC  
1600 PA Ave., NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear General Jones:

Last week, Admiral Dennis Blair testified to Congress about worldwide political turbulence and risk to America as a result of spreading economic hardship and our perceived failure of stewardship. I am writing to recommend an option to President Obama to confront these dangers boldly, with fresh ideas and an appreciation of "smart power" and the new global communication technologies.

## Enrolling Support for Vulnerable People

I suggest that President Obama ask the Vice President to chair a Working Group on Global Initiatives and invite former President Clinton (drawing upon the development work of the Clinton Global Initiative) and former President Carter (drawing upon the peace-building work of the Carter Center) to serve as members. The Working Group will enroll leaders of the nonprofit and private sectors and governments, here and abroad, to support NGOs and projects that *"help everyone, worldwide, get through the current economic difficulties; and especially the world's poorest and most vulnerable people."* It also will advise President Obama about fresh ideas.

This US leadership may seem hopeless, given the magnitude of the economic and political problems being created. However there are at least two large sources of new funds that Vice President Biden could organize to support development and humanitarian projects. And we know, from studies of

commitments to overarching humanitarian goals, that they are healthy political-ly, even when they only partly ameliorate hardship. The two sources of new support are:

1.) The Internet and Youth Support. President Obama's campaign raised more than \$700 million using the Internet, and especially tapping youth markets: Extend the idea worldwide to expand support of humanitarian and development NGOs. Young and idealistic people in all countries will respond to President Obama's (charismatic) leadership - and with joy, hope, and excitement that there is a leader who believes that people matter and that we are all in this together. [And, in the long run, this also will be a healthy investment for America and the world. The answer to the old geopolitical question, "Who will rule the world?" actually is demographic - i.e., it will be today's young people.]<sup>1</sup>

2.) Global Corporations and Image Advertising. The world's 100 largest global corporations now spend \$100 billion/year for global advertising (Attachment 1). Vice President Biden and former Presidents Clinton and Carter may find it easy - especially with the threat of protectionism - to shift 25% or more of these funds into high profile support for timely NGO projects. US global corporations should take the lead. If one billion people in the world subsist on less than \$1/day, these corporations could make a very large difference in many lives.

Three related ideas:

- Children's Nutrition and Health. I suggest a focus on the most vulnerable - i.e., children's nutrition and health in UDCs. America's leadership in international health could become one of the most politically resonate ideas in the foreign policy of the Obama Administration, and this is a good place to start. We can measure these needs and the rate of progress. If he is confirmed, Surgeon General Sanjay Gupta would be a natural leader and he has the background in global journalism to develop a strategy of smart power and leverage America's leadership. The NGO community is organized (the Global Health Council) and committed.

- Include arms control and security.

This global economic crisis should, as President Obama might put it, be a time *"to begin taking a serious look at arms control, and regional security, around the world. Especially in these times of hardship, we should help nations to invest in their*

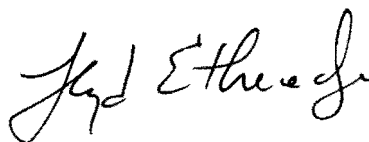
*people rather than buying weapons."*<sup>2</sup> Many thoughtful people, in all countries, will be joyful if President Obama and Vice President Biden try to advance this visionary agenda, including the eventual elimination of nuclear weapons. [Shaping a secure world based on mutual respect, and reducing expenditures on arms, also is a theme that will resonate with initiatives toward North Korea, Iran, and the Middle East.]<sup>3</sup>

- A US Regional Component. Vice President Biden might want to organize US leadership for regional responsibilities - in our case, working with Canada to set a good example to assist Mexico and Central America and other countries in our own hemisphere. [Earlier, during the Carter and Reagan years, the Arab oil embargo and a global recession drove GDP downward by 30% - 40% in Central America. These economic hardships, combined with the unresponsiveness of oligarchs and extreme income inequality, engendered revolutionary movements. The Carter Center became involved to broker long-term peace. Thus, Mr. Carter may have insights about new commodity stabilization or other economic measures to protect the region from renewed political turbulence.]

I enclose a recent overview paper for the US Institute of Peace, World Politics and Economic Hardship: Forecasts and Lessons from the Depression. It discusses these issues and, also, new research capabilities to monitor and understand these changes in world politics. In the 1930s it only required one Hitler to come to power in one country, and within a decade there were much larger problems. Vice President Biden's Working Group, and its success, will be one of the wisest investments that we can make.

If further discussion of these ideas would be useful, please call me. I can be contacted in the Washington, DC area at 301-365-5241.

Yours truly,



(Dr.) Lloyd S. Etheredge, Director  
Government Learning Project

cc: Vice President Joseph Biden, Hon. Jimmy Carter, Hon. Bill Clinton, Dr. Richard Solomon

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<sup>1</sup> If you want to pursue Internet options I can suggest specific projects - e.g., using Google Earth. A bold, global initiative for international health, a sort of goal-oriented Yes We Can/United Way, could use Google Earth.

<sup>2</sup> I believe that current numbers are about \$1 + trillion/year in world military expenditures and \$30+ billion/year for the international arms trade.

<sup>3</sup> With a light touch of high level leadership, a very interesting coalition of peace-building/prevention groups might be possible. We know that, with hard work and good intentions on both sides, it sometimes is possible to accomplish through communications what some people believe, now, only can be accomplished through violence. The US Institute of Peace, the Carter Center, and others have educational and applied projects along these lines. I know that there have been discussions within the American Psychological Association about placing curriculum materials online to support the development of conflict resolution/human rights curricula in secondary schools worldwide. There was an approach to US psychologists by the Islamic Mental Health Association in the 1990s for assistance with curriculum development ideas but funding did not seem to be available, and the request was at an earlier stage of the Internet when global access would have been more expensive and problematic.

Attachment 1

Top 20 Global Advertisers - Annual Media Spending (2006)

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Company</u>	<u>Spending (\$US million)</u>	
1	Proctor & Gamble	8,522	
2	Unilever	4,537	
3	General Motors	3,353	
4	L'Oreal	3,119	
5	Toyota	3,098	
6	Ford Motor	2,869	
7	Time Warner	2,136	
8	Nestle	2,114	
9	Johnson & Johnson	2,025	
10	Daimler/Chrysler	2,003	
11	Honda	1,910	
12	Coca-Cola	1,893	
13	Walt Disney	1,755	
14	GlaxoSmithKline	1,754	
15	Nissan Motor	1,670	
16	Sony	1,620	
17	McDonald's	1,611	
18	Volkswagen	1,609	
19	Reckitt Benckiser	1,550	
20	PepsiCo	<u>1,530</u>	
		50,678	
	Total: Top 100		97,760
	Total: Top 100 (outside US)		51,745

Source: [www.adage.com/datacenter](http://www.adage.com/datacenter): Advertising Age's 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Global Marketers: Part 1: Global Ad Spending by Marketer. (2007 Edition). Data collected from 90 countries, rankings are for companies advertising on at least three continents.