From Christiaan’s Desk:

Last week I intended to reflect a bit on the discrepancy between Treasurer Geithner’s bailout plan and the astute observation during the UNAUSA membership day that “all the central banks of the nations (and their ministers of Finance) cannot find a solution by themselves and the IMF and Worldbank are woefully under-equipped to handle the banking and economic crisis.”

Geithner’s plan, which got a thumbs down by those who control the mood on Wall Street, was not only scarce on details, it also was absent of acknowledgements that the policies of the USA need to be coordinated within a global framework. The need to seek cooperation from Saudi-Arabia, China and Japan, among others, is mentioned by just a few opinion makers, often on the fringe of the debates in DC. No wonder that abroad the policymakers started to worry about an American return to isolationism. Later in the week, Geithner traveled to Rome to meet his colleagues of the G7, where he got a more friendly reception than at Wall Street. He spent a lot of time assuring an American commitment to the principles of free trade (hopefully he will learn to say soon “fair” trade). The mood at this “financial” G7, where discussions precede the gathering of the G20 in April, must have been so depressing that it got the better of minister Shoichi Nakagawa of Japan, who seemed to have sought solace in a bottle. The G7 meeting concluded that national bailouts of banks are very necessary steps, but the policy makers did not make any further overtures towards collaboration. The president of the World Bank, Robert Zoellick, reacted with a strongly worded statement that national bailouts only worsen the global crisis, not resolve it. "In this moment, economic nationalism is neither economic

International Women’s Day 2009

March 3, 7 PM
International House, 3700 Chestnut Street

Our board member Anastasia Shown has pulled together a marvelous event to commemorate International Women’s Day. With support from friends and colleagues she has put together an extraordinary evening of speeches, fun and socializing around the courage of women.

Suraya Pakzad from Afghanistan and former congress woman Marjorie Margolies, current CEO of Women’s Campaign International, will speak on the need to advance women into the halls of political power. UNA-GP is sponsoring this event together with the Africa Studies Center, The South Asia Center, and UPenn’s Middle East Center. The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. And speaking from experience, males are more than welcome in joining the cause for the advancement of women in politics, business and social life.

Contact For More Information:
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nor nationalistic," Zoellick said, adding "what might be politically correct might be economically incorrect...The pull of national politics is very sharp but it's clear that the issues we are dealing with don't stop at national borders."

Today, Reuters reported that the City of Los Angeles has started the implementation of a water-rationing policy. What should that mean to the citizens of Philadelphia? Feeling lucky? Or for the citizens of Phoenix? A reckoning of human folly at hand? Or for the citizens of Johannesburg, where a radical shift in water tariffs is being proposed? Just like with banking, we should start thinking about these water issues on a global level, not only local.

It is to be hoped that our leaders in the United States take the daring step of thinking globally and cosmopolitan. We will be going for the lowest common denominator in solving global problems if we keep a nationalist or local focus. We want to be leaders, we want to be constructive leaders, but you need others who will accept your leadership. That means you need to know and respect their needs and their wants.

### Mid-Atlantic Regional Conference and UNA-USA Member’s Day

*write up by Marietta Tanner*

**Year of Change:**

*New Prospects for America and the United Nations*

On February 6, Christiaan, Marietta and Daniel traveled to the United Nations to attend the New Prospects conference, organized by the Mid-Atlantic Region. The conference was combined with the Membership Day for UNAUSA. The Century Foundation sponsored the conference and Jeffery Laurenti, UNAUSA National Director, was moderator. Scheduled to speak was the new US ambassador, Susan Rice, but Ramu Damodoran, Deputy Director of outreach for the UN department of public information, had to announce her regrets. Nevertheless, the conference radiated optimism and many were armed for a long day of debates.

There were three panels covering: Peace and Security, Human Rights and Climate Change.

Ambassador Abdelaziz, representative of Egypt, heralded the possibility of improved relations with the US in dealing with international disputes. He sees a new US spirit that may avoid acts of
war such as those experienced in Gaza and Lebanon. James Traub of the NYTimes magazine saw opportunities to overcome sovereignty induced intransigence. Britain’s ambassador, Karen Pierce, hoped that nations would take advantage of this transformational moment. She noted that the veto power was an inbuilt weakness in the Security Council, and those five nations will not be ready any time soon to relinquish the veto advantage. China’s rise will change the dynamics of the UN, but that will not immediately affect UN’s great problems.

The Declaration of Human rights may be the most translated document on earth, but its ubiquity might become its undoing, as it allows nations to avoid accountability for their own actions. Craig Mokhiber sees the “articulation to protect” as a wedge through the sovereignty issue, allowing the UN to step in within a nation when human rights are systematically being violated. Joanne Sandler of UNIFEM finally sees some real efforts taken to promote gender equality across the UN system. Shamina Deganzaga, Chair of the 2008 DPI0-NGO Conference, is pleased that Obama has embrace multilateralism, opening the door to dialogue; and Peter Maurer, permanent representative of Switzerland is hopeful that treaties can now be ratified and the US can become a key partner in the Human Rights agenda, taking part in the upcoming Geneva conference to surmount the negativism in western political circles around Durban II.

Tariq Banuri, Director of Sustainable Development, said that we cannot stabilize the atmosphere because we cannot put our carbon back in the earth. He hopes that all nations, including China and India, can be partners in the upcoming sustainability talks. Bonnie Harken, of Natutilus International Development Corp discussed urban flooding and took New York City as an example of waterfront solutions and adaptive ecology. Heather Kendall-Miller, a lawyer and an Athabascan native of Alaska, has devoted her career to empowering traditional people who are now suffering displacement from warmer winters and thinner ice which have made their subsistence activities hazardous and unproductive. The consensus among experts seemed to be that we have reached the stage where there can be no room for excess emissions quotas; everyone has to work toward a global policy of zero emissions.

**Enid Adler** was at the UN all of last week at the resumed 7th Session of the Assembly of States Parties (ASP) of the International Criminal Court. The USA is not (yet) a state party. ([http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ASP/ASP+Home.htm](http://www.icc-cpi.int/Menus/ASP/ASP+Home.htm)) She met Secretary General Ban Ki-moon at the Assembly reception and according to Enid, “He seems very pleasant”. The work of the Assembly this time focused on the “Crime of Aggression,” the fourth crime to come under the ICC’s jurisdiction once the definition and other issues will be agreed upon by the ASP. It’s all very complex, since the ACT of Aggression involves a decision by the UN Security Council, while the ICC will deal with the CRIME of Aggression.

We are all looking forward to a debriefing meeting from Enid. **Keep your eyes out for more information.**

Ban Ki-moon with Board member Enid Adler
Join the Philadelphia Global Water Initiative for an interactive conference where we will bring together experts:

- To explore how the public health sector professionals and those in the water/sanitation sector can work together more effectively in meeting the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) for 2015 and beyond
- To provide a forum for public health and water/sanitation professionals to exchange ideas and build a platform for future collaborations
- To identify public health – water/sanitation research questions
- To build momentum toward the national APHA meeting to be held in Philadelphia in November 2009

**April 3, 2009, 5 p.m. - 7 p.m.:**
Reception at the Fairmount Water Works Interpretive Center (640 Waterworks Drive, Philadelphia PA 1913) Refreshments will be served; entertainment by Sarah Davis – please register in advance!

**April 4, 2009, 8 a.m. - 5 p.m.:**
All day conference with speakers from Houston, New York, Baltimore, Washington DC and Philadelphia. Panel discussions, Plenary debate ending with a Social Gathering and Poster Session on location – an opportunity for informal discussions; posters from students, from sponsoring organizations and from leaders in Philadelphia. Breakfast, lunch and light refreshments will be served

The conference will take place at
The College of Physicians of Philadelphia
19 South 22nd Street, Philadelphia, PA

To register, to display your project or research in a poster, or for more information, email Cassandra Partyka at partykaa@sas.upenn.edu.

The Philadelphia Global Water Initiative is a group of interested organizations and individuals committed to helping to meet the UN Millennium Development Goals for water & sanitation throughout the world. It includes the University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia Water Department, Water for People, Aqua America, Pennoni Associates, US Environmental Protection Agency, Uhl, Baron, Rana and Associates, Delaware River Basin Commission, the United Nations Association Greater Philadelphia Chapter, Traveling Mercies, Keiyo Soy Ministries.
The Philadelphia based Project for Nuclear Awareness organized an advocacy trip to the Congress in DC. The UNA-GP and the local chapter of the Physicians for Social Responsibility sponsored this event and our members Marietta Tanner, Wayne Jacoby, Christiaan Morssink, and Craig Eisendrath climbed on board a bus at 7AM to join 37 others.

Headed by PNAers Ed Aguilar and Elizabeth Erickson the troupe was instructed, briefed, and properly ordered by the time we reached THE HILL. Seven groups met with members of the senate and congress, all having a role in one of the relevant committees, from energy to armed forces and foreign policy. Our group, visited the offices of Reps. John Salazar D-Co, Glenn Nye, D-Va., Zach Space, D-Oh, and Charles Dent, R-Pa. In each case we met with their assistants, young and friendly and able. Our purpose was to get the house to reduce spending on nuclear forces and missile defense and consolidate nuclear spending under the Energy Department. To do this, funds need to be diverted to threat reduction, waste management and environmental cleanup, with greater oversight and safeguards of nuclear power plants. Another important point was our advocacy for compensation of US veterans and Native American residents who had been exposed to the fallout of nuclear test sites.

Lastly we urged courage to take the relative easy step of removing most of the nuclear warheads from the current hair-trigger alert, thus providing great positive signals to the world. This would eliminate the immediate danger of complete annihilation and would not at all diminish US security. In all cases we urged the staffers to see the PNA as a useful resource of information when confronted with budget or policy issues regarding nuclear weaponry.

At the afternoon briefing, Jofi Joseph, Senator Robert Casey’s foreign policy adviser, opened the discussion on the US and Nuclear Non-Proliferation. He did not want a hasty vote, but time for an envoy to be appointed who takes a personal interest in the treaties, working thoughtfully for a replacement for START (Strategic Arms Limitation treaty, which obligates the US and Russia to reduce their nuclear arsenals by 6,000 warheads). Other speakers included Craig Eisendrath on dangers of weapons in outer space, Thomas Graham, Jr. on the escalation since Hiroshima, and Steven Starr of PSR; his presentation can be found at http://www.ipinst.org/asset/file/393/Starr.pdf. Ed Aguilar enumer-

Five guys working for nuclear disarmament, hoping to stop the folly.
ated the costs and the dangers of proliferation stating that we are spending $52.4 billion per year for nuclear weapons. All speakers worried about the futility of early warning systems, their accessibility to terrorist sabotage and the possibility for human error and folly.

A highlight was a leader in the international student movement against nuclear weapons, Emily Gleason, who spoke of problems in encouraging student activism. She said her age group could not conceptualize the “duck and cover mentality” of WWII generations, and that many believe we need the weapons for hegemony over a “dangerous world.” She tries to communicate the facts through blogs and Facebook, focusing on the cost of weapons and the lost opportunities for youth as we maintain expensive nuclear arsenals. She is planning an art contest, “Join the Revolution” to attract students. Also she is collaborating on video conferencing and independent study of health effects with other youth groups such as GEM; she wants to modify her approach so that students can interact with information as she builds the “Ban All Nukes Generation, USA.” Emily can be reached via the PNA, where she interns (www.projectnuclearawareness.org).

After this day of work, in which the aroma of hope wafted from conversation to conversation (not only was the press at the afternoon briefing meeting, but there was word that one of the employees of the Russian embassy was in the audience), we decided to grab a bite at the station and headed for home. We came home tired but full of hope that there is a good opportunity to get the stakeholders of the nuclear military-industrial complex away from center stage. Let’s make them stakeholders in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, like medicine, or energy for ocean faring ships.

**UNA-USA ADVOCACY AGENDA 2009:**

*In each of the coming six issues of the UNA-GP newsletter, we will present one priority issue of advocacy. This month we start with number one. The whole document, adopted on 12-15-2008, is available online at www.unausa.org. The text below is edited for the Philadelphia region.*

**Strengthening the U.S.-UN Relationship**

There is an opportunity now to strengthen the U.S.-UN relationship and reinvigorate U.S. leadership in the world. But it will require the U.S. acting as an engaged and constructive partner with other UN member states. U.S. leadership at the UN and in the world also depends on upholding our commitments, including by **paying our dues to the UN’s regular budget, peacekeeping budget, and specialized agencies on time and in full**, as well as **fulfilling pledged commitments to UN voluntary programs**.

The United States must do more to help the UN manage its rapidly growing peacekeeping mandates, in addition to paying unpaid debts and ongoing assessments in full. Currently, the United Nations does not receive adequate contributions of troops and equipment from member states, and its capacity to effectively manage operations has not kept pace with the growth in peacekeeping mandates. The U.S. can and should play a central role in helping **strengthen UN peacekeeping capabilities**, not only in the areas of transport, logistical support and communication equipment, but also in direct participation in the military dimension of UN peace operations when appropriate.

When the U.S. short-changes the UN, it not only jeopardizes the effectiveness of the organization’s important work, it also undermines American leadership at the United Nations and within the international community.
Goals:

• By the end of 2009, the President and Congress should develop a plan for paying all outstanding dues payments owed to the United Nations and to put the United States on track to pay its dues to international organizations on time;
• The United States should permanently lift its unilateral cap on UN peacekeeping contributions and pay all of its current year UN dues in full and without conditions;
• The United States should increase its support of UN peacekeeping, including in the areas of logistics, communications, intelligence, training, and equipment, and units of its military should prepare and train for potential direct participation in peace operations when appropriate; and
• The United States should support the important work of UN voluntary programs, including restoring US financial contributions to the UN Population Fund (UNFPA).

Action Items for UNA-USA Leaders and Members:

• Visit the local offices of your congress representative (mine is Chaka Fattah’s on Germantown Avenue) as part of National Advocacy Week (to be held in spring 2009), bring a letter, co-signed by friends or neighbors and stay in touch throughout the year to stress the importance of fully meeting our financial commitments to UN peacekeeping and basic operations; I will post my letter to Rep. Fattah on our website www.una-gp.org;
• Contact Members of Congress, as instructed by UNA-USA action alerts and otherwise, to request support for U.S. financial contributions to the United Nations;
• Submit letters to the editor and op-eds to The Inquirer, Tribune, Sun, Daily news, City paper, and the neighborhood papers to raise awareness about the need for the U.S. to pay its UN dues and the importance of constructive U.S. leadership at the UN;
• Work with other organizations and local affiliates of the UNA-USA Council of Organizations (www.unausa.org/Councilgrassroots) to highlight the value to the United States of a well-funded United Nations.