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Look What You Missed!

The Millennium Project

synopsis of the September 2003 WFS Washington DC Chapter dinner program presented by Jerome Glenn, Director, Millennium Project at the American Council for the United Nations University; summarized by Russell Wooten

On Tuesday, September 16, 2003 the National Capital Region World Future Society started its 2003-2004 program year at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Friendship Heights. Mr. Jerome Glenn, the Director of the Millennium Project at the American Council for the United Nations University, presented his ideas on the Millennium Project. His presentation was a robust and highly interactive program, to the point that questions and commentaries from the audience approximated the length of Mr. Glenn's delivered presentation.

The Millennium Project at the American Council for the United Nations University is a global think tank of roughly 1500 people. Its process differs from standard think tanks in that the members and their responses remain anonymous. Nodes are responsible for reaching out to appropriate local experts and capturing their opinions. The objectives of the Millennium Project are to

1. Create normative scenarios which may lead to Middle East peace
2. Define preconditions to this peace
3. Develop actions to meet those preconditions
4. Evaluate the policies contained in its scenarios

Seven conditions were identified that may be necessary for peace in the Middle East:

1. Providing secure borders for Israel
2. Establishing a viable, independent Palestinian state
3. Resolution of the Jerusalem question
4. An end to the violence by both sides and to build confidence
5. Social and economic development
6. Education
7. Resolution of Palestinian refugee status

For these seven conditions, events were then generated that would need to take place to allow for the realization of the conditions. These events are generated by a backwards (time) thinking analysis. For example, for condition # 1 occur, "event d" needs to immediately occur, and for "event d" to occur, "event c" needs to occur immediately before, etc. These events and conditions are then judged as to their importance, likelihood of occurring, and possibility of backfiring.

The Millennium Project is still a work in process. However, some conclusions have already been developed and include:

1. Systematic study of routes to peace seems possible (in doubt at the start)
2. The politics of the respondents cannot be determined from the answer (results from Node control and anonymity of respondents)
3. Differences in opinion about what is important are small
4. Most events identified are important and are as likely of happening as not
5. Backfire potential is, on the average, lower than 50/50
6. The most important events were viewed as most likely and with the least backfire potential
7. The consequences and cross impacts of any action are complex and must be carefully thought through in any scenario and planned action.

For additional information on this subject log on to <http://www.acunu.org/>.

*[Editor's note: This program synopsis was scheduled to appear in the previous issue of **Future Takes** but was inadvertently omitted. **Future Takes** regrets the error.]*