

Something We Can All Agree On

Richard Stearns and James A. Bell, December 7, 2009

Though it may not seem natural that one of the largest international charities and the world's leading aerospace firm would join together on an issue of such critical public importance, World Vision and The Boeing Company are firm believers that the U.S. needs to do more to invest in people throughout the world.

The need for American leadership in building a better, safer world is something all Americans can agree upon. Based on our experience, we know that a critical part in accomplishing this is increasing our national investments in development and diplomacy alongside of defense - otherwise known as the "smart power" approach.

Nowhere is the smart power consensus more evident than on the solid, common ground where America's business and humanitarian communities find themselves today. Whether we are working to expand markets or to improve lives in distant places, we know that America's national security needs and future economic progress are firmly linked with the fortunes of people in other countries.

Together, we are doing what we can to exert private sector leadership in making the world a better place. World Vision partners with more than 800 corporations and is supported by some 3 million Americans to work in 100 countries around the world to fight HIV/AIDS, poverty, and hunger, rebuild communities after disasters, and restore hope to children and families. Boeing is a leader in global

corporate citizenship, providing \$57 million every year to strengthen communities through partnering with local and global NGOs and giving hope to people who are struggling to survive.

The success of these and other private sector initiatives has been such that the U.S. government has partnered with us to help solve some of the world's most urgent problems. Initiatives that seek to leverage and amplify development investments overseas are delivering genuine results. Examples range from the past Administration's leadership on the global AIDS crisis and creation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation, which has produced an innovative model for delivering foreign assistance and holding countries accountable for the results, to President Obama's new Global Food Security Initiative, which emphasizes agricultural production, local capacity, and long-term self sufficiency.

While these are good examples of programs that are working, the reality is our international affairs programs are still woefully underfunded and understaffed. The International Affairs Budget is a little more than one percent of the federal budget and cannot deal with the enormity of global challenges facing the world today. This is why World Vision and Boeing are part of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC), a network of 400 businesses and NGOs, national security and foreign policy experts and community leaders who support increasing the International Affairs Budget and enhancing America's engagement with the world.

As members of the USGLC, we affirm our shared vision that the U.S. needs a smart power approach to ensure America strengthens its civilian development and diplomacy programs - and allocates the public resources necessary to meet the 21st century challenges we face today. We share this view with politicians and foreign policy experts from both sides of the aisle who understand that we must elevate and strengthen development and diplomacy to their proper positions as equal pillars alongside defense.

Tonight, the USGLC will pay tribute to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, a longtime advocate of the smart power approach who is working to translate this policy into reality. At her confirmation hearing earlier this year she underscored her belief saying, "Investing in our common humanity through social development is not marginal to our foreign policy but integral to accomplishing our goals."

Secretary Clinton is right, and the experiences of our own engagements in developing countries tell us these investments are the right thing to do. If America will step up and lead with a strengthened commitment to development and diplomacy, and the funding to see it all through, we can go a long way to ensuring that better, safer world.

Richard Stearns is President of World Vision. James A. Bell is Corporate President, Chief Financial Officer and an Executive Vice President of The Boeing Company. Both organizations are members of the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition (USGLC) and sponsors of the USGLC's Tribute Dinner to Secretary of State Hillary Clinton December 7, 2009.