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Scholars to Assess Genocide Prevention Task Force Report in Washington, DC

Washington, DC—A symposium to assess the official report of the Genocide Prevention Task Force will be held on March 13, 2009 at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. This is the initiative of the editors of *Genocide Studies and Prevention*, published in partnership by The International Association of Genocide Scholars (“IAGS”), The International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (“IIGHRS”) and The University of Toronto Press.

“This much anticipated report was released in December 2008,” said Prof. Herb Hirsch, one of the journal’s editors. “We wanted to organize as quickly as possible a symposium of experts from North America and Europe in political science, international law, sociology, history and philosophy to provide an independent, in-depth, scholarly review and assessment of its findings.”

The Genocide Prevention Task Force was officially launched in November 2007 by a consortium of non-governmental agencies—The US Holocaust Memorial Museum, The American Academy of Diplomacy, and The US Institute of Peace—under the joint chairmanship of Madeline Albright and William Cohen. Albright served as US Ambassador to the United Nations and then Secretary of State during the Clinton administration. Cohen was Secretary of Defense during Clinton’s second term. Participants in the Task Force and its research comprised over fifty people with international, diplomatic, political, government, military, academic, humanitarian, and other relevant experience.

The Task Force’s mandate is explained in the title of its official report, *Preventing Genocide: A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers*. The Co-Chairs explain in their Foreword, “This report provides a blueprint that can enable the United States to take preventive action, along with international partners, to forestall the specter of future cases of genocide and mass atrocities. The world agrees that genocide is unacceptable and yet genocide and mass killings continue. Our challenge is to match words to deeds and stop allowing the unacceptable.”

Prof. Gregory Stanton, President of the IAGS, noted, “Scholars understand that to commit genocide is a political act. But when it comes to such things as preventing genocide, the kind of politics found in Washington and other capitals of power can sometimes get in the way of real understanding, and therefore of effective intervention.”

Prof. Roger W. Smith, Chairman of the IIGHRS, commented, “One can not study genocide without feeling the urgent need to do everything one can to prevent it. We need to persuade governments that preventing genocide is in their national interest, for both moral and pragmatic reasons. That is why this symposium should critically analyze this vital report and its potential effectiveness.”

Entry to the symposium is free, but pre-registration is required. Please contact the IIGHRS office at 416-250-9807 or admin@genocidestudies.org, if you wish to attend. The papers presented

and discussed at the symposium will be published in the Spring 2009 issue of *Genocide Studies and Prevention*.

Genocide Studies and Prevention: An International Journal was co-founded by the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the International Institute for Genocide and Human Rights Studies (A Division of the Zoryan Institute). The journal's mission is to understand the phenomenon of genocide, create an awareness of it as an ongoing scourge, and promote the necessity of preventing it, for both pragmatic and moral reasons. It is the official journal of the International Association of Genocide Scholars and is published three times a year by the University of Toronto Press.