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# Proposal

## **SHAPING OUR RESPONSE:**

### **Refugee Camps as a Model for Sustainable Settlement**

**A proposal for determining rational and durable humanitarian support to affected populations across civil-military boundaries**

**San Diego, California**

**February 11-13, 2002**

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The needs of the hundreds of thousands of Afghans displaced by conflict – both inside Afghanistan and those who have become refugees in neighboring countries – poses a genuine threat to the security and stability of the surrounding nations, each of which was only marginally able to manage the basics for its own citizens before this onslaught. **We propose** a small and elite meeting, by invitation only, to collect new knowledge and methods for establishing sustainable sites for managing displaced populations. We will be capitalizing on an international multi-disciplinary group already familiar with the topic areas and with each other.

## II. OBJECTIVES

- To develop specific methods for providing sustainable and durable solutions for displaced persons;
- To reduce the pain and suffering of displaced persons through providing a successful model of agency cooperation and sustainable settlement in the real world;
- To decrease the reluctance of host nations to offer asylum to refugees during times of conflict through improving resource use and outcomes, thereby easing the ongoing burden and expense on the countries and agencies taking responsibility for the displaced;
- To increase the national security and the international persona of the United States and its coalition partners through improving the effectiveness of our humanitarian assistance.

## III. BACKGROUND

In late August 2001, the Rocky Mountain Institute hosted the Information Technologies in Sustainable Development Charrette (a term for an intense workshop) in Aspen, Colorado, with the aim of exploring a basic question about emerging technology: How will information technologies help us rethink the formation of sustainable settlements? This intensive, trans-disciplinary design workshop explored the intersection of information technologies with the basic needs of any community—shelter, water, food, energy, healthcare, education, jobs, and access to capital. Participants came from a range of organizations and backgrounds for a process that asked everyone to think carefully across boundaries and disciplines to create new solutions addressing this specific topic.

The Sustainable Settlement Charrette proposed for February 2002 has a broader agenda that builds upon the foundation of the August meeting. It has been explicitly designed to address problems inherent in the very type of crisis unfolding now in South and Central Asia. The resources that will be expended by relief agencies to establish new camps in South and Central Asia will vanish, with more loss to follow, if there is no effort to design a "whole-system" community within the morass. Given the stakes, we should be working closely **now** with current experts in disaster relief to incorporate whole-systems design concepts from the very beginning.

The Afghan refugee and displaced persons camps developing now are an ideal opportunity to establish sustainable settlements, providing tools and techniques to support and educate the affected population in ways that encourages their safe and productive return home as soon as possible. If we can design a sustainable and reproducible way to meet the human needs of both the new arrivals and the prior occupants in the austere conditions of an ad-hoc refugee or displaced persons camp, the way that it's done should also help provide durable solutions for hundreds of millions of others globally who are also trying to create sustainable settlements where they already live.

Afghan refugees are being told that America wants to ruin them. A camp designed, built, and explained as a sustainable system from the ground up could begin their broader world-education in a powerful way. If propagated, the ripples should benefit a large pool of the dispossessed throughout the world. To our knowledge, no one has tried to implement such a comprehensive design within refugee camps forming in a crisis setting.

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## IV. PARTICIPANTS

The Sustainable Settlement Charrette will be facilitated by the Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), which was established in 1982 by resource analysts Hunter and Amory Lovins, who still lead it. RMI began as a small group of colleagues focusing on energy policy but has since grown into a broad-based institution with more than 45 full-time staff, an annual budget of nearly \$7 million, a significant Department of Defense history of cooperative design, and a global reach.

Approximately 70 experts will be invited to participate in the Sustainable Settlement Charrette with broad-based representation from government, military, international humanitarian organizations, academia and other experienced individuals and organizations. This list will include:

### **Government:**

Department of Defense and Joint Services (DOD)  
Department of State (DOS)  
National Science Foundation (NSF)  
U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)  
Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA)  
Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA)  
UK Department for International Development (DFID)  
European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)

### **International Humanitarian Organizations:**

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)  
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
World Food Programme (WFP)  
World Health Organization (WHO)  
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)  
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies/American Red Cross (IFRC)  
CARE  
Doctors of the World/Medecins du Monde (MDM)  
Doctors Without Borders/Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)  
International Rescue Committee  
Mercy Corps International  
OXFAM  
WorldVision International.

### **Academia:**

Harvard University  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
University of California  
Boston University  
Carnegie Mellon University  
New York University  
University of Arizona

### **Other Individuals and Organizations:**

Janine Benyus, writer, "Biomimicry"  
John Clark, Urban Planner of Haymount, VA, John A. Clark Company  
Pliny Fisk, co-director, Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems  
Gunter Pauli, Founder and Director of Zero Emissions Research and Initiatives (ZERI)  
Mark Prutsalis, Consultant in International Disaster Management  
Amulya K. N. Reddy, Indian Institute of Science in Bangalore  
John Todd, founder, Living Systems and Ocean Arks, International

Dave Warner, Director of Medical Intelligence, MindTel  
Peter Warshall, editor, Whole Earth  
Joanie Klaar, Bamboo Institute, Bali, Indonesia

## IV. OUTCOMES

The Sustainable Settlement Charrette is designed to assist three distinct groups:

1. International relief agencies involved in both sustainable settlement and emergency response activities, particularly within global disaster relief;
2. The National Science Foundation, with special attention to their submission to the UN Summit in Johannesburg next September, and
3. The US government, seeking to improve the effectiveness of our humanitarian assistance during times of conflict.

The recommendations that come out of the Charrette will focus on detailing how to accomplish and address a set of specific challenges, using the population within the camp and the environment that surrounds them. Our intent is the enhancing of our national and collaborative ability to be effective with displaced populations in austere environments. We will be addressing specific opportunities on these topics:

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- Water provisioning and purification;
- Novel and nutritious food crops;
- Food production and distribution;
- Power production;
- Cooking fuels;
- Effective sanitation for biological systems;
- Disease surveillance and response;
- Education models that work in remote environments;
- Employment solutions within displaced persons camps;
- Long-term job opportunities appropriate to the population and place

## V. BUDGET

We are requesting a total of \$345,000 to fully sponsor the Sustainable Settlement Charrette to be held in San Diego on February 11-13, 2002. This will provide the necessary resources for the site, labor, per diem and honoraria, travel expenses and logistics support. A break down of expected expenses is as follows:

Site Expenses	\$ 65,000
Labor	\$55,000
Per Diem	\$90,000
Travel	\$100,000
Logistics & Administration	\$35,000

**Contact information can be found at the head of this proposal.**