

“A Community of Purpose”

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**Comments at the Civilian R&D Foundation Reception
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Thank you John and Cathy for those very kind words and the lovely gift. And thank you to the CRDF Board and staff for this wonderful reception tonight, and to all of you for coming. I especially want to thank my husband Rod Diridon, who not only flew out for the reception this evening, but who has been a staunch supporter during the years of my time commitment to CRDF, and who enthusiastically supports its mission.

When we think about the concept of community, usually it refers to a geographic location – a town, maybe a college campus. Boards of directors that nurture and develop organizations are also communities; not communities of place, but communities of purpose. Their goals

vary widely depending on the nature of the organization, from a business interested in making money, to a non-profit protecting human rights. And, like other communities, the individuals on a board are diverse, coming from different backgrounds and experiences.

In the allocation of resources in society, especially in the public sector, there is a constant pull and tug between different organizations and causes – for talent, expertise, funding, and other kinds of support. Through the efforts of its board and staff, and support from a wide circle of partners in the Congress, the executive branch, in business and foreign governments, in this competition for resources CRDF, a particular community of purpose, has in the past 12 years carved out quite a bit more space than previously existed for international science and technology collaboration in the service of human progress and prosperity. This expansion of resources to international S&T collaboration has been, and continues to be, timely and important.

Wisely applied, science and technology have the power to transform human experience – from poverty to prosperity, from ignorance to literacy, from disease to health, from low efficiency to high productivity. I am proud that, with the combined work of our staff, our board and advisors, and our partners we have pulled greater assets into this field, expanding the total resources available to the enterprise.

With a doctorate in Political Science, you might wonder how I as a social scientist came to be involved in an organization like CRDF. As an undergraduate, I chose a core curriculum for my liberal arts studies at Occidental College, called Science and Human Values. It was team-taught by faculty from different disciplines, including biology, math, art and ethics. I was interested in the conflicts and confluences between scientific progress and social values, where issues like the environment, nuclear proliferation and euthanasia lurked. What a privilege to have

been able to come back to that long-ago interest later in life, through our work at CRDF, which sits at that nexus of science and values.

In 1995, with the guidance of House Science Committee Chairman George Brown, Congress directed the establishment of CRDF, the National Science Foundation created it, and the Defense Department, the State Department and George Soros provided enough funding for its first couple of years. But the endowment described in the founding legislation was not been allocated by Congress – these days, we’d call it an “unfunded mandate”. Two years later, with the objective of moving the money out quickly to do the most good, CRDF had spent all the available funds on grants, and no further funding was in sight. With the sunset of the organization looming, the promise of CRDF could have vanished in 1997.

And yet CRDF’s work was too important to fall by the wayside. It was clear that CRDF needed to prove what it could do, and earn its way

based on its usefulness. So the board and the staff pulled our socks up, and launched into a period of intense creativity and experimentation. We created new programs to meet the needs we were set up to address, and sought new support. The response from Congress, the executive agencies, foundations, companies and representatives of other governments was very positive.

Most of the board members who led this turn-around and expansion are still with us – John Moore, Marjorie Senechal, Fred Johnson, Bert Westwood and Ken Rind. They brought their experience in business, venture capital, academia, and government to the table, and we are still implementing their solid ideas today. And each of them, and later recruits to the board, has been directly involved in executing these initiatives, through travel, service on committees and financial management. Ten years is a long time to chair a board, and ten and more years is a long time for many of us to serve on the board,

but myself aside, clearly that continuity of focus by the board has benefited CRDF and the goals it pursues.

Through CRDF's own programs and executing projects for other groups, CRDF has raised and spent \$343 million dollars on international scientific collaboration. It has made 3,000 awards, and administered 1200 projects for other organizations. Support has been provided to 28,000 scientists and other researchers. CRDF created an initiative for Basic Research in Higher Education at 20 universities in Russia that is now being extended by the Russian government with their own funding to set up 15 more centers. We have mentored the creation of over 50 NSF-like entities and other indigenous institutions in nine countries, to allocate R&D resources and provide infrastructure for S&T.

In collaboration with the Bush Administration, we have created an AIDS/HIV research project with the former Soviet countries, as well as our own collaborative bioterrorism defense research program. We

have funded collaborative research in chemistry, math, physics, energy, health sciences and many other fundamental fields. We are the project manager for the Iraqi virtual science library, through which over 2,000 Iraqi scientists are now able to access scientific journals. We are assisting the government of Qatar in improving their S&T capacities. CRDF has inspired over \$43 million in matching funds for its collaborative research projects, from other countries.

Through our focus on practical applications of research and work with companies, a number of products have emerged from CRDF-funded research – from teeth whitening strips to more energy efficient refrigeration for produce during shipping.

Congressional support has been essential in this expansion of resources – from Nancy Pelosi, Pete Domenici, Tom Lantos, and so many others. I remember the last time I met with Chairman Lantos, in November. I think he knew how ill he was. He cut right to the chase –

asking “what can I do for you?” It’s important to remember and appreciate this good man of powerful beliefs.

Of course, it is the staff of CRDF that has really made all these projects happen, and the leadership of Gerson Sher, Tom Owens and Cathy Campbell has led directly to the highly effective outcomes of the past 12 years. It has been a pleasure to work with them as chair, and to assist and support their efforts. And many of the key staff that started out with the CRDF turn-around ten years ago continue to be the strength of the organization – like John Modzelewski, David Lindeman, Cindy Mentz, Shawn Wheeler and so many others.

The power of science and technology is more and more widely recognized around the world, as a crucial driver of human and social progress. This is the case in the former Soviet countries – from Russia where most of President Putin’s economic goals are based on science

and technology, to Azerbaijan, where the government is reinvesting oil revenues in technological progress.

And the US has so much to offer in this field. The US model of creating Silicon Valleys, prairies and forests, our biotech industry, now our green industries, are fascinating and suggestive to other countries. The development of Education City in Doha, Qatar, is a prime example of how many countries are turning to S&T to drive modernization, and in particular to American S&T knowhow. CRDF has growing potential, in this context, as an instrument of US diplomacy.

To develop this potential, CRDF is launching the Science and Technology for Diplomacy Initiative, to put the resource of international S&T collaboration at the disposal of the US to deal with new international challenges that will arise in the future, ranging from terrorism threats to disease to the environment.

One of the important things a board leader must do is to ensure that an organization has great leadership for the next phase, and that is certainly the case with CRDF. Our new Chair, John Moore, is former Deputy Director of the National Science Foundation, and former President of Grove City College. He is a chemist by training, and has served on the CRDF board since the beginning, including for the past several years as Vice Chair. Our new Vice Chair, Rose Gottemoeller, whom I've known since we were both very young researchers at the Rand Corporation 30 years ago, has served as an NSC Staff Director and as both Assistant Secretary and Deputy Undersecretary of Energy. She is now Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, and will be returning to the US this fall. In John and Rose, and in President and CEO Cathy Campbell, CRDF is very fortunate to have this level of leadership going forward.

To participate in a community of purpose, especially to provide leadership for one, is one of the most meaningful experiences one can

have in life. I am honored to have had the opportunity to serve as the CRDF board chair for a decade, and look forward to supporting CRDF during its next decade of progress, with all of your partnership and leadership.