

Natsios Discusses Humanitarian Aid

By Kristy Eberbach Special to The Hoya

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Administrator for the U.S. Agency for International Development Andrew Natsios (CAS '71) and Lynn Fritz, founder of Fritz Institute, addressed an audience of students, administrators and United Nations representatives yesterday in Gaston Hall. Fritz described the essential role of humanitarian relief and praised the collaboration between the Fritz Institute and Georgetown University's Institute for the Study of International Migration on humanitarian relief projects.

In order to deal with pressing humanitarian issues, the Fritz Institute and ISIM have joined to educate both students and mid-career leaders with humanitarian aid efforts as well as conduct research, analysis and workshops.

"During the past decade, millions of people have lost their lives, homes and families due to natural disasters, conflict and repression," an excerpt from Georgetown's report on its collaboration with the Fritz Institute said. "The imminent threat of future disasters and more displaced populations worldwide, combined with a need for more professional training in the disaster relief field, underscores a critical need for more advanced models in

disaster relief and immediate improvements in the global logistics system used in relief operations."

"There's a real paucity of tools, technology and industries that could help them do their job ... The fact that they are as effective as they are and do what they do with what they have is extraordinary," Fritz said.

Fritz explained his decision to collaborate with Georgetown by listing its long and distinguished record of service and the university's internationally recognized academic reputation. The three specific functions of the collaboration will include the expansion of the certificates of Susan Martin, head of ISIM, the addition of a certificate curriculum for complex emergencies and the creation of a mid-career professional training program. Fritz ended his short speech by expressing his pride and hope in the continued humanitarian effort.

Andrew Natsios, who was the commencement speaker for the Nursing School last year, focused on the current U.S. humanitarian relief effort. He defined the complex emergencies that the U.S. aid forces attempt to address and list-

ed five lessons he feels humanitarian relief organizations need to learn because "if we don't learn our lessons, we're putting the people we serve at risk."

He stated that these humanitarian relief organizations must remember that the primary purpose of the humanitarian system is to provide relief and save lives. To do this, organizations must understand the cultural, political and economic aspects of a society before acting in order to prevent unintended consequences.

Natsios also noted "emergencies don't last forever" and that humanitarian relief is not a neat continuum, but that there are always possible setbacks in an attempt to bring a country out of a state of "complex emergency." He defines this term as a society characterized by civil conflicts, significant large-scale displacement, the collapse of the state and dramatic decline in food security. Finally, Natsios noted the need for an integrated, coherent strategy for dealing with humanitarian relief efforts and that individual autonomy for non-governmental organizations is not a good idea.