

Albright: Humanitarian Efforts Need Collaboration

Blue & Gray

March 21, 2005

Fresh thinking and more talks across party lines are necessary for success in international peace efforts and humanitarian aid, said Madeleine Albright, the Mortara Distinguished Professor of Diplomacy and former U.S. secretary of state.

During the third annual Fritz Institute Lecture on Humanitarian Relief, held on March 16 in Gaston Hall, Albright spoke to dignitaries, faculty members and a large number of students and staff.

Building on previous Fritz lecture themes of ongoing humanitarian crises and the need for collaboration, Albright said, "Evidence is growing that the past is the past and that the future could be more hopeful.

"More recently, much of the right and left have agreed that halting the pandemic [of HIV/AIDS] is one of the leading moral imperatives of our time. There are Republicans in Congress who are leaders among the range of issues long associated with liberals. But the spectrum is more circle than a straight line."

Albright was candid about her ideas regarding the possibility of developing a multilateral military coalition that would be ready at a moment's notice and the support of a more moral and activist U.S. foreign policy on humanitarian issues.

"American people think themselves as extremely generous, and on a personal level I know that to be true," she said. "U.S. dollars are a major source of sus-

tenance to international charitable organizations." But she also noted that the U.S. ranks last among the 22 most industrialized countries in terms of what America devotes to international development.

"At present rates, the U.S. will spend more in Iraq in a year than we'll spend helping the 50 poorest countries over the next two decades," she said.

Albright thinks this is a historic opportunity for people from "red" and "blue" states to join together to find ways to save and enrich lives -- despite which side gets the credit.

"There could be no better time to bring serious-minded liberals, conservatives, and centrists together in support of renewed U.S. leadership on humanitarian issues," she said. "For that to happen, we have to stop letting disagreements on some things prevent us from cooperating on other things. We need to move beyond ideological battlegrounds."

Susan Martin, director of Georgetown's Institute for the Study of International Migration, credited the Fritz Institute, which co-sponsors the annual lecture, for strengthening humanitarian operations such as logistics management, technology, training, monitoring and evaluation.

"It is our hope that this lecture series will bring new ideas and perspectives that will prevent the loss of human life, improve humanitarian responses and



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help prepare people to withstand future shocks," Martin said.

The Fritz Institute partners with humanitarian organizations to develop infrastructure solutions to increase the effectiveness of their relief efforts by drawing on expertise and other resources from the private sector and academia to facilitate the implementation of solutions and monitor improvements.