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inequality in the world, there is no way you can lift people out of poverty without having some kind of trade, and often the trade will involve some kind of luxury goods.

You've got two paths: Dumping cash on the developing world and raise them out of poverty; that has failed, because it doesn't create incentives for performance. The only other option you have is trying to encourage some positive, sustainable mechanism of livelihood. And livelihoods are not possible without trade.

R.R.: *How has this message been received so far by the environmental movement? Do people think your idea is bunk?*

S.A.: On the whole, it's been positively received. My argument is that there are no simple, magic bullet solutions and we will have to make some kind of sacrifice in terms of environmental crises, just as we often have to sacrifice our human wants. And sometimes environmentalists just look at one side of the story in terms of consumerism and say, "Well, let's just consume less." But that's really kind of an ostrich (with its head in the sand) mentality and I think environmentalists in the developing world really appreciated my message.

I got some pushback, definitely, from Western environmentalists who said, "Well, you know, it's a slippery slope if you start consuming more." And my argument is, "Well, the reality is most of your doom-and-gloom scenarios, which I agree are likely to happen — there [are] a vast number of people who are already living in those gloom-and-doom scenarios." If you go to some areas of sub-Saharan Africa, where you see abject poverty, people are living in that apocalyptic world that the Al Gore narratives tell you about. So how you lift them out of that poverty is particularly important. Until environmentalists pay attention to poverty alleviation they'll never get traction. And that's what has happened with the failure of the climate change negotiations time and again. I think more environmentalists are coming around to it, and they've appreciated that I'm approaching this with nuance and I'm not trying to be sensationalistic about it.

Some people, some journalists, have this view, "Oh well, his argument is a bit meandering and it's not linear." Well the world is not linear. I don't want to pretend to give an argument like (New York Times columnist) Thomas Friedman that McDonald's will save the world or that kind of very simplistic view, which sells books but is just not the reality.

R.R.: *You were profiled in National Geographic and you said, "Environmental issues have the power to unify groups with seemingly irreconcilable differences. Shared concerns about resources in conservation can resolve even bitter conflicts." Can you give examples?*

S.A.: So, this is the other side of my work, to say, "How do we use environmental issues as a peace-building strategy?" Because environmental factors can be seen as a common threat, you can get people to cooperate on issues where they might not otherwise. So for example, if two countries have been in conflict over a border area, and there has been recognition (that) this is an ecologically very important area, you can get people to resolve their disputes.

One example is the dispute between Ecuador and Peru that has waged on for many decades in a region called the Cordillera del Cóndor. It's a beautiful area where the Andean ecosystem meets the rainforest ecosystem, and this war went on for decades because that border was not

properly delineated by the Spanish colonials. In the mid-90s, the U.S., with the help of the Brazilians — one of the few cases of U.S. diplomacy actually succeeding — were able to resolve that dispute by making it an ecological preservation zone and creating this peace park. And thankfully, both countries have diplomatic relations, and I would say the environment really brought them together.

R.R.: *Earlier you mentioned the Democratic Republic of Congo. There's a civil war raging there. How could an environmental issue, in the heart of Africa, be resolved through the unity of groups dealing with this environmental issue?*

S.A.: Well, the same argument is not applicable in all cases. In the Congo, there is the Virunga National Park proposal, to make the Virunga volcanoes a conservation area. But the problem is there's just no governance to begin with. The DLC government, the democratic government of the Congo, (has) absolutely no authority in Eastern Congo. There's a complete lack of control. There's international meddling from Uganda and Rwanda. So until there is political will and enforcement...

So I'm very much a pragmatist. I'm not saying the same strategy could be used everywhere. You have Liberia and Sierra Leone: a terrible conflict during the 1990s and into the early part of 2000, but the conflict was not a territorial dispute. It was again similar to the Congolese conflict: lack of governance, lust for resources. Once it was resolved, (Liberia and Sierra Leone) established a trans-boundary conservation zone in that region where they also used to have smuggling of diamonds and so on. Now that can help to sustain the peace. So you need multiple strategies.

R.R.: *What if the environmental movement worked more with corporations?*

S.A.: There's just no other option. There's a reason why corporations evolved. The same is true about environmental organizations. Many times they will merge. I come from Vermont, which is, of course, home of Ben & Jerry's. Well, Ben & Jerry's started small, in a garage, and became part of Unilever. Look at Stonyfield Farms, bought by Dannon. Ultimately you have economies of scale. It works more efficiently to add resources that way.

So the corporate model itself, it has functionality. But as with anything related to human behavior, you need to create checks and balances. You can't do it without regulations. You need to have government involvement in managing corporations. But the corporate model itself is not necessarily flawed. And I think environmentalists are going up the wrong road to suggest that we should no longer have corporations and everyone should run mom-and-pop shops. That's a recipe for disaster environmentally because it would be very inefficient.

R.R.: *I'm not saying I disagree with you —*

Well, you're welcome to. But just think of resource usage. There is a reason why, organically, you have corporations develop. Now that doesn't mean that mom-and-pop shops have no place in society. There are certain niche markets where they do have a place, like for art galleries. In fact, my town has become a great magnet for them.

But for most kinds of commodity exchanges, small scale doesn't work, from a resource utilization perspective. You end up using far more resources for doing the same thing, which is bad environmentally. Look at Tom's of Maine

toothpaste, started by a husband-and-wife team, sold to Colgate-Palmolive. It's the only path that's going to end up being efficient. Now (if activists) really want to keep pressure on the company, to make sure they're socially responsible, to make sure they don't abuse their workers, I'm all for that. But you will shoot yourself in the foot if you say get rid of big companies.

R.R.: *I know some people who won't buy Tom's of Maine toothpaste anymore.*

S.A.: (Laughs.) There you go. If you're going to live on a planet with nine billion people by 2050, we cannot have that same level of devolution of production. It will end up being terribly inefficient. You'll end up using more resources per unit input, which is bad for the environment.

R.R.: *This might be a silly question but: Do you have hope for our environmental future?*

S.A.: You know, when people ask me if I'm an optimist or a pessimist, I say I'm neither. I'm a pragmatist. And I have no idea if we're going to be able to challenge all of these problems that exist with technology.

But what I do say is we have no other choice. We need technology. Technology is really our only hope if we are going to be able to meet these challenges. That doesn't mean that I'm optimistic. I'm being realistic. So I get worried when environmentalists get threatened by technology and you'll see many of them, "Oh, the technologists are somehow going to make us complacent and we won't be very involved in conservation." Not at all. The reality is, if you want individual choice, there's always some point where you have to say, "Look, we can regulate, we can create incentives."

But how much are we going to regulate individual choice? Population is ultimately the fundamental variable for environmental impact. But as a society we have decided that we are not going to regulate population. So we will always come up with a suboptimal outcome. And when you're dealing with that suboptimal outcome, your only salvation will be technology. So, that's how I approach it.

I think that human ingenuity so far has triumphed. That doesn't mean it will always. But my only feeling is that we have thus far been too confining of our technological work in the environment. We see people try to present one solution and get shot down. You look at biofuels, you get shot down. You try something else — I think environmentalists need to stop that kind of tendency. You're in a very high-tech incubation corridor (in Seattle). We should celebrate that. We shouldn't be afraid of that. And I come across far too many environmentalists who are so threatened by that. So that's my sort of take-home message.

R.R.: *I just have one more thing to say: I didn't know they were drilling for diamonds in the Arctic.*

S.A.: Oh, yes. I just visited the Diavik Diamond Mine in November, which wasn't the best time to go. It was minus 40 degrees. But it is an amazing place. They've actually got two diamond mines in the Northwest Territories, about 200 miles north of Yellowknife. If you're so inclined, visit Yellowknife. It's become the diamond capital of the North.

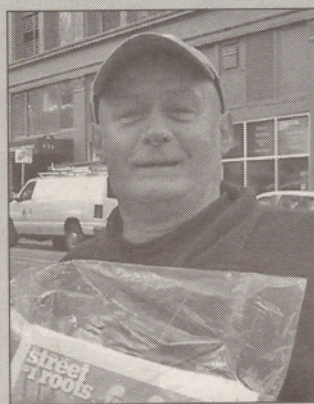
R.R.: *Well, I never thought I'd hear a line like that.*

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