

CREATING A CULTURE OF PEACE

Working together and interacting with a large network of activists is a thought-provoking experience that enriches one's mind..." said Mikhail Gorbachev, describing The State of the World Forum. As part of this weeklong event in the beginning of October, San Francisco SGI-USA members joined together with members from 34 other peace organizations to cosponsor a panel discussion at the Herbst Theatre tonight near city hall.

The event, which was open to the public, was titled "Creating a Culture of Peace for the 21st Century," and was attended by more than 1,000 people.

The first panel was called "Eliminating the World's Nuclear Weapons," during which Dr. Helen Caldicott, founder of Physicians for Social Responsibility, focused on the Y2K problem after other panelists spoke. Dr. Caldicott explained that imbedded chips within computer systems may become the cause of untold suffering and labeled the current situation an "acute clinical emergency." She stated that nuclear weapons systems may be affected, and proposed that first strike weapons worldwide be taken off their current alert status to prevent any accidental nuclear strikes and retaliations. She also proposed that nuclear reactors worldwide be equipped with diesel backup systems to prevent possible meltdowns in the event power is disrupted.

The second panel then presented "How the Internet and Global Communications Offer New Opportunities for Positive Social Change and Human Development." Presentations included the NET AID Concert (held on Oct. 9) by Diane Merrick from Cisco Systems. The program incorporates 1,500 servers with a capacity for 60 million hits per hour, with a goal to impact extreme poverty on a global scale.

Another example of the positive use of the Internet is helping farmers to know the fair market value of their goods, and thus eliminating corruption from the middleman, and in turn allowing them to better support their families.

Touraj Rahimi, president of Schools on Line, explained his goal is to create an alliance for global learning, and to connect children through the Internet.

Barbara Marx Hubbard, president of the Foundation for Conscious Evolution, explained that the steps we take at this time will spell either death [for the planet] or birth into the next step of human evolution, which she calls universal humanity. By using communications technology, her current project is to help people with similar passions and resources to link up together, and thus help liberate the creative potential within each person.

—RON BAIRD