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**Department of Human Development**

**Violence, Democracy and Education:  
An Analytical Framework**

**Jamil Salmi**

February 2000



**The World Bank**

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**Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Office**



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## Violence, Democracy and Education: An Analytic Framework<sup>1</sup>

*“Education provides people with the keys to the world.”  
José Martí (1853-95)*

### Introduction

On October 21, 1989, the Berlin wall fell, announcing the collapse of the Soviet empire and the demise of 20th century socialism. In a much celebrated article published the same year, a senior official of the US Department of State, Francis Fukuyama, announced the “end of history”, celebrating “the unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism and the universalization of Western democracy as the final form of human government”.<sup>2</sup>

And yet, how do we reconcile the triumph of Western liberalism with the pictures of chaos, war, crime, terror and poverty which continue to appear in the daily news? These disturbing images do not come only from the unruly former republics of the Soviet Union, the fundamentalist regime of Afghanistan, or the fanatic dictatorships of Saddam Hussein and Slobodan Milosevic. They originate also from the rich democratic societies of our planet. For example, in the United States, the wealthiest nation of the world, 20 percent of the children live in poverty, one in four children is exposed to family alcoholism, 3.5 million people are homeless, one-third of low-income families go hungry on a regular basis, 25 million adults are functionally illiterate, 44 million citizens live without health insurance, 23,000 people are murdered and 50,000 rapes are reported every year, and the country boasts the highest concentration of jailed people in the world. Are these staggering statistics just reflections of accidental events and crises, or does violence coexist, in a significant fashion, with capitalism and democracy? What role does education play in this context?

To begin to address these questions, this article is divided into three parts. First, it presents a framework which compares and contrasts different forms of violence in a systematic way. Second, it discusses how this typology can be used along various analytical dimensions. Finally, it focuses on the complex relationship between violence and education as an illustration of how the framework can be applied to analyze issues which are not commonly looked at from a violence and human rights perspective.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is adapted from Salmi, J. (1993). Violence and Democratic Society: New Approaches to Human Rights. London: Zed Press.

<sup>2</sup> Fukuyama, F. (1989). “The End of History”, National Interest, no. 16, summer 1989.

## The Different Categories of Violence

Most people think of violence in a narrow context, equating it with images of war (as in Kosovo), murders (as in Washington D.C.), or riots (as in Indonesia). But violence, defined as any act that threatens a person's physical or psychological integrity, comes in many forms. Four main analytical categories can be put forward to classify the different forms of violence that can be inflicted upon a human being:

- + direct violence;
- + indirect violence;
- + repressive violence; and
- + alienating violence.

When people write or talk about violence, it is usually direct violence they refer to, those physical acts that result in deliberate injury to the integrity of human life. This category includes all sorts of homicides (genocide, war crimes, massacres of civilians, murders) as well as all types of coercive or brutal actions involving physical or psychological suffering (forced removal of populations, imprisonment, kidnapping, hostage taking, forced labor, torture, rape, maltreatment, battery, female circumcision). What the Serb army and police have inflicted upon the Muslim populations of Bosnia and Kosovo for the last ten years is a sad illustration of this category of violence. In the 17th century, the Turks would cut out the tongue of any Armenian citizen caught speaking Armenian. Two centuries later, they took even more drastic actions when they attempted to wipe out the entire Armenian population in 1915. The conquest of the Americas, by Spanish and Portuguese colonists in Central and South America and by British settlers in North America, brought war, massacres and slavery to the Native Americans. Entire populations were decimated as the European settlers took over the land and looted the gold and silver mines of the American continent.

Indirect violence is a category intended to cover harmful, sometimes deadly situations which, though due to human intervention, do not involve a direct relationship between the victims and the institutions, population groups or individuals responsible for their plight. Two sub-categories of this type of violence need to be distinguished: violence by omission and mediated violence.

*Violence by omission* is defined by drawing an analogy with the legal notion of non assistance to persons in danger. In some countries, there is a legal penalty to punish citizens who refuse or neglect to help victims of accidents or aggression in need of urgent care. Addressing violence by omission requires applying, at the social or collective level, a similar notion of "criminal failure to intervene" whenever human lives are threatened by actions or phenomena whose harmful effects are technically avoidable or controllable by society. For example, some historians have accused the US Government of failing to intervene early enough on behalf of the victims of the Nazi holocaust, arguing that the State Department had received sufficient information about Hitler's "final solution" as early as 1942<sup>3</sup>. Only in January 1944, after reading the conclusions of a secret

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<sup>3</sup> Morse, A. (1967). While Six Million Died. New York: Ace Publishing Corporation.



memorandum entitled “Acquiescence of This Government in the Murder of the Jews”, did President Roosevelt order the US army to take immediate steps to rescue the victims of Nazi extermination plans. A new book written by Richard Breitman documents a similar failing in Great Britain, where Anthony Eden’s government did not react to reports of mass executions of Jews<sup>4</sup>. Because of his strong anti-Semitic feelings, Anthony Eden refused to act upon the devastating information gathered by British intelligence monitoring German radio communications.

This “violence by omission” approach does not apply only to the lack of protection against physical violence, but also to the lack of protection against social violence (hunger, disease, poverty), against accidents, occupational and health hazards, and against violence resulting from natural catastrophes. In countries where resources are abundant but unequally distributed, the victims of poverty, which Mark Twain called “the greatest terror”, could be regarded as experiencing violence by omission. This is certainly true in the case of mass hunger. In 1944 and 1945, for example, the French occupation forces in Indo-China contributed indirectly to the death by starvation of two million Vietnamese by denying them access to rice stocks after the crop had failed<sup>5</sup>.

The absence of strict gun control laws in the United States is another striking illustration of this type of indirect violence. To give just one recent example, in December 1998, a woman was shot dead by her ex-husband in New Jersey, even though she had obtained a restraining order from a judge because she feared for her life and the police had forced her ex-husband to surrender his gun. But the angry ex-husband needed only to drive ten miles to the neighboring county, to walk into a store, and purchase another gun before going to kill his ex-wife. It could be argued that gun manufacturers, the US Government, and perhaps, even more, Congress members bear a significant degree of responsibility in this death and the several thousand gun accidents, suicide and murders which occur every year.

The devastation of natural disasters can similarly be seen as a form of indirect violence, whenever it is recognized that human intervention could have lessened the impact of seemingly uncontrollable acts of God. For example, experts have established that the Armero catastrophe in Colombia in 1985 would not have killed as many people, had the Nevada del Ruiz volcano been carefully observed and the population evacuated before the fateful mudslide.<sup>6</sup> We all remember the sad eyes of Omayra, the little girl whose slow death was retransmitted by all the TV channels of the world, and who became the symbol of the 25,000 victims of this tragedy.

In contrast to violence by omission which happens in a passive way, *mediated violence* is the result of deliberate human interventions in the natural or social environment whose harmful effects are felt in an indirect and sometimes delayed way. Examples of mediated violence are all forms of ecocide involving acts of destruction or damage against our natural environment. The use of the defoliant Agent Orange in the

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<sup>4</sup> Breitman, R. (1999). Official Secrets: What the Nazis Planned, What the British and Americans Knew. London: Penguin Books.

<sup>5</sup> Reported in Zinn, H. (1980). A People’s History of the United States. London: Longman, p. 461.

<sup>6</sup> Vanhecke, C. (1985). “Armero ne devait pas être détruite”, in Le Monde, 30 November 1985.

Vietnam and Afghanistan wars by the US and Soviet armies, which was primarily intended to destroy crops in enemy territory, has caused genetic malformations among babies in the infected areas and cancer among war veterans. The sale, in developing countries, of pesticides and medical products banned in the country of origin is another illustration of this type of violence.

Paradoxically, embargos against repressive regimes, motivated by generous principles of solidarity with populations suffering under a dictatorial regime, can also be a source of mediated violence. A recent book by the former Unicef representative in Haiti documents the terrible impact, on the children and women of that country, of the UN imposed embargo against the illegal government of General Cédras<sup>7</sup>. In the countryside, for example, many people died of common diseases because transport was disrupted as a result of the embargo on petrol.

Repressive violence refers to the most common forms of human rights violations, regularly documented and monitored by international NGOs like Amnesty International or Human Rights Watch. Violations of civil rights occur whenever people are denied freedom of thought, religion, and movement, or when there is no equality before the law, including the right to a fair trial. Violations of political rights exist in countries where there is no genuine democracy, no fair elections, no freedom of speech and free association. Violations of social rights occur in countries where it is not legal to form a trade union or to go on strike.

Democracy is a fairly new phenomenon in the history of human civilization and, until a few decades ago, repressive violence was widespread in most countries of the world. But the gradual disappearance of dictatorships in Latin America over the past twenty years, the recent abolition of apartheid in South Africa and return to civilian rule in several African countries, and the elimination of the Soviet Empire have brought about a significant reduction in the need for and reliance on repressive violence by governments. It does not mean, however, that this form of violence has vanished altogether. Repressive violence continues to be prevalent in many countries, even in the more ancient democratic societies. In Great Britain, for example, the Thatcher administration promulgated new laws in 1980 and 1982 which restricted the rights of trade unions and workers. Grave judicial errors were committed in connection with the intervention of the British army in Northern Ireland, such as the notorious case of the Guilford Four portrayed in the movie "In the Name of the Father."

The notion of alienating violence, which refers to the deprivation of a person's higher rights such as the right to psychological, emotional, cultural or intellectual integrity, is based on the assumption that a person's well-being does not come only from fulfilling material needs. Looking at alienating violence means paying attention to the satisfaction of such diverse non-material needs as empowerment at work or in the community, the opportunity to engage in creative activities, a young child's need for affection--some child psychologists are now talking about the crucial role of a dimension called emotional intelligence--, the feeling of social and cultural belonging, etc.

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<sup>7</sup> Gibbons, E. (1999). Sanctions in Haiti: Human Rights and Democracy under Assault. Washington D.C.: The CSIS Press.

Examples of alienating violence are found in countries with deliberate policies of ethnocide threatening to destroy the cultural identity of an entire linguistic or religious community. In Morocco, for example, the Berber part of the population, which represents 60 percent of the total population, does not have official recognition at school or in the media. In several African and Latin American countries, indigenous population groups are being gradually assimilated, losing their identities as a result of discriminatory cultural policies. Racism, and any form of prejudicial practice against any particular group in society, such as homosexuals or the elderly, are other forms of alienating violence found in many places.

Freedom from fear is a key dimension in this discussion of alienating violence. The daily life of millions of people throughout the world is affected by feelings of anxiety, apprehension and dread. This is found among communities caught up in situations of direct violence, such as war, civil strife and repression. Colombia, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, Sierra Leone, Rwanda, Bosnia and Kosovo are present-day examples. Feelings of apprehension often continue for years after the end of the conflicts, aggravated in many cases by the presence of land mines, which lie dormant in the ground in more than 70 countries and kill or maim about 26,000 people a year, mostly civilians.

People living in urban areas with high crime rates are also subject to this type of anxiety. A recent survey among inhabitants of the largest metropolises in Latin America indicates that, even in cities with relatively low levels of crime like Buenos Aires, a large proportion of people live in fear. Often, this leads to restricted mobility in terms of the times of day people can leave their houses or district and the places they can safely go to. The rapid growth of security products and services in both industrialized and developing countries is a sad illustration of the importance of this dimension of fear. In his Annual Message to Congress in 1941, President Roosevelt had mentioned "freedom from fear" as one of the four essential freedoms he wanted to preserve for the American people, together with freedom of expression, freedom of worship and freedom from want.

Table 1 below summarizes the main dimensions of the proposed analytical framework and indicates possible levels of responsibility.

**Table 1. Typology of Different Categories and Forms of Violence**

<b>Perpetrator</b>	<b>Individual</b>	<b>Group</b>	<b>Firm</b>	<b>Government</b>
<b>Category</b>				
<b>Direct Violence</b> ( <i>deliberate injury to the integrity of human life</i> )				
murder	X	X		X
massacre		X		X
genocide				X
torture	X	X		X
rape and child sex	X	X		X
maltreatment	X	X		X
female circumcision	X	X		
forced resettlement	X	X		X
kidnapping / hostage taking		X	X	X
forced labor (incl. child labor)	X	X	X	X
slavery				
<b>Indirect Violence</b> ( <i>indirect violation of the right to survival</i> )				
<b>Violence by Omission</b> ( <i>lack of protection against...</i> )				
poverty			X	X
hunger			X	X
disease			X	X
accidents			X	X
natural catastrophes				X
<b>Mediated Violence</b> ( <i>harmful modifications to the environment</i> )		X	X	X
<b>Repressive Violence</b> ( <i>deprivation of fundamental rights</i> )				
<b>civil rights</b>				
freedom of thought		X		X
freedom of speech		X		X
freedom of religion		X		X
right to a fair trial				X
equality before the law				X
freedom of movement				X
<b>political rights</b>				
freedom to vote				X
freedom of association				X
freedom to hold meetings				X
<b>social rights</b>				
freedom to go on strike			X	X
freedom to form a union			X	X
protection of private property				X
<b>Alienating Violence</b> ( <i>deprivation of higher rights</i> )				
alienating living/working conditions	X	X	X	X
racism	X	X		X
social ostracism	X	X		X
cultural repression		X		X
living in fear	X			X

## Applying the Analytical Framework for Violence

How can this framework be used? Its main advantage is that it constitutes a flexible analytical tool for investigating complex situations in a systematic, thorough and objective manner. One can compare situations of violence along several dimensions, for example geographical, historical, ideological, and institutional in order to establish and study patterns of interconnections and causal relationships in a consistent way.

Along the space dimension, levels and occurrences of violence can be analyzed in different countries using the same methodological approach. Linkages can be found even across national borders. For example, between the look of wonder of a European child buying her or his first electronic game and the exhaustion in the eyes of an Asian woman who spends her day assembling tiny electronic components, there is a whole set of complex economic and social relationships. In some cases, action in the name of economic development leads to both social and environmental catastrophe. Environmental specialists have explained that the impact of the October 1999 floods in India—which killed more than 17,000 people—would have been much less deadly, had the mangrove trees which had always been a natural protection against floods not been cut to set up lucrative shrimp farms geared to the export market.

Second, along the time dimension, one can look at historical patterns of violence, outlining for example the causal relationship between colonialism and the growth of the Western economies. To quote the Nobel Peace Prize winner Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, “When the missionaries first came to Africa they had the Bible and we had the land. They said ‘let us pray.’ We closed our eyes. When we opened them, we had the Bible and they had the land.”

Third, there often is a dynamic relationship between different forms of violence which can be mutually reinforcing. Recent econometric studies have shown, for example, that income inequality (indirect violence) has a significant and positive effect on the incidence of violent crimes.<sup>8</sup>

Fourth, the same approach can be applied to compare different realities across ideological boundaries. The typology of human rights violations can be used for capitalist and communist societies, for kingdoms and republics, for secular and fundamentalist regimes. Looking, for example, at the defunct Soviet Union through this analytical framework, it is possible to identify the main dimensions of the human cost of socialism as it functioned in that context. The history of the Soviet regime is indeed filled with tales of terror, massacres, mass executions, deportation of entire population groups, purges and concentration camps, reflecting unprecedented levels of institutionalized state terrorism<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Fajnzylber, P., Lederman, D., and N. Loayza (1999). “Inequality and Violent Crime”, unpublished paper. Washington D.C.: The World Bank, November 1999.

<sup>9</sup> See for example Heller, M., and A. Nekrich (1986). *Utopia in Power: The History of the Soviet Union from 1917 to the Present*. New York: Summit Books. Conquest, R. (1973). *The Great Terror: Stalin’s Purge of the Thirties*, rev.ed. New York. Conquest, R. (1979). *Kolmya: The Arctic Death Camps*.

Fifth, the framework is helpful in identifying harmful situations in democratic societies where, theoretically, human rights are fully protected by the rule of law. The French Government has recently been condemned by the European Court of Justice for the use of torture by police against common criminals. Amnesty International has launched a campaign against capital punishment in the United States which is one of the few countries in the world, together with Iran, Pakistan and Somalia, where the death penalty can still apply to young people under the age of 18.

Sixth, the typology allows measurement of the respective roles and responsibilities of different institutions, from individuals to groups of people to firms to governments to multinational companies. For example, thousands of Bolivians and Paraguayans died between 1932 and 1935 because their two nations were at war; but in reality it was a war by proxy between two giant oil companies—Standard Oil of New Jersey and Shell Oil—competing for control of the Chaco oil fields at the border between the two countries.

A final observation concerning the application of the framework is that a particular occurrence of violence may fall under several categories at the same time. Slavery, for example, cuts across all four categories of violence. It encompasses the direct violence of the manhunt in West Africa, the forced voyage to America and the denial of freedom, the indirect violence of the slaves' living conditions, the repressive violence inflicted upon people who never had any rights whatsoever, and finally the alienating violence involved in uprooting Africans and plunging them in a totally foreign cultural and social environment and denying them their basic dignity as human beings. As an extreme illustration of the relationship between individual cruelty and the significance of slavery as an economic system, one can evoke a "delicate" practice used in 19<sup>th</sup> century Cuban plantations to preserve the continuity of the slave population. Before punishing a pregnant slave woman who had misbehaved in her work, a hole would be dug in the ground so that the woman could lie on her stomach and be whipped without any damage to the baby she was carrying<sup>10</sup>.

### Violence and Education

Can the same analytical framework be applied to the concept of education? At first sight, violence and education do not fit well together. The former refers to harmful situations which cause people to suffer, and the latter to a positive process of intellectual and moral growth. But these two notions which appear to belong to very separate realities have, in fact, many points of intersection. In some countries, schools are violent environments and the education process, or lack thereof, are important determinants of violence. At the same time, education can be a powerful instrument to reduce violence and improve the human rights situation in any given society.

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Oxford: Oxford University Press. Medvedev, R. (1976). *Let History Judge*. Nottingham: Spokesmann Books. Carrère d'Encausse, H. (1978). *L'Empire Eclaté*. Paris: Flammarion.

<sup>10</sup> Reported in Galeano, E. (1981). *Les veines ouvertes de l'Amérique latine*. Paris: Editions Plon, p. 119.

As early as 1948, the international community decided to include in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights an article affirming that "*Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages.*" The Declaration went on to indicate that elementary education should also be compulsory. Several other texts and legal instruments have reaffirmed the importance of this basic human right, for example, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the 1959 Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and the 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child ratified by 191 countries<sup>11</sup>.

The UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education has introduced a second, related dimension: equality of educational opportunities. This refers to the obligation of States to offer access to education equally to all children, regardless of differences in terms of regional, ethnic, religious, linguistic or gender background.

The third dimension of education as a human right defended by the United Nations system is the notion of freedom of choice. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights mentions that "The State Parties to the present Covenant undertake to have respect for the liberty of parents ... to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions."

To emphasize the importance attached to education as a human right, the UN Commission on Human Rights, under the authority of the Economic and Social Council, has begun to issue, since 1998, a yearly report on the degree of compliance of countries with the right to education as defined by the United Nations system. However, the content of the report reveals a relatively cautious and restricted discussion of the issues involved<sup>12</sup>. With regard to access and availability, the report focuses on national legislation on compulsory and free education, without reviewing actual compliance. The equality of opportunity dimension is looked at exclusively from the viewpoint of gender inequities, undoubtedly a crucial element but certainly not the only one. Unequal access deserves to be analyzed as well along socio-economic, ethnic, linguistic, and religious lines. Finally, there is little consensus, among the members of the General Assembly, on considering "the choice of parents" as a fundamental human right at the same level as access to basic education. Many States view it as a Western, capitalist notion designed to legitimize existing patterns of social or racial inequality or justify the introduction of voucher systems.

To ensure a more systematic and thorough assessment of the relationship between violence and education, it is possible to apply the analytical framework presented earlier, looking at the linkages from two complementary angles: first, education as a place or a determinant of violence, and second education as an instrument to reduce societal violence.

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<sup>11</sup> Only two countries have not ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child to this day: Somalia and the US.

<sup>12</sup> Preliminary Report of the Special Rapporteur on the right to education, Ms. Katarina Tomasevski, submitted in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 1998/33. United Nations, Economic and Social Council, document E/CN.4/1999/49.

*Negative Dimensions in the Context of Education*

To begin with direct violence, it should be noted that schools are not always the sanctuaries of peace and harmony they are expected to be. In many countries, societal violence reaches into the schools. The US case is one of the most striking example in that respect<sup>13</sup>. In a society where gun violence has become a major public health hazard, schools are not immune from the same type of violence. In many urban schools, passing through a metal detector is the first daily "educational" experience of a student. Students are not allowed to carry a book bag to school. Police officers and dogs on patrol are part of the regular school landscape. The frequency of school massacres, such as the Stockton massacre in January 1989 or, more recently, the Columbine High School killings in Colorado in April 1999, has increased in dramatic proportion. Nine school shootings have been recorded in the last two years across the country.<sup>14</sup> A Washington Post poll of the concerns of American people in the context of the presidential electoral campaign revealed that, out of a list of 51 problem areas, lack of safety in schools was ranked number two<sup>15</sup>. Financial resources which could be used for pedagogical purposes are channeled to purchase security equipment, as exemplified by the recent decision of Montgomery County authorities in the State of Maryland to invest close to US\$700,000 to install electronic monitoring equipment in all schools of the county.

The presence of guns and knives in schools is also a major preoccupation in countries going through civil war, such as Colombia or Sierra Leone. In Nicaragua, gang violence in schools has become a worrisome phenomenon and the presence of armed policemen is now indispensable to assuage the fears of parents. The University of Antioquia in Medellin, Colombia, the oldest higher education institution of the country, is increasingly under siege by armed groups from all political sides. Students live in a state of "panic and consternation".

*"The main administration building has been dynamited by leftist guerillas; a respected professor, a student leader and a popular cafeteria worker have been shot to death on university grounds for political reasons; and a right-wing paramilitary group has begun to operate openly and circulate a death list of future targets."*<sup>16</sup>

War and post-conflict situations can have other devastating effects on the school system. In 1996, 29 out of the 48 countries of Sub-Saharan Africa were affected by civil strife. In countries like Angola, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Cambodia, Croatia, Iraq, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Chechnya and Somalia, the presence of land mines in former conflict areas prevents children from getting an education because of the life-threatening danger involved in something as basic as walking from the home village to the local school. In several instances, schools have been bombed and children have died during

<sup>13</sup> See for example Salmi, J. (1992). "L'Amérique malade des armes à feu". *Le Monde Diplomatique*, April 1992.

<sup>14</sup> Pressley, S. A. (2000). "Year of Mass Shootings Leaves Scar on U.S.", *The Washington Post*, 3 January 2000.

<sup>15</sup> "What Worries Americans", *The Washington Post*, 7 November 1999.

<sup>16</sup> Rohter, L. (1999). "College students warily live, learn in war's shadow", *The Miami Herald*, 29 December 1999.



conflicts, as has happened in Lebanon, Iraq and Bosnia during the past few years. On December 17, 1999, 20 students ages nine to 15 were wounded by shrapnel when shells fired by an Israeli-allied militia exploded in an elementary school in southern Lebanon which has been hit five times in as many years.<sup>17</sup> In Colombia, large numbers of school teachers and students have been threatened or killed by the various guerrilla and paramilitary groups. In the Northern Colombian province of Bolivar, 300 teachers are currently on leave with pay away from their schools of assignment because of death threats.

*"In the last ten years, being a teacher in Colombia has become as dangerous as being a soldier, policeman or journalist. On average, one teacher is killed every fifteen days...Some teachers, who ignored the threats, have been murdered in front of their own class."*<sup>18</sup>

Refugees and displaced persons offer another challenge to the educational authorities of the affected countries. Additional resources are needed to provide schooling in remote areas where often there are no schools. Appropriate pedagogical approaches are required to help children traumatized by their exposure to conflict situations. At the end of 1996, there were about 6.2 million refugees and internally displaced people in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Colombia again, it is estimated that up to 15 percent of the rural population is displaced as a result of guerrilla or paramilitary activity, which means that thousands of children are deprived from a normal school experience. As a result of the civil war in Guatemala in the early 1980s, an estimated 20 percent of the overall population lived as refugees in the mountain areas of the country or in neighboring Mexico.

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<sup>17</sup> Mantash, A. (1999). "Children Hurt in S. Lebanon Militia Attack", The Washington Post, 17 December 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Restrepo, J.D. (1991). "Ser maestro: un peligro mortal [Risking your life to be a teacher], Educación y Cultura. FECODE, Santafé de Bogotá, Colombia, no. 24, p. 8. Quoted in Camargo Abello M. (1997). "Are the seeds of violence sown in schools?", Prospects. UNESCO: Paris, vol. XXVII, no.3, September 1997.

While less newsworthy, corporal punishment is another important dimension of direct violence which is part of the daily school experience of children in many countries, especially in the developing world. Beatings are seen in many cultures as a normal enforcement tool to motivate students to learn better, in defiance of the International Convention on the Rights of the Child which stipulates the use of discipline appropriate with the dignity of the child. In Morocco, for example, a majority of primary school teachers work with a ruler, a stick or a piece of rubber garden hose which are generously used to hit the children.<sup>19</sup> The American researcher Maher, who spent a year in the Moroccan countryside, recalls that teachers usually "*shout their lesson, delivering ridicule and blows freely*".<sup>20</sup> As one teacher explained, "*the children have always been hit, beaten at home and in the street. If one takes up a different system in school, they become too spoilt and one cannot control them anymore. True we are taught many things at the teacher training college, everything about psychology and pedagogy, but when we arrive here, we don't know how to deal with them. Using the stick is the best way.*"<sup>21</sup> There is an old Colombian saying to the effect that you can learn well only after a strong beating ("la letra con sangre entra"), reflecting an ancient tradition of school beatings which is still prevalent in the rural parts of the country. Corporal punishment and school bullying is also widespread in socially cohesive societies like Japan. The 1994 suicide of a 13 year old boy, Kiyoteru Okochi, who had been repeatedly humiliated and harassed by other boys without intervention of the school authorities, brought this issue to international attention.<sup>22</sup> In the United Kingdom, where corporal punishment had traditionally been extensive and brutal, there have been recent efforts to reintroduce this practice in schools, despite the European Court of Human Rights' condemnation of Britain in that regard.<sup>23</sup>

Illiteracy, a strong factor of poverty, is one of the most debilitating forms of indirect or social violence. For the millions of girls and boys who are denied access to school, or who are rejected after only a few years, living without the capacity to read and write will be a serious handicap during their entire life. It affects their ability to find remunerated employment and become more productive if they are self-employed. Illiteracy is also potentially life-threatening because of its negative impact on the health of its victims and that of their family, especially in the case of girls and mothers who usually play the leading part in the transmission of progressive hygiene and health habits. World Bank researchers have underscored a clear correlation between girl education and mortality rates, especially child mortality.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Salmi, J. (1981). "Educational Crisis and Social Reproduction: the Political Economy of Schooling in Morocco". University of Sussex: Unpublished Ph. D. thesis.

<sup>20</sup> Maher, V. (1974). *Women and Property in Morocco*. Boston: Cambridge University Press, p. 81.

<sup>21</sup> Belarbi, A. (1976). "Les relations enseignants / enseignés dans la classe". University of Paris, unpublished thesis, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> Hirsh, M., and Takayama, H. (1994). "The Other Side of Paradise". *Newsweek*, 19 December 1994, p. 37.

<sup>23</sup> Parker-Jenkins, M. (1997). "Sparing the Rod: Schools, Discipline and Children's Rights in Multicultural Britain". Paper presented at the Conference of the South African Education Law and Policy Association. Stellenbosh, South Africa, September 1997.

<sup>24</sup> Hill, M. A., and E. M. King (1995). "Women's Education and Economic Wellbeing". *Feminist Economics*. Vol. 1, No.2, London: Routledge Journals.

The scores of children who are excluded from schools are usually the victims of negligent government policies which have failed to make "education for all" a real national priority. Some groups in society can be affected more than others. In many South Asian, African and Arab countries, for example, girls fare systematically worse in terms of access to school and permanence in the education system. According to UNICEF, sixty percent of the 130 million children aged six to 11 who are not in school throughout the world are girls. In the Caribbean region, by contrast, there is a reverse pattern of gender inequality, whereby the school performance of boys is below that of girls. In several Latin American countries, children from the indigenous populations are less likely to enter school, to stay in school, or to perform well academically than the rest of the population. In Peru, for example, Quechua children score an average of 30 percent lower than Spanish speakers on national tests of academic achievement.<sup>25</sup> In Guatemala, according to Ministry of Education statistics, the average education level of indigenous females is less than one year of formal education and the illiteracy rate is as high as 70%. By contrast, average number of school years achieved is 4.5 for the non-indigenous population, whose illiteracy rate is only 40%.

Sometimes, government negligence is compounded by deliberate discriminatory practices against "minority" groups from a social or legal standpoint. In South Africa until the early 1990s, education for the black majority was a powerful instrument of perpetuation of the unjust apartheid system. In 1970, for instance, less than one percent of the African and colored population had finished 10 years of formal schooling, compared to 23 percent for the white population. In the words of the Minister of Native Affairs, "... *my department's policy is that education should stand with both feet in the reserves and have its roots in the spirit and being of Bantu society... There is no place for [the Bantu] in the European community above the level of certain forms of labor*<sup>26</sup>." Indonesia, Malaysia and Sri Lanka are other examples of countries whose education policies were purposely and systematically biased against some ethnic minorities in the form of explicit or implicit quotas. In Hungary, children of the Gypsy minority continue to be discriminated against to this day. Many rural schools are segregated, including the provision of separate toilet facilities.

The AIDS epidemic, which has reached alarming proportions in many Sub-Saharan African countries, is a strong factor of exclusion. It is estimated that there are already 4.5 million "AIDS orphans" in Eastern Africa alone. In the absence of special attention to their plight, most of these children do not have access to school or do not stay in school for long.

Illiteracy is not only a developing country social disease. Recent surveys in industrialized nations have shown that a surprisingly high proportion of the adult population is functionally illiterate. The 1995 survey indicates that, for the adult population in the 46-55 age category, the range of functional illiteracy is between 7 percent (in Sweden) and 36 percent (in Ireland). It is as high as 25 percent in the United

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<sup>25</sup> The World Bank (1999). Peru - Education at a Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Washington D.C., Report No. 19066-PE, vol. 1., p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in Troup, F. (1976). Forbidden Pastures: Education under Apartheid. London: International Defence & Aid Fund, p.4.

Kingdom and 21 percent in the US.<sup>27</sup> This situation is all the more worrisome as rapid technological change and the information and communication revolutions are drastically changing the content of jobs and career patterns. Lifelong education is not a luxury anymore but a necessity for survival and adaptation, but it is not accessible to the relatively large share of the population falling in this category of functionally illiterate people. UNICEF estimates that, at the eve of the new century, almost 900 million people, representing close to one sixth of humanity, are functionally illiterate.

In many developing countries, especially in the rural areas, the physical infrastructure conditions for learning available to the children are far from being adequate. Schools operate without a proper sanitary infrastructure or without sufficient protection against harsh climatic conditions (rain, heat). In rural Peru, for instance, 68 percent of the smaller schools have no working latrines; 39 percent of the classrooms have no roof.<sup>28</sup> In Northeast Brazil, a third of all schools do not have bathrooms.<sup>29</sup> In some countries, for example in Trinidad and Tobago, asbestos has been used in school construction, with a significant risk of harmful exposure for the children.

School accessibility is also a factor to consider. In rural El Salvador, the number of teachers and children drowning on their way to school has increased so much, in the wake of recent floods, that it has become a national problem for the Ministry of Education.<sup>30</sup> In some rural areas in the Philippines, children carry ropes which are used routinely to cross rivers and avoid drowning in the daily school commute.

With respect to the “repressive violence” category, an uneducated population is fertile ground for the denial of civic and political rights. Even in countries with a long democratic tradition, the high proportion of abstentions at key political votes, for example in the US or in France, could be an indicator that adult illiteracy and the lack of civic education in schools are obstacles to full participation of the majority in democratic life. Successive surveys of college freshmen in the US indicate that young people are increasingly detached from political and community life.<sup>31</sup> In many societies, school governance, structure, organization and pedagogical practices do not reflect the democratic ideals which could impact positively the young people educated in these schools. As two US professors emphasized in a recent book on democratic schools, “the most powerful meaning of democracy is formed not in glossy political rhetoric, but in the details of everyday lives.”<sup>32</sup>

<sup>27</sup> OECD (1997). *Literacy Skills in the Knowledge Society*. Paris: OECD, table 1.6 page xx.

<sup>28</sup> The World Bank (1999). *Peru - Education at a Crossroads: Challenges and Opportunities for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*. Washington D.C., Report No. 19066-PE, vol. 2, p. 101.

<sup>29</sup> Waiselfisz, J. (1999). “Ambientes Escolares”, unpublished document. Ministry of Education, November 1999.

<sup>30</sup> Interview with the Minister of Education, October 4, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Referred to in *Infobrief* (1998). Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Issue 13, June 1998, p.2.

<sup>32</sup> Apple, M.W., and J.A. Beane. (1995). *Democratic Schools*. Alexandria, Va: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, p. 103).

The last category of violence, alienating violence, is particularly relevant to this review of education and human rights. In many education systems, there is a wide disconnect between the curriculum taught at school and the community it is meant to serve, as humorously illustrated by Charles Schulz and his Peanuts character.

*"I learned something in school today.*

*I signed up for folk guitar, computer programming, stained glass art, shoemaking and a natural foods workshop.*

*I got Spelling, History, Arithmetic and two study periods.*

*So what did you learn?*

*I learned that what you sign up for and what you get are two different things."*<sup>33</sup>

For millions of children, being confronted with an alien curriculum in terms of content and, sometimes, language of instruction makes for a very unsettling educational experience. The language situation in Morocco offers an interesting example of this type of challenge. As a child, the young Moroccan learns either one of three Berber dialects or Moroccan Arabic in the family and immediate community. When a child enters primary school for the first time, he/she starts to be taught in classical Arabic, an erudite written language which is linguistically distinct from the Moroccan Arabic spoken in the country. After two years, children are introduced to French which will serve as the vehicle for learning mathematics and natural sciences. During these years of acquiring basic literacy skills, the mother tongue (Berber or Moroccan Arabic) is strictly banned from the classroom. Many students end up with serious shortcomings in terms of cognitive achievement, not because of inherent intellectual deficiencies, but because they have to study in what are for them, from a purely linguistic viewpoint, two "foreign" languages.<sup>34</sup>

Textbooks often reflect a cultural, urban or gender bias which misrepresents minority groups or population segments with a minority status. Studies of textbooks used in Latin America have shown, for example, that black people have been systematically eliminated from any reference outside the slavery period. Moreover, when depicted, black persons are associated with negative images reflecting profound racist prejudices in society<sup>35</sup>. At times, the level of frustration of minority groups can be so high as to lead to extreme reactions. In Sri Lanka, for example, it appears that the violent Tamil Tigers movement started among students disenchanted with an education system which totally ignored their minority culture.

Again, this type of curriculum problem is not confined to the developing world. The progress of "creationism" in the US is a striking example of biased teaching in an industrialized country. Over the past ten years, Christian fundamentalists have taken over school boards in many districts or counties and successfully removed any reference to

<sup>33</sup> Quoted in Reimer, E. (1971). *School is Dead: An Essay on Alternatives in Education*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, p. 22.

<sup>34</sup> Salmi, J. (1987). "Language and Schooling in Morocco", *International Journal of Educational Development*, Vol. 7, No.1, pp.21-31.

<sup>35</sup> Arenas, A. (1999). "Education of People of African Descent in Latin America and the Caribbean", in Kwame A. A. and H. L. Gates (eds). *Encarta Africana*. Redwood, WA: Microsoft Corporation.

Darwin and evolutionism from the biology curriculum in high schools.<sup>36</sup> The August 1999 decision of the Kansas board of education to eliminate, from State education standards, references to Darwinism and to scientific accounts of the origin of the universe and the Earth which conflict with the biblical version of creation, has revived the national debate and raised the specter of censorship.<sup>37</sup> As a result of the Kansas board decision, zealous librarians in religious schools have torn out the section on Charles Darwin in books about great scientists and labeled "dangerous" biology books with the following warning:

*Teacher beware: This book contains evolutionary statements. Use material carefully.*"<sup>38</sup>

Another important dimension of alienating violence is the culture of fear prevailing in many school systems where tests and exams have become an end in themselves. When the purpose of each school cycle is solely to prepare for the next cycle, the anxiety to pass replaces the pleasure of learning. Intense competition, starting sometimes as early as in kindergarten, is associated with the dread of failure and engenders worrisome phenomena. Widespread cheating has been documented in several developing countries, for example Pakistan and Bangladesh<sup>39</sup>. Even in the United States, a recent survey among Duke University students revealed that close to half acknowledged some degree of high school cheating<sup>40</sup>. Child suicides occur in closely knit cultures where school failure brings humiliation for the child and disgrace to the family, like in Japan and Hong Kong. One of the most dramatic and extreme illustrations of the weight of social pressure was the recent murder of a two-year old toddler in Tokyo, whose only "sin" was to be selected by lottery for admission to a prestigious kindergarten. He was strangled by an envious neighborhood mother whose own child had not been accepted<sup>41</sup>. Also, as a result of the prevailing physical violence in inner city US schools, in European schools in low income suburbs, and more generally in societies torn by civil war, teachers live in fear of being victimized by aggression from unruly students.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that, as in any other situation of violence, the different dimensions of the relationship between violence and education can be mutually reinforcing. In Jamaica and Colombia, for example, failure at school and growing unemployment lead young males into a vicious cycle of drug abuse and street violence.

<sup>36</sup> Mathews, J. (1996). "Creationism makes a comeback". The Washington Post, 8 April 1996.

<sup>37</sup> Keller, B. and A. D. Coles (1999). "Kansas Evolution Controversy Gives Rise to National Debate", Education Week, 8 September 1999.

<sup>38</sup> Rosin, H. (1999). "Creationism, Coming to Life in Suburbia", The Washington Post, 5 October 1999.

<sup>39</sup> Greaney, V. and T. Kellaghan. (1996). "The Integrity of public examinations in developing countries", in H. Goldstein and T. Lewis (eds). Assessment: Problems, developments and statistical issues. Chichester: Wiley. pp. 167-188.

<sup>40</sup> Raspberry, R. (1999). "Their Cheating Hearts", The Washington Post, 23 November 1999.

<sup>41</sup> Tolbert, K. (1999). "In Japan, Education is Deadly Serious", The Washington Post, 27 November 1999.

*Education as a positive factor*

*Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern but impossible to enslave.*

*Henry, Baron Brougham (1778-1868)*

Fortunately, the relationship between violence and education is not always harmful, quite the opposite. On the positive side, education is an important instrument to overcome violence and improve respect for human rights. In societies where direct violence is or was pervasive until recently, for example in countries torn by civil war like Sierra Leone and Colombia, in post-conflict nations such as Mozambique and El Salvador, or in post-apartheid countries like South Africa and Namibia, political and civic leaders have emphasized the need to make schools violence-free and to promote peace education as a key channel for changing the value system and bringing up generations of young people able to coexist in a more peaceable fashion. In Namibia, for example, corporal punishment has been eliminated at the end of the apartheid period and school discipline is now based on a non-violent approach called “discipline from within”.

Ongoing experiences of education for peace and human rights in Colombia offer rays of hope in an otherwise discouraging situation of widespread violence. In the Northern Province of Bolivar, for instance, the Convivial Schools program (“Escuelas Territorios de Convivencia Social”) has adapted the traditional local figure of the “palabrero” or mediator, prevalent among the Indigenous population, to train a network of negotiators chosen among students, parents, teachers and school administrators, whose role is to promote peaceful modes of conflict resolution in the school and the community. Set in a region of acute violence where three different guerilla groups, various squads of paramilitary terrorists, drug lords and the national army have been actively fighting and terrorising the civilian population for two decades, the program has begun to transform the culture of schools in a more democratic way and to shield them relatively from the surrounding violence, even achieving the safe release of teachers kidnapped by the guerilla or the paramilitary.

In countries with repressive political systems, universities have often provided a forum for voicing criticism on important political and social issues. In many parts of the world, authoritarian governments have been seriously challenged by student protests, as illustrated by the Tianamen Square events in China (1989), or even overthrown, for instance in Thailand (1974) and Korea (1987).

Providing education helps young people acquire the fundamental skills and values needed to find productive employment, be able to adjust to changing labour market requirements over their lifetime, and live a politically, socially and culturally meaningful life. Higher levels of education also result in better health and longer life expectancy. Girls’ education, in particular, has high individual and social health benefits. More educated mothers maintain better hygiene and feeding habits in their household; resulting in lower infant mortality. Educated teenagers are less at risk of adolescent pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. Girls’ education also helps reduce fertility rates.

*... In Brazil, illiterate women have an average of 6.5 children, whereas those with secondary education have 2.5 children. In the Southern Indian state of Kerala, where literacy is universal, the infant mortality rate is the lowest in the entire developing world—and the fertility rate is the lowest in India.<sup>42</sup>*

Experiences throughout the world demonstrate that programs specifically dedicated to those children who have been excluded from the education system for one reason or another can have very positive results. The BRAC schools in Bangladesh, to give just one example, have been successfully offering quality education to a growing number of children from low income families, with a special emphasis on girls and disadvantaged children. In addition, in any society, keeping children in school is also the best way to eliminate child labor and the sexual exploitation of children.

As discussed earlier, transforming schools into settings which are free from physical violence is a fundamental requirement. But it is equally important to eliminate dimensions of indirect violence in schools by offering to all children a healthy school environment which entails, at a minimum, provision of potable water, decent sanitary facilities and a safe building.

Finally, several channels can be used to make the formal education experience of children in schools more meaningful, with the purpose of reducing alienating violence. In several countries, far-reaching innovations have been introduced to transform the curriculum and improve pedagogical practices so as to provide underprivileged groups with a more empowering education. *Escuela Nueva*, for instance, is an interactive teaching and learning approach which stimulates learning among peers and the development of democratic behaviors in multigrade schools. Started in Colombia in the 1980s, it has been successfully adapted in other countries, including Guatemala and Honduras. The EDUCO movement in El Salvador, which began as a grassroots initiative at the end of the civil war in 1992, has brought about an active involvement of the communities in the operation of schools in the poorest districts of the country. The City of Emmaus School in Northeast Brazil is designed as a new form of education for street children, giving them the opportunity to learn to live as independent and responsible citizens.

For many children from linguistic minorities, access to bilingual education is an important factor to assure a meaningful school experience and increase their chances of academic success. In Latin America, the education authorities in Ecuador, Bolivia, Mexico and Guatemala have taken the lead in developing and implementing bilingual programs with appropriate education materials, adapted pedagogical practices and qualified teachers.

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<sup>42</sup> UNICEF (1999). *The State of the World's Children 1999*. New York, pp. 7-8. Based on UNESCO 1995 data.



With respect to the teaching of tolerance, a pioneering program in Southern California has had a remarkable impact at San Clemente High School, where inter-ethnic tensions among whites, Latinos, blacks and Asian Americans had led to serious incidents in the early 1990s. A course where students are taught to identify and reject all forms of prejudice and racism--not just ethnic discrimination--has significantly modified the social climate on campus<sup>43</sup>. Similarly, the Givat Gonen school in Israel, located in a district characterized by high levels of criminality and antagonism between Jewish and Arab youths, has pioneered an "education for peace" program which has successfully integrated children from the two communities.

Table 2 below summarizes this discussion of the relationships between violence and education with a typology of the role played by education from both a negative and a positive perspective.

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<sup>43</sup> Smith, H. (1999). "Before the violence breaks out", The Washington Post. Washington D.C., 18 September 1999.

**Table 2. Violence and Education: a Typology**

<b>Manifestation Category</b>	<b>Negative Dimensions in the Context of Education</b>	<b>Education as Positive Factor</b>
<b>Direct Violence</b> <i>(deliberate injury to the integrity of human life)</i>	effects of violent conflicts ... land mines ... bombing ... threats, kidnappings, murders weapons in schools corporal punishment failure suicides	education for peace  weapon-free schools banishment of corporal punishment
<b>Indirect Violence</b> <i>(indirect violation of the right to survival)</i>  <b>Violence by Omission</b>         <b>Mediated Violence</b>	illiteracy inequities of access and achievement ... gender ... socio-economic groups ... ethnic groups ... linguistic groups ... religious groups  inadequate infrastructure ... lack of basic hygiene ... exposure to rain and heat ... asbestos	education for all equality of opportunity including the excluded (minorities, refugees, displaced children) education for life  adequate infrastructure ... potable water and latrines ... protection from rain and heat ... harmless construction materials
<b>Repressive Violence</b> <i>(deprivation of fundamental political rights)</i>	absence of democracy in schools lack of education for democracy	democratic practices in schools at all levels education for democracy (civic education, recognition of equal rights and freedoms)
<b>Alienating Violence</b> <i>(deprivation of higher rights)</i>	foreign / biased curriculum and textbooks (history, biology, etc.)  foreign language alienating pedagogical practices  harassment examinations as negative incentive	appropriate curriculum education for tolerance and cultural diversity use of mother tongue or bilingualism pedagogical practices for intellectual and emotional growth harassment-free schools

## Conclusion

To understand fully the role of violence and the related extent of harm inflicted upon various population groups or individuals in a democratic society, or in any society for that matter, two things are required. One needs first to conduct a systematic analysis of the different forms of violence existing in that society. Second, on the basis of this analysis, one must try to establish the patterns and relationships linking these manifestations of violence to the prevailing economic, social and political power structures, in order to establish accountability. The framework outlined in these pages is offered as a tool to facilitate this type of analysis.

This paper was guided by the assumption that violence is a multifaceted phenomenon associated with specific causes and responsible people or institutions. The paper also reflects a strong belief in the existence of universal human rights and the premise that the different forms of violence mentioned to in the article are sources of harm or suffering regardless of the type of society and culture one lives in and no matter one's own individual characteristics. Whether Chinese or Swiss, Muslim or Jew, man or woman, situations such as torture, hunger, illiteracy, lack of political freedom, living in fear, and lack of self-determination are hurtful. The degree of tolerance towards various manifestations of harm may differ from one person to the other, and from one culture to the other, but there are common experiences of oppression, suffering and alienation which affect all human beings alike.

Education's place in the study of human rights violations is particularly important because of its potential role as either a negative or a positive factor with strong multiplier effects in each case. As discussed in this paper, the possibility to enjoy an education and the quality of that educational experience bear on all four forms of violence. This was illustrated in a dramatic way by the anguished cry for help message left behind by the two Guinean teenagers who were found dead in July 1999, after hiding in the landing gear bay of a Sabena airplane which flew from Conakry to Brussels. Their letter, addressed to the "Excellencies and officials of Europe", is self-explanatory:

*"... We suffer enormously in Africa. Help us. We lack rights as children. We have war and illness, we lack food... We have schools, but we lack education..."*<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Hoagland, J. (1999). "Help Us", The Washington Post. Washington D.C, 22 August 1999, page B7.




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