FROM MEMORY TO ACTION

How Holocaust Education Can Change Our Response to Genocide Today
MUSEUM’S MISSION

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum is America’s national institution for the documentation, study, and interpretation of Holocaust history, and serves as this country’s memorial to the millions of people murdered during the Holocaust.

WHAT WE DO

• Advance and disseminate knowledge about this unprecedented tragedy;

• Preserve the memory of those who suffered;

• Encourage visitors to reflect upon the moral and spiritual questions raised by the Holocaust as well as their own responsibilities as citizens.
FACTS AND FIGURES

Visitors to the Museum

- More than 30 million since the museum opened in April 1993.
  - 34% school-aged children; 12% international; approximately 90% non-Jewish.
  - 90 heads of state; more than 3,500 foreign officials from over 132 nations.

Visitors Online in 2009

- **Visits**: More than 34 million; more than 100 countries visit daily.
VISION
“There were no prayers at his grave. No candles were lit to his memory. His last word was my name, a summons to which I did not respond. I did not weep and it pained me that I could not weep. But I had no more tears.”
“A memorial unresponsive to the future would violate the memory of the past.”
LOGIC
DEFINITION OF GENOCIDE:

The intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, as such…

UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, 1948
ACTS OF GENOCIDE

• Killing members of the group;

• Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group;

• Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its destruction in whole or in part;

• Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group;

• Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.
BEARING WITNESS

• Power of eyewitness testimony;

• Public speaking and outreach;

• Resources.
Bearing Witness: Darfurian Refugee Camps Chad, 2004
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A PHYSICAL PRESENCE: THE MEMORIAL SPEAKS

• The significance of a dramatic physical presence in a specific geographic location

• Public outreach through visitation and press coverage.
Our Walls Bear Witness

November 20 - 26, 2006
Our Walls Bear Witness

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CHANGING THE SYSTEM: ENGAGING POLITICAL PLAYERS

• Partnering with colleague institutions: United States Institute of Peace and the American Academy for Diplomacy;

• High level panel from across the political spectrum;

• Careful attention to detail, implications of the work, and networks needed to sustain its significance.
PREVENTING GENOCIDE
A Blueprint for U.S. Policymakers

Madeleine K. Albright • William S. Cohen
Co-Chairs, Genocide Prevention Task Force
KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

• Create interagency Atrocities Prevention Committee

• Prepare interagency genocide prevention and response plans

• Invest $250 million for crisis prevention and response

• Create international network for information sharing and coordinated action

• Provide assistance to build capacity of international partners
IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS

• The White House recently created a high-level interagency atrocity prevention committee and hired a Director for War Crimes and Atrocities.

• Director of National Intelligence, Admiral Dennis Blair, included an assessment of genocidal threats as part of his annual report to Congress.

• The Quadrennial Defense Review, a planning document for the military, states that the Pentagon should be prepared with options for “Preventing human suffering due to mass atrocities or large-scale natural disasters abroad.”
TRANSITIONING OUR ON-SITE VISITORS

• From history to the present;

• From learning by reading and watching, to learning by doing;

• From on-site to online
From Memory to Action: Meeting the Challenge of Genocide

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