

DAY 1 Saturday May 30

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**The flight:** Even though I understand the physics, it still boggles the mind that anything so immense and heavy as a 747 can soar into the sky. Looking out the window, the wings seem to extend nearly to the horizon. As we take off on our night-long flight, my colleague with whom I'm seated, a professor of international studies at the University of Michigan, sighs, "so, we're off to save the planet." I wish I felt so clear-sighted about it. I'm still sorting out, even as we start our ascent, my goals and intentions.

For the past two years, as part of my studies of environmental policy, I've looked at the ways in which environmental agreements between Canada and the United States get transformed into laws and actions that improve the Great Lakes ecosystem. In recent years, non-governmental organizations have played increasingly important roles in the diplomatic relationship between our governments. This is also true everywhere else in the world. I'm fascinated by this trend.

Inside the plane the meetings have already begun. On my right is the leader of a group of nearly one-hundred members of a consumer coop movement in Japan. They are interested in meeting representatives of producer cooperatives from tropical countries who extract products without destroying the rain forests in the process. The Japanese group wants to bypass the transnational timber companies by making direct purchasing agreements with local producer coops. Behind me is a man from Traverse City Michigan going to Rio as a computer hacker volunteering for the Association for Progressive Communications. APC will be setting up computers in every meeting center in Rio so that participants can stay in touch with each other. All the draft treaties and schedules will be on-line. We'll be able to e-mail information back home and get comments and revisions of treaties and new ideas from those unable to make the trip to Rio. The APC has established computer networks in every part of the globe. With a computer and a modem almost anywhere on the planet an individual interested in forest issues or solar energy or endangered species can log on the network and share data and action updates. Just as fax machines and computers poked holes in the iron curtain and brought news to the dark nights of silence in military-run Chile and Burma, likewise today it is no longer possible to go unnoticed when practicing cut-and-run logging or dig-and-dump mining in the far corners of the globe. Even before the drinks are offered on the plane, names, phone numbers, and electronic mail addresses are being exchanged in several languages.

Already on this one jet the world is starting to change. How many other jets with their hundreds of passengers are above this troubled planet at this same instant, pointed toward Rio. If, as some

profess, the Earth is a Being, we seem to part of some urgent circulation of antibodies or neural information that She needs in order to restore her health. And yet I'm never satisfied with such self-serving images. Our intentions and our actions abound in contradictions. Each flight to Rio contributes its jet fumes to the stratosphere. And even as we talk about the best front-end communications software for our laptop computers, in many places basic postal services are collapsing, libraries and schools struggle for primary supplies and books. One more chasm is splitting the world between rich and poor, this time between those with and without access to information.

The in-flight movie is *Father of the Bride*. a funny movie about the problems some rich folks have deciding how to spend thousands of dollars on a wedding: a set of concerns difficult to take seriously, even as comedy, on the way to Rio. I saw it at the theater with my nine-year old daughter, Dianna. On the plane I took off my headset and thought about her. She's told me that she likes science and babies and so wants to be a research pediatrician when she grows up. There's a lot of uncertainty in a child's hopes for the future but we act to try to make them achievable. Scientists, native faithkeepers, sincere observers, thoughtful people and millions of folks see present realities and trends for the future as deeply disturbing. The ecological ramifications of ozone depletion, climate change, soil degradation, deforestation, loss of biodiversity and the increasing pollution of air, water and land threaten our capacity to support children's dreams. Most of the frightening predictions are put in terms of what could happen by early in the next century. This often seems like a long way off, but it is the brief span that separates our children from our children's children. If we don't change course, our children will end up where we're leading them. In order for Rio to be a success a major shift in public and personal priorities will occur. Will it happen?

It's a restless night, full of unsettling dreams made even more troubling by the storm we encounter midflight. The lightning flashes both in my dreams and in my window.

Sunday, May 31

### **Landing in Rio:**

Rio's international airport is out in the northern suburbs of this farflung city. We land early on a hazy grey morning. The giant mountain outcrops typical of the region are but specters in the distance. My first impression is of cloying humidity and the acrid scent of diesel exhaust. Once inside the terminal we are quickly surrounded by Brazilian government representatives handing out

customs forms, placing stickers on our chests to signify whether we are with official delegations for the UN Conference or participants in the parallel global forum. At least five different individuals ask if I have questions or need help. Signs pointing toward special shuttle busses to the hotel areas are prominent everywhere. It is a welcome display of labor-intensive efficiency.

There has been much speculation about whether the Brazilian government, mired as it is in multiple crises and chronic corruption, will be capable of handling the monumental logistics for such a major international event. The key for success, it seems, lay in the ready availability of workers. We are quickly riding on one of the lined-up buses filling and heading toward Rio.

The new highway from the airport into the city was built especially for the Conference. If all these new visitors mean that Rio's declining tourist industry might rebound, the highway could be a useful investment for the city. If, as I suspect, Rio's crime and pollution will keep it off most vacation plans, then the highway and many of the other improvements will go the sorry way of many World's Fairs and Olympic investments with no return for the beleaguered people.

It is these people, or at least the angry and/or desperate among them I presume, that we are being protected from by the hundreds of heavily armed soldiers stationed along the highway. I expected the soldiers. It was part of the deal with the U.N. The Brazilian government had guaranteed our security. It is a pledge they clearly do not take lightly. There are green-fatigued soldiers, their weapons poised, on each side of the highway, and especially on every overpass, concentrated even more where the bus window looks out on a stretch of depressing shanties. At some intersections tanks stand guard. The rhetoric of this event begins to seem surreal..... "*this global partnership .....the world community....sustainable, secure and equitable future....*(snippets from Secretary Maurice Strong)...*the creativity, ideals and courage of the youth of the world should be mobilized to forge a global partnership in order to achieve sustainable development and ensure a better future for all...*(principle 21 of the Rio Declaration) This discussion can not take place in most of the major cities of the world without a large, visible display of military firepower. The irony is inescapable, the tragedy undeniable.

During the hour or so the bus takes to get to the touristy part of town the fog and smog begin to burn away and I get my first view of the stunning beauty of this city. In every direction mountains rise stone grey and tropical green, lush and intense. The neighborhoods are separated by the mountains and connected by a series of tunnels, in which of course the all-pervasive diesel fumes choke out the meager air. In the flats and crannies between the mountains live the people. The steeper locales are where the poor crowd into hillside favelas. My first impression of Rio: lush,

intense, dangerous, intoxicating. Above it all, ghostlike in the fog, stands the enormous statue of Christ the Redeemer.

My colleague and I arrive at what's supposed to be the apartment we had rented for the two weeks only to discover someone else in it. Thankfully the travel agent who made the arrangements is waiting for us outside, apologetic and promising to make things right. Basically she's been burned. The owners rented the same apartment twice, expecting to find, she presumes, another place for us. "These people," by which she means specifically the owners but which seems also to include everyone in Rio, "are desperate and so they do foolish things." She thinks however that she might have a cancellation in a hotel. As a result we end up for no additional charge in a five-star hotel on the beach at Copacabana, shared by among others, the President of Portugal and delegations from Kuwait, Italy, and Columbia. From our 21st story window we can see many of the landmarks of Rio: sugarloaf mountain, Leme and Copacabana beaches. Beneath us the sea crashes and hisses loudly enough so that up here the noise of buses and sirens are almost drowned out. The military helicopters fly low beneath our window, soldiers sitting at the open door, rifle ready.

Maurice Strong, Secretary General of UNCED is quoted in this morning's paper as saying, *"It has taken the whole of human history to get to this point where we can bring all the the leaders of the world together. If we do not begin the movement toward a new sustainable pathway here, there will not be another chance in our lifetime."* A singular moment, a chance in a lifetime. There is enough urgency in that thought to make one think maybe something really important is going to happen here. Surely I wouldn't have invested two weeks of my time, much money, effort and anxiety getting here if I didn't believe it were possible. For a moment, that sense of history and urgency overshadows questions about whose history, about the legitimacy and sincerity of these world leaders, who after all include various "presidents-for-life" and China's Tienamen marauder, Li Peng, Kuwait's Emir and Iraq's Tariq Aziz and a host of lesser notables.

We settle into our hotel room, venture out past the guards to walk the few blocks around the hotel, past money changers, and vendors of souvenirs and gemstones. The warnings are everywhere. Don't go out alone. Don't bring anything of value to the beach. Don't ride the city buses. I'm trying to figure out if this is prudent advice or an overreaction meant for wealthier tourists than I. For now I'm cautious. Gawking at everything, tripping on holes in the sidewalk and walking into vendors, making it clear I'm unaccustomed to this place. Nervous and fascinated.

We take a cab over to the Gloria hotel, in the once fashionable edge of downtown near the horribly polluted Guanabara Bay, across from Flamengo Park where the Global Forum is taking shape. The Forum opens tomorrow, but registration begins in the hotel convention center today. We walk along the fencing surrounding the park. The finishing touches are being placed on an amazing undertaking. Thirty five temporary structures are being built to house scores of simultaneous meetings. The first day's meetings will include the South American Conference on Religion and Ecology, International Council for Adult Education, a workshop by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Women's Environmental and Development Organization and many others. It looks like thousands of workers are busy in the park. Rows of porta-johns at the entrances, even temporary banking services and telecommunications centers are being set up. We walk along the outside edges where I'm far enough for the first time from the streets and the cars to inhale deeply of the tropical humidity and scent of the thick foliage. Darkness is settling very early reminding me that here it's nearly the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year. Above sugarloaf I can see the first of the unfamiliar stars of the southern hemisphere. In the last of the light, children are playing soccer on the beach.

### **Monday, June 1**

We head out early to Rio Centro, the location for the "official" of the two conferences. I am representing Great Lakes United as an NGO delegate. GLU is an organization that has managed to bring together some unlikely allies: hunters and anglers with environmentalists and scientists, indigenous people and others. It has been active in assuring compliance with and extending the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement between Canada and the United States. The Great Lakes Research Consortium, the organization that employs me is a member of Great Lakes United and I serve on its Board of Directors. When several U.S. and Canadian government officials referred to the Great Lakes Agreements as models for international environmental cooperation, some of us felt that it was important to point out the role that non-governmental parties have played in prodding government action. We wanted to establish contacts with people working in other large watersheds of the world and we created an International Committee, which I Chair. When the United Nations began planning for this conference we saw it as an opportunity to draw on the Great Lakes experience and to learn from others. So we registered for accreditation. I had attended some of the preparatory meetings in New York City in April and had helped work on the proposed Earth Charter. I was therefore invited to participate as well in Rio.

The Conference Center sits at the foot of one of Rio's many mountainsides facing toward the sea. Its about an hour bus ride from the city through Rio's most prosperous suburbs. Things

are quiet, unlike the bustle at the Global Forum. The official meetings won't start for two more days and only a few of us are present when the offices open for credentials. Later I learn that our experience as NGOs is very different from what the government delegates endured. For us there's a very brief line and everything is well organized. Our pictures are taken and we receive our badges within a few moments. By contrast, government delegates have to wait for hours for their credentials in a stifling downtown office building. This unusual reversal of the usual comparative fortunes of government and non-government delegates makes some of us feel pretty smug.

With credentials around my neck I wander through the huge, open-sided convention complex. New, dark wood and leather furniture, a vast display about Brazilian forestry and agriculture, meditation gardens, the large plenary hall where workers are hanging the backdrop with the conference logo and the words, *The United Nation Conference on Environment and Development*: The stage is being set.

I return to the Global Forum headquarters in time for the first Rio meeting of the US Citizens Network on UNCED. Over a hundred crowd into the hotel meeting room meant for half as many. Most of the people have just arrived and look tired and excited. It's a briefing: what will be happening at the forum, how to leave messages for each other, will we have meetings with the official US delegation, how to find computers and cellular phones, where to eat, etc. We hear a report about the makeup of the U.S. delegation. William Reilly has been named head of the delegation which cheers many of those at the meeting, since he's regarded as a reasonable man, not completely steeped in the right-wing ideology dominating the Bush administration. Three members of the U.S. Citizens Network have also been appointed to the official U.S. delegation. Don Edwards, Michael Dorsey and Diane Ridgely are each impressive, articulate and thoughtful. Everyone seems pleased that our interests are being well represented. The fact that all three are young african-americans is a pleasant surprise in the predominately white middle class milieu of environmental science and environmentalism.

## Tuesday June 2

After a breakfast of papaya, pineapple, watermelon, and ham I trek back to the Gloria Hotel for the first session of the International NGO Forum, yet another series of meetings, this one intending to prepare written agreements, or "treaties" between the participating NGOs. The point isn't to offer more radical alternatives to the UN treaties, nor to highlight what is missing from the government versions, but instead to represent commitments the NGOs are willing to make to each other in the process of developing international networks on environment and development. There

are some thirty proposed treaties on the table, from trade relationships to the rights of children and adolescents. This breadth of focus and talent is awesome, but it points out one of the major problems of this whole Rio encounter: the scope of problems that fall within the context of global environment and development is virtually infinite. How do you prioritize attention and resources. How do you find common ground? How do you even read all the documents? Does saving the planet have to require such encyclopedic intelligence?

One of the interesting contradictory processes that has led to Rio and will emerge from it is the assault on the authority and legitimacy of national governments. On the one hand an international community is saying that global environmental problems are beyond the capacity of any one nation to resolve alone and new mechanisms for global action are needed. At the same time, local communities see national leaders as too distant and removed from the sources and solutions of local community problems. New forms of local participatory democracy are being created everywhere. I heard one speaker describe how national leaders, from Bush to Brazil's President Fernando Collor, often just seem irrelevant, even silly. The location of power each represents is at the wrong scale for really addressing the most critical problems. The irony is that the main focus of the press and much of the world is concentrated on the procession of presidents and prime ministers heading for Rio. Meanwhile at the local and global levels new leadership is emerging and new forms of power, management, science and governance are being invented.

The first plenary of the international NGO forum opens with about 1500 delegates in attendance. The Chair asks for reports from the several regions represented: Latin America, Pacific Islands, Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, Australia/New Zealand, Indigenous Peoples, Islamic Regions. People from each region stand as they are announced to the applause of all the rest. Its a good mix with broad representation from most of the planet with one exception. When the Islamic regions are announced, only two arab men rise.

The meeting is opened with a ceremonial dance by three men in traditional amazonian indian dress and headgear. Carrying spears and chanting along with an accompanying drummer, the three trace a rhythm back and forth across the front of the large room. Each sequence ends with a loud cheer. All around delegates are standing on chairs taking pictures. The flash clamas and the gawking is already a too familiar site. There is a large contingent at many of the venues of traditional people from several indigenous communities around the world. Many wear native dress and attract throngs of onlookers. They are not here to be a spectacle. They are looking to have a say. The world's most important and vulnerable ecosystems—tropical forests, desert, arctic tundra—are home for many of them. Development, by the Western model, has usually meant

displacement, disease and destruction. In Rio they want to be heard and heeded, not just admired and photographed.

The session begins with an overview of the issues facing UNCED. Martin Khor, an activist from the Phillipines, outlines what he sees as the North/South issues. According to him the key issue is who will control world institutions in the future. Will they be based on the United Nations model of one country, one vote or the World Bank and IMF model of one dollar, one vote. The amount of money being discussed at UNCED, the financial issues that have so dominated the debate and the press coverage, is, according to Khor, a pittance compared to the \$200 billion annually that presently flows from the South to the North. This amount includes profits on foreign investments, debt payments, transfer of funds by the wealthy in the South to overseas banks, and the drain of skills and talents that regularly moves out of the South through emigration. Even if foreign assistance from rich to poor countries were to increase by \$5 billion/year, one of the more optimistic figures being bandied about UNCED, that amount would be wiped out by a mere 1% increase in the interest on the foreign debt, or an equivalent decrease in commodity prices for raw materials. The issues are far more difficult than simply increasing foreign aid.

### Wednesday, June 3

Today UNCED begins. It seems like a good time to pray. Last night some of the organizers of the women's tent at the Global Forum held an all-night vigil by the sea in part, according to one of the fliers, *to reaffirm this strange and obstinate belief in life* that women have. High priestesses from Bahia, dressed in traditional long white gowns, dance in samba circles and toss flowers out to the Goddess of the sea. Tonight groups of Christians, Buddhists, Moslems and others will gather in Flamengo Park and each will pray in their own way for the success of this conference. Most of the delegates and participants here are more used to government, scientific or academic meetings where at most the banquet might be perfunctorily blessed. I pray that all the prayer will stir up some imagination, passion and courage.

This morning the Japanese government announced it is taking on the task of cleaning up Guanabara, Rio's horridly polluted bay at whose edge Flamengo Park and the Global Forum sit. In a world whose attention has shifted to environment and development, the technologies of wastewater treatment and sediment remediation will be in great demand. In these areas U.S. technological leadership has been well established. These are the kinds of initiatives the U.S.



government could also be announcing, instead of focusing on diplomatic damage control which seems to be dominating the U.S. presence here so far. In fact, in the middle of all the debates shaping up in Rio about new institutions and CO2 reductions and biotechnology, some of the simplest things are forgotten. We already know the basics of public health, sewage treatment and water supplies. Something so basic as a global commitment to providing primary urban wastewater treatment for the cities of the world remains in contention in the documents being prepared at UNCED because they mention specific costs, around \$20 billion annually of which \$7.4 billion would come from development assistance.

#### **Thursday, June 4**

Today nothing seems to work out right. First I'm locked out of my hotel room because the key is broken, then I take the wrong bus to get to the UN Conference and end up back where I started, an hour and half later back in front of my hotel. I had several meetings planned for today, including a negotiation session on an NGO treaty on freshwater, but I think its time to get out into the Atlantic Rain Forest. So I take a city bus until it starts to climb the hills and then catch the train up to the top of Corcovado, the site of the Christ the Redeemer Statue. From there I walk down, along paths and roads, through the palms, bamboos, begonias and banana trees. Clean mountain air, butterflies and bird calls, no speeches. Yes, its just what I need, thank you.

#### **Friday, June 5**

The Sheraton Hotel hunkers in luxury beneath Sugarloaf, on a stunning stretch of rocky shore and sandy beach. From its heights we look straight across into the open air windows of the stacked homes of the surrounding favelas. I'm here to meet with William Reilly along with 29 other representatives of U.S. NGOs. It was a list of people the EPA administrator selected from the membership of the U.S. Citizens Network present in Rio. Reilly, long involved with Great Lakes issues, selected me I presume because of my lakes connection.

I've planned what I want to recommend to him. It goes like this, "Canada and the United States have cooperated in the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement. I think it would be an excellent gesture if the delegations of our two countries in Rio would join together and announce a clean waters initiative to spread some of what we've developed in wastewater treatment, pollution prevention and regional planning to major watersheds in the developing world. This will give you an opportunity to highlight the Great Lakes, reaffirm U.S.-Canadian cooperation and have a real

impact, like the Japanese are doing in Guanabara Bay." I want the U.S. to brag about the Great Lakes agreements. Their most successful features have been major commitments in urban wastewater treatment, strict timetables for reducing phosphorous loads, and an independent commission to monitor progress: each feature something that the U.S. has rejected in the agreements under discussion at Rio.

Reilly is a tall handsome man who made his career in the Conservation movement. This morning he appears shaken but cordial. The New York Times has published a leaked memo he had written to the White House suggesting movement in the U.S. position on the biodiversity treaty, a recommendation rejected out of hand by the conservatives there. The press has followed us to the meeting, wanting to get to Reilly to play up what appears to be a rift in U.S. policy. Reilly jokes about his situation. "As you can all see," he tells us with a straight face, "our strategy for Rio is proceeding exactly as planned. It is all well orchestrated and we are in perfect control." Meanwhile, he's afraid to go out into the hall where a pack of journalists awaits.

He listens only to a few of the comments, thanks us for coming and apologizes for the brevity of the meeting, asking us to understand that he has much to do. I don't get my turn to talk about lakes. The situation of the U.S. delegation is sad really. There are many individuals among them who have come to Rio, like most of us, hoping to see real changes that might lead us out of the pending doom. But they are being undermined by a cynical leadership bent on nothing more than damage control. "What is the least we can do and not appear too much the villain," seems to sum up their Rio strategy. This from the country that produces the greatest per capita share of pollution on the globe, uses by far the most energy and contributes the greatest amount of greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. Single-handedly the U.S. has lowered everyone's expectations, dashed our hopes. It's very sad.

Jacques Cousteau is at the speaker's tent. "Surviving like rats is not what we should bequeath to our children and grandchildren. "

## Saturday, June 6

When I first arrived, the passage overhead of the military helicopters sent all the waiters from our breakfast buffet to the windows to watch. By now the gunships are just part of the background noise. "It's our government saying good morning," someone on street jokes in Portuguese. It's not difficult to understand how, except by those being targeted, military juntas become popularly accepted, be they in Rio or Los Angeles.

Jerry Brown is speaking at the open mike tent in the Global Forum. He seems to have a grasp of the issues and says many of the right things, but why does he seem so out of touch with where he is. He's giving a campaign speech. One person gets up and asks him in Portuguese to comment about the pollution in Guanabara Bay. After hearing the question translated, Brown recommends that the questioner sue the polluters. The Brazilians in the audience seem bewildered by such a response. Come on, Jerry, we're talking third world court systems here. Wake up, you're not in California.

One Brazilian NGO representative comments on the UN Conference, "A pound of feathers will only fly if there is a bird inside."

This evening it's back to the Sheraton Hotel to meet with the delegation of U.S. Senators in Rio. Al Gore, John Kerry, Larry Pressler, and several others are there along with about sixty NGO representatives. The meeting goes on for several hours, with the Senators listening to the concerns we express.

### **Sunday, June 8**

It's midway through the Earth Summit and the flurry of activities is now overwhelming. How can I choose where to go. At the Parliamentarians meeting, the Dalai Lama is speaking. At the women's tent there is a discussion of earth ethics, including Shirley McLaine and one of my favorite intellectuals, Carolyn Merchant. The Brazilian sports association is sponsoring a walk for the planet starting at Copacabana beach, and several U.S. activists will be carrying banners showing their disgust with U.S. positions in Rio. Al Gore and Jose Lutzenbertger, the Brazilian environment minister recently fired after charging the government with corruption, are at the speakers tent. And I've already scheduled a discussion with a group of U.S. academics who are all in Rio studying the evolution of international environmental law and policy. Since the last one seems to be the most important for my work, that's where I go. I guess I'll have to miss "New Models for Integrated Rural Community Development" and all the others.

After the academic discussion I speak with a man from Japan who tells me about an impressive voluntary program in his country. There the post offices also serve as savings banks where a large percentage of the Japanese people keep their personal savings. In January last year the ministry introduced a new savings plan where citizens can voluntarily donate 20% of the

interest earned toward international development assistance. In the first year, almost 7 million such accounts have been opened. We need many more ideas like that.

David Brower, the eighty year old senior radical of environmentalism, has been here promoting the idea of an International Conservation Corps, a kind of a cross between the depression era conservation corps and the peace corps. The idea would be to mobilize the energy and enthusiasm of young people around the world in numerous environmental restoration projects. I love that thought. While all the delegates over at the UN conference are fighting over dollars, one of the most important resource, labor, is growingly marginalized from the international order. Here's a way to put people to work in huge numbers doing good, important, grassroots work. We need more good ideas like that too.

### **Monday, June 9**

Many children are back on the street. Where are all the rest? Before we arrived, government buses toured the city, especially near the tourist hotels, offering coffee and pastry to any of the children who would come off the street. They took them away. Noone, not even the professional social workers of the shelters, seems to know where they've gone. In the meantime, scores of returnees or new arrivals have appeared. Now when I take my morning walk along the beach, I see a dozen or more boys who appear to be around ten years old, curled up on the exercise benches, under the palm trees, on the sand.

I am here in this fantastic city but I am so far from its heartache. It doesn't past the security anywhere near to the UN buildings. The Global Forum is surrounded by a ten foot fence. Entry by pass, \$50 please. The minium monthly salary in Rio is \$60. And that's for those with a job. Many people stand around the outside of the fence looking in. What can be done? Without security none of these meetings can go on. Just one of the many contradictions that is the Earth Summit.

Today is the day I speak at a workshop titled *Lessons from the Great Lakes and Global Rivers*. We are scheduled in an auditorium far from any of the other meetings. There are nearly one-hundred other meetings going on at the same time. I had brought several hundred fliers with me from Syracuse announcing the meeting but they all had the wrong location on them. It seems unlikely anyone will show up, but I'm prepared to talk about the experiences of NGOs in the Great Lakes. Only a handful do show up but thankfully those that do have a good reason for coming. We're able to share experiences, learn from each other, and exchange information about future

activities. I also do a lengthy interview with two reporters from the Canadian Broadcasting Company, so I presume my thoughts will go out across a hemisphere.

Incredible music tonight. It's Afro-Brazilian night at the Global Forum and by the end of the show everyone, not just the Brazilians but the Norwegians and Indonesians as well are on their feet and its Samba time. This is hard music to stop. When the band is finally sent off the stage by the worried clock-watching organizers, they march toward the beach and much of the crowd follows them. Everytime the drums stop, several heartbeats later a whistle blows, the samba master points toward the snares, and off we go. Tonight I love Brazil.

## **Tuesday, June 10**

The time for agreements has come. The world leaders begin arriving tomorrow. The parallel events begin to lose their sense of purpose. Whatever influence we are going to have by talking, we will have had it by now. The Global Forum is turning into a global fair, vendors crowding out most everything else. There are many angry people who want to demonstrate. I don't believe that Rio is the time or place for confrontation. Most of those calling for demonstrations are U.S. and European activists. They don't know what increased tensions might mean for this city.

I am in the mood for some specifics. Scheduled at the Earth Parliament is a day of presentations about successful agricultural and forestry projects that manage to produce wealth and protect the environment. Once I find my way to the Brazil Bank of National Development downtown where the seminars are being held its a fascinating day. All the examples really have the same simple message. Each is based on methods and tools that mimic the local ecosystem processes. It's the wisdom of designing with nature, instead of automatically trying to fight against natural processes. This is ancient knowledge and we are still struggling to make it relevant to our contemporary lives. Why does it seem so difficult?

One of the presentations and videos describe a rain forest agricultural system based on the workings of tropical forests. Each plot is cleared much in the same shape as a wind throw would produce. There are several layers of crops all in the same field. A root crop, a squash ground cover, corn on which pole beans climb, fruit trees. Each reaches its peak productivity in stages. Its all based on traditional forest knowledge. Each field produces for around four to six years, until the fruit trees predominate, and a new field is cleared. Meanwhile the fallow field continues to produce. And the whole system produces considerably more food than any of the fields which the settlers clear for grazing or export agriculture. And yet the people who developed this system, from

an indigenous culture in southern Mexico, are in danger of being wiped out as their lands continue to be stolen and the settlers diseases spread. Even as we meet, the processes destroying the knowledge that might form the basis for true sustainability grind on.

### **Wednesday, June 10**

4:45 AM. The meetings that began yesterday afternoon are finally winding down. There will be agreements for the leaders to sign. Few will be overjoyed with what's been accomplished. There is progress, but there was not the beginning of real change that so many wise people said was necessary. The processes and contradictions unleashed in Rio will push on. Now its time to listen to the speeches.

At one point reporters start running in one direction, security guards push them back, a woman near me yells, "someone's shooting." I freeze on the staircase where I'm standing above it all, in fear and amazement, watching the scuffles below. No one, it turns out, is shooting. A group of traditional chiefs are attempting a demonstration of some kind. Their supporters are pushed away. The chiefs, are taken, someone says, to see Secretary General Maurice Strong. The press, hungry for news, pushes every which way. The security guards, obviously very nervous, overreact. After a while the scene settles down. Similar encounters are repeated several times later. Two weeks at the center of the world's attention and people are getting very edgy.

The Tree of Life, a wood and wire sculpture that stands as the centrepiece of the Global Forum, is gathering pledges from individuals into its branches in the form of paper leaves on which wishes and promises are written. Today the organizers announced they had so far received 146,720 pledges. Today Jane Fonda and Ted Turner add theirs.

### **Thursday, June 11**

I wish people would stop calling the amazing web of life "genetic resources." I'm starting to feel like this whole UNCED process was a front to legitimate the marketing of Creation.

This and many other cranky thoughts whirl in my feverish head. If I hear one more helicopter fly beneath my window, one more siren screech up from the street, I think I'll crack. Perhaps appropriately, just as George Bush, Li Peng, Helmut Kohl and the others take center

stage, I have become ill of some tropical malaise or dysentery. For now, I sleep, take nothing but water and pray I recover in time to face the flight home.

I watch some of the speeches on television from my hotel bed, trying to listen beneath the portuguese translation. The President of Iceland, Vigdis Finnbogadottir, the only woman I've seen approaching the head-of-state podium, said it well. *Man has taken himself out of nature; he has attempted to manipulate it and has made it his slave instead of his partner. The questions that have not been answered in Rio will still remain on the world's agenda, simply because they have been raised, and they will not disappear until they have been resolved.*" Referring to the threat of sea level rise resulting from forces outside her country, she also says, *No man is an island. And no island is an island either.*

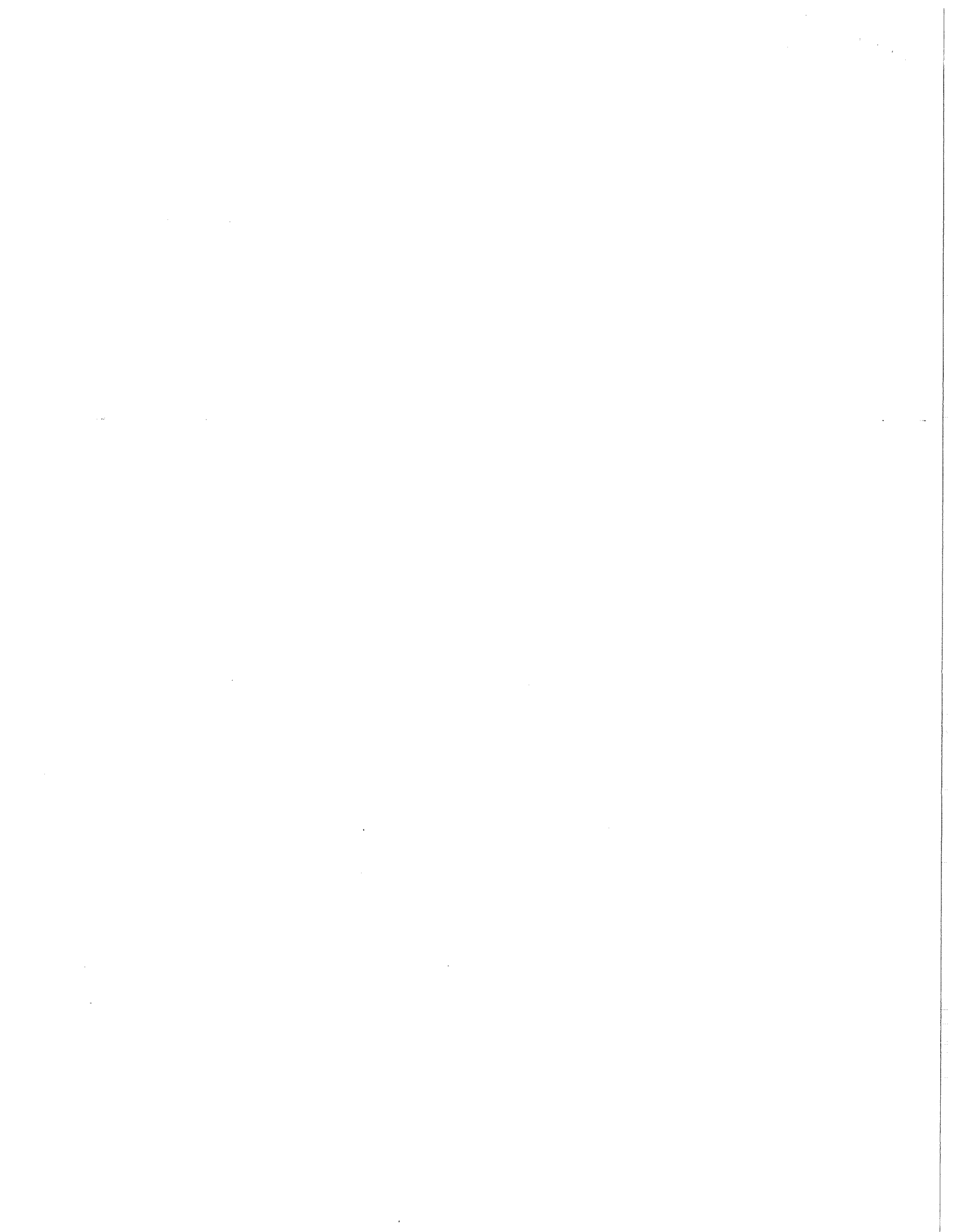
### Friday, June 12

Onondaga Chief Oren Lyons is speaking to reporters at Rio Centro. Chief Lyons has been a major presence in Rio throughout these two weeks. I feel proud to be from Syracuse. The Iroquois presence is part of our culture, our history and knowledge. Some day I hope Syracuse respects this community by listening and heeding them, and honoring their ancestors. We have a history of working for change in our region. We helped give birth to the women's rights movement and fought hard against slavery. I think we will produce leaders in the new movements just now being created and our grandchildren will be proud of us.

Chief Lyons is talking about the street children. He says that when he asked some of them what they needed, they replied, "Somebody to care for us." He says that the condition of the Earth can be judged by the treatment of its children. "Who will take responsibility for this condition?" he asks. "What should be infused in the Earth Summit is the spirit, the will to act. This is no time to be afraid. "

### Saturday, June 13

I've recovered enough to walk around one last time and visit the beach at Ipanema. After days of tropical heat in the nineties, the air is cool and clear. Even the ever present diesel fumes seem to have blown away. I'm ready to go home.





... prospect, I wish I had known more about the hazards and difficulties of such a business, especially during a recession of the kind that hit New England just as I was acquiring the inn's 43-year leasehold. I also wish that during the years I was in public office, I had had this firsthand experience about the difficulties business people face every day. That knowledge

choking off those opportunities. My own business perspective has been limited to that small hotel and restaurant in Stratford, Conn., with an especially difficult lease and a severe recession. But my business associates and I also lived with federal, state and local rules that were all passed with the objective of helping employees, protecting the environ-

to absorb or pass on these costs. Some of the escalation in the cost of health care is attributed to patients suing doctors. While one cannot assess the merit of all these claims, I've also witnessed firsthand the explosion in blame-shifting and scapegoating for every negative experience in life. Today, despite bankruptcy, we are still dealing with litigation from individuals

## Beware of False Gods in Rio

*Forty-six prominent scientists and intellectuals in the U.S., including 27 Nobel Prize winners, have joined 218 scientists in other countries in an appeal to the heads of state attending the Earth Summit in Rio this week. They call their petition the Heidelberg Appeal, after a conference held in Heidelberg, Germany, in April on hazardous substance use.*

*The full text is below, followed by the names of the U.S. signers.*

The undersigned members of the international scientific and intellectual community share the objectives of the "Earth Summit," to be held at Rio de Janeiro under the auspices of the United Nations, and support the principles of the following declaration.

We want to make our full contribution to the preservation of our common heritage, the Earth.

We are however worried, at the dawn of the twenty-first century, at the emergence of an irrational ideology which is opposed to scientific and industrial progress and impedes economic and social development.

We contend that a Natural State, sometimes idealized by movements with a tendency to look toward the past, does not exist and has probably never existed since man's first appearance in the biosphere, insofar as humanity has always progressed by increasingly harnessing Nature to its needs and not the reverse.

We fully subscribe to the objectives of a scientific ecology for a universe whose resources must be taken stock of, monitored and preserved.

But we herewith demand that this stock-taking, monitoring and preservation be founded on scientific criteria and not on irrational preconceptions.

We stress that many essential human activities are carried out either by manipulating hazardous substances or in their proximity, and that progress and development have always involved increasing control over hostile forces, to the benefit of mankind.

We therefore consider that scientific ecology is no more than an extension of this continual progress toward the improved life of future generations.

We intend to assert science's responsibility and duties toward society as a whole.

We do however forewarn the authorities in charge of our planet's destiny against decisions which are supported by pseudo-scientific arguments or false and

non-relevant data.

We draw everybody's attention to the absolute necessity of helping poor countries attain a level of sustainable development which matches that of the rest of the planet, protecting them from troubles and dangers stemming from developed nations, and avoiding their entanglement in a web of unrealistic obligations which would compromise both their independence and their dignity.

The greatest evils which stalk our Earth are ignorance and oppression, and not Science, Technology and Industry whose instruments, when adequately managed, are indispensable tools of a future shaped by Humanity, by itself and for itself, overcoming major problems like overpopulation, starvation and worldwide diseases.

BRUCE N. AMES, director, National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Center, Berkeley;

PHILIP W. ANDERSON, Nobel (Physics), department of physics, Princeton;

CHRISTIAN B. ANFINSEN, Nobel (Chemistry), biologist, Johns Hopkins;

JULIUS AXELROD, Nobel (Medicine), Laboratory of Cell Biology, National Institute of Mental Health;

SAMUEL H. BARONDES, Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute;

BARUJ BENACERRAF, Nobel (Medicine), National Medal of Science, Dana-Farber Inc.;

HANS ALBRECHT BETHE, Nobel (Physics), Newman Laboratory of Nuclear Studies, Cornell;

NICOLAAS BLOEMBERGEN, Nobel (Physics), Harvard;

THOMAS R. CECH, Nobel (Chemistry), University of Colorado;

STANLEY COHEN, Nobel (Medicine), professor of biochemistry, Vanderbilt;

MORTON CORN, director of Environmental Health Engineering, Johns Hopkins;

ERMINIO COSTA, director, Fidia-Georgetown Institute for Neurosciences, Georgetown Medical School;

GERARD DEBREU, Nobel (Economics), professor emeritus of economics, University of California;

CARL DJERRASSI, professor of chemistry, Stanford, U.S. Academy of Sciences;

LEON EISENBERG, professor of social medicine, Harvard;

IVAR GIAEVER, Nobel (Physics), professor of physics, Rennselaer Polytechnic Institute;

DONALD A. GLASER, Nobel (Physics), physicist, University of California;

ROGER GUILLEMIN, Nobel (Medicine), Whittier Institute;

DUDLEY R. HERSCHBACH, Nobel (Chemistry), professor of science, Harvard;

ROALD HOFFMANN, Nobel (Chemistry), professor of chemistry, Cornell;

JEROME KARLE, Nobel (Chemistry), chief scientist, U.S. Naval Research Laboratory;

WEN HSIUNG KUO, Department of Sociology, University of Utah;

ABEL LAJTHA, director, Center for Neurochemistry, The N.S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research;

M. DANIEL LANE, director, Department of Biochemistry, Johns Hopkins;

ARTHUR M. LANGER, director, Environmental Science Laboratory, Institute of Applied Science, Brooklyn College;

YUAN T. LEE, Nobel (Chemistry), Department of Chemistry, University of California, Berkeley;

WASSILY LEONTIEF, Department of Economics, NYU;

RICHARD S. LINDZEN, U.S. National Academy of Sciences, MIT;

HAROLD LINSTONE, professor emeritus of systems science, Portland State University;

WILLIAM N. LIPSCOMB, Nobel (Chemistry), Department of Chemistry, Harvard;

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MALCOLM ROSS, Research Mineralogist, U.S. Geological Survey;

JONAS SALK, professor in International Health Sciences, The Salk Institute for Biological Studies;

JOSEPH F. SAYEGH, research scientist, N.S. Kline Institute for Psychiatric Research;

ELIE SHNEOUR, director of Biosystems Institutes Inc.;

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THOMAS HUCKLE WELLER, Nobel (Medicine), professor emeritus, Harvard;

ELIE WIESEL, Nobel (Peace), Boston University;

TORSTEN N. WIESEL, Nobel (Medicine), President, Rockefeller University;

ROBERT W. WILSON, Nobel (Physics), head, physics research department, AT&T Bell Laboratories

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