

**Introductory remarks by Diego Hidalgo to the Seminar on
Philanthropy, peace and security, Madrid, November 20th, 2008.**

Dear representatives from American and European foundations, dear experts, dear friends,

It is a pleasure for me to host you in Madrid for this relevant event oriented to explore the role of philanthropy in the fields of peace and security and to discuss the links that may be established between foundations at both side of the Atlantic.

We are living paradoxical times. On the one hand, a new presidency in the US is generating great expectations, which I am afraid reality will be taming in a few months. On the other hand, a financial crisis, which is already affecting the so called "real economy", whose bottom we have not seen that will imply a heavy price to pay for several years.

On the one hand, a more committed international community in the fields of peace operations and peace building. But, on the other, we have bloody and dramatic clashes in the Democratic Republic of Congo, high political unrest in Nicaragua, terrible massive crimes related to drug trafficking in Mexico, rough attacks and fragmentation in Afghanistan (where two Spanish soldiers were killed a few days ago), signs of deep trouble in Pakistan, and the unfortunately violence as usual in Palestine and Israel.

These are only obvious examples of a structural social and economic violence that has been deepened in the last month since the global financial

crisis has eroded the fragile economies of countries as Haiti, Timor Leste, and Burundi among others. We have been focusing our attention in saving the financial economic system, but should not forget the impact that this crisis is having on the weakest States of the economic system.

I do not want to raise the possibility of more serious conflicts. On Monday I chaired the CAFFO which this tear was given by Joschka Fischer: he raised the specter of a more serious war.

In these complex and difficult times, the richest Northern states will very likely reduce their contributions for development aid, humanitarian actions and long term peace building policies. But even if this prediction is wrong, there is always urgency inside the donor community to get rapid results. The problem that we face is that rapid results and Peace building, peace consolidation do not always go together. Something that we are learning is that even if there may be fewer internal wars and wars between states, but that we are leaving in a world of countries in post-conflict rehabilitation.

If we consider that around 30 countries are going through these processes then it's easy to understand that creating the bases for reliable and self sustainable States is a crucial task that must be assumed by official and non governmental actors, as well as the local governments and societies.

From my limited position I have been promoting centers and initiatives directed linked to peace and security and to the basic conditions for peace: reduction of poverty, respect for human rights, promotion of democracy, the effective role of development aid, and the dialogue as an instrument. FRIDE

is a think tank with a vocation of creating action tanks such as the Club of Madrid and the CITPax. Other examples include DARA and Concordia 21, a new organization that I am establishing with some other donors,

I am convinced that governments, multilateral organizations, private foundations, non governmental organizations and the Media have a responsibility in supporting peace, democracy, development and human rights regimes in countries in conflicts, in dangerous regions and in post conflict situations.

We must also help to end vicious conflicts as the Israeli Palestinian and establish dialogues with our governments in order to avoid other Iraks and to act wisely towards conflicts as the Afghan one.

This seminar, that is gathering foundations from both side of the Atlantic, is a very important step. FRIDE has been participating and promoting several activities to encourage these dialogues.

But today the important actors are you, the representatives from Foundations and a relevant group of experts, that have accepted to come to Madrid, invited by the US Peace, Security and Funders Group to have a fruitful two days discussion about what we can and we should do towards the series of violent situations that we are living around the world.