

Tsunami Triggers Debate Over U.S.'s Role in Global Village

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**BY JULIA NEYMAN**

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About 60 Northwestern students and Evanston residents listened to a panel of experts speak on the United States' role in world aid and development Monday in Harris Hall.

Northwestern political science Prof. Richard Joseph, director of the Global Chicago Center Richard Longworth, and U.S. Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Evanston) spoke as part of the "Red, White and Blue Coming Together" Town Hall.

The program is part of an ongoing series sponsored by Americans for Informed Democracy, a group of students from more than 175 college campuses working to raise global awareness.

Sarah Bush, NU's AID branch president, said the tsunami disaster and last week's presidential inauguration made discussion of the United States' role in the world especially timely.

"Especially in the wake of the tsunami, the development of policy has been a very big issue," the Weinberg senior said.

Weinberg freshman Jasmyn Jones decided to attend after she saw a description on the HereandNow Web site.

"I'm in the international relations program and (aid to developing nations) is something everyone should be informed on," she said.

All three speakers used the United States' pledges for tsunami aid as jump-off points to discuss the obligations that come with being a wealthy nation and what Americans can do to help poorer countries.

Longtime foreign correspondent and foreign relations expert Longworth spoke about the affects of globalization on the world community.

"The real solution to helping the developing world lies through globalization," Longworth said, "because globalization erases community as we know it."

Longworth said that because technological advancements have shrunk the global community, Americans are faced with the dilemma of helping people around the world while protecting their domestic interests.

"Globalization is a work in progress, and we don't know where this is going," Longworth said.

Rep. Schakowsky spoke about statistics regarding the disparity between rich and poor nations and then said why it is advantageous for the United States to aid developing nations.

Schakowsky said the combined wealth of the world's 497 billionaires is greater than the gross national product of all of the sub-Saharan African countries combined. She also said Americans think the government spends 25 to 40 percent of its national budget on foreign aid, when in fact only 0.1 percent is allocated to aid.

Schakowsky said the United States should realize that helping developing countries will put it in more favorable international light and promote peace.

"We need to get over the idea of developmental aid as something wonderful and generous, and understand it is something that is in our own self-interest," she said.

Joseph, who also is NU's director of African studies, reflected on his days as a political activist as a student at Dartmouth College. He urged students to get involved in the aid process.

"Why can't global development be as intrinsic to a good 21st century university as being a philosopher, doctor, lawyer or engineer?" he asked.

Winnetka resident and NU alumna Karla Stone decided to attend because she thought the subject of world development was relevant.

"(Longworth, Schakowsky and Joseph) were three very different but very informed speakers who came at the topic from very different perspectives," she said.