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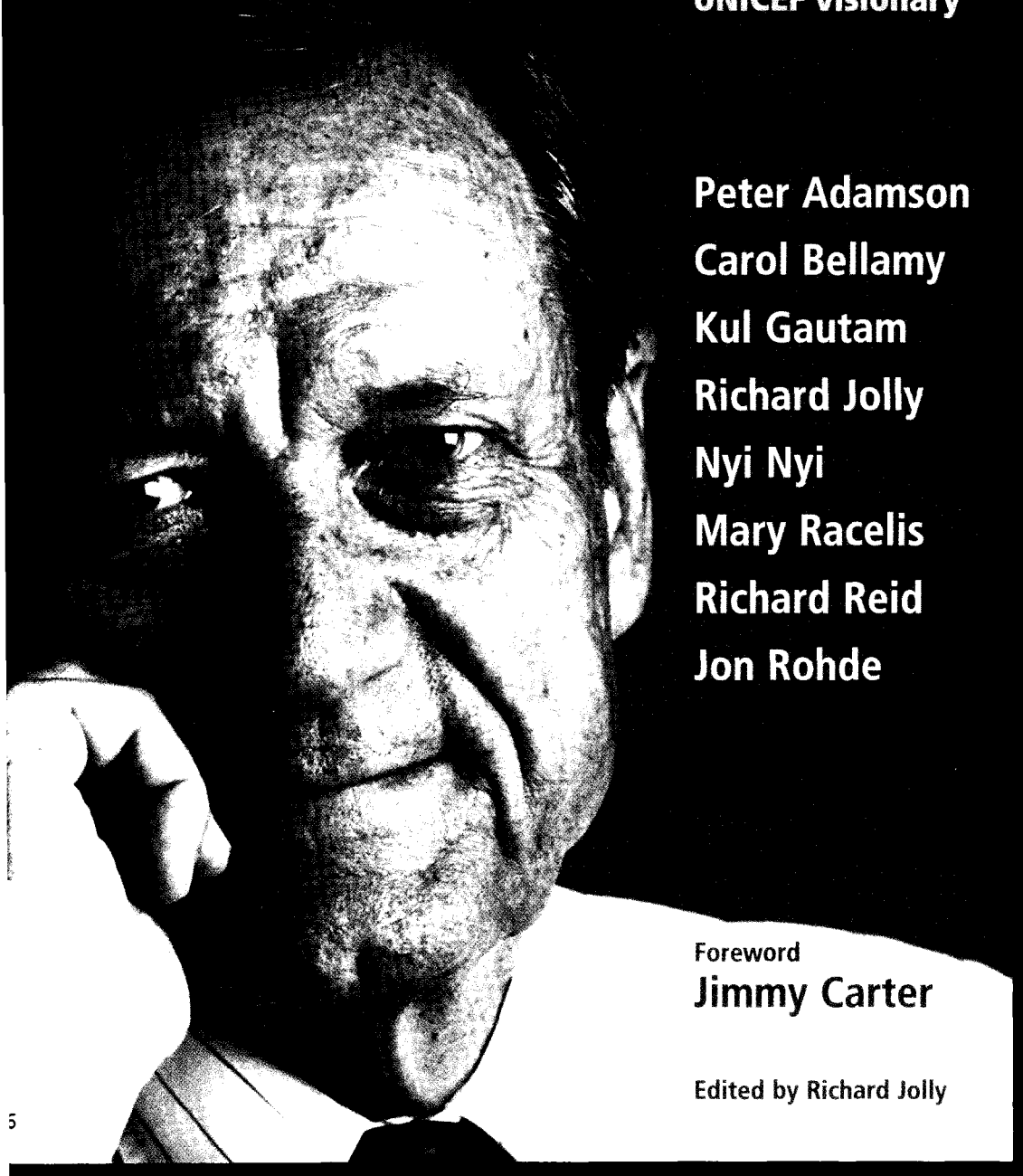
JIM GRANT

UNICEF visionary



Peter Adamson
Carol Bellamy
Kul Gautam
Richard Jolly
Nyi Nyi
Mary Racelis
Richard Reid
Jon Rohde

Foreword
Jimmy Carter

Edited by Richard Jolly

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JIM GRANT

UNICEF Visionary

This book has been written by former colleagues and friends of Jim Grant, with help and contributions from many others. We are grateful to the James P. Grant Trust for financial support for the editing and layout. We would also like to thank Bernadette Abegglen and Eve Leckey of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre in Florence for help with the printing and distribution of the book. In New York, we thank Ellen Tolmie and the UNICEF photo library for identifying and making available photographs. We thank Mary Cahill for her help in assembling a list of Jim Grant's contacts.

We express especial thanks to Ellan Young Grant for allowing us to use her own photographs of Jim taken during their travels together to see UNICEF programmes in different countries of the world.

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Jim Grant (1922-1995)

Jim Grant was a remarkable man of truly worldwide influence. Born in China, he dedicated his whole life to the cause of international development: in USAID; as founder, President and Executive Director of the Overseas Development Council in Washington; and for his last 15 years, as Executive Director of UNICEF. He was a professional and a visionary, an analyst with vast experience and an activist of almost unlimited commitment. But it was during his time as head of UNICEF that his vision, skills and leadership came together to make a worldwide impact. At the time of his death it was estimated that, because of his influence, at least 25 million children were alive who would otherwise have died in early life.

This book gives glimpses of his leadership and achievements during his period as Executive Director of UNICEF. Each piece is written by one of his close colleagues – one of those who was privileged to share in the heady excitement of the efforts and victories for children during those intense years. Many others could have contributed to this volume. For Jim was an inclusive leader, always reaching out to mobilize everyone for children and readily acknowledging the contributions of others, inside UNICEF and the UN and far beyond. We hope this helps to rekindle his vision and carry on his global mission for children.

R.J.

About the contributors

Carol Bellamy has been Executive Director of UNICEF since 1995.

Peter Adamson was for fifteen years the author of UNICEF's annual *State of the World's Children Report*. Before this, he was founder-editor of *The New Internationalist* magazine and a writer and presenter of BBC television documentaries on development issues. He has also published two novels, including one set in the developing world.

Sheila Barry Tacon was a UNICEF staff-member from 1975 to 1994. Over this period, she was Assistant Secretary of the Executive Board, Chief of the Non-Governmental Affairs Office in New York, Women and Child Survival Officer in Nairobi, and finally UNICEF Representative in Botswana. Since 1995, she has been closely involved with the UNICEF history programme.

Kul Gautam is Deputy Executive Director (Alliances and Resources) for UNICEF, a position he has held since 2000. Before this, he was for three years Regional Director of UNICEF for South East Asia and the Pacific and from 1993 Director of Programme Division in New York. Over his career, he has worked for UNICEF in a variety of positions from programme officer to UNICEF representative in Laos, Haiti and India. He was the key UNICEF staff member responsible for preparing the draft Declaration and Plan of Action for the World Summit for Children in 1990.

Richard Jolly, a development economist, worked with Jim Grant as UNICEF's Deputy Executive Director (Programmes) from 1982 to 1995. Before this he was Director of the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, where he is currently an Honorary Professor and Research Associate. From 1996 to 2000 he was special Coordinator of UNDP's Human Development Report.

Nyi Nyi was invited by Jim Grant in 1980 to become Director of Programme Development and Planning Division. Later he was appointed Director of UNICEF's Programme Division, where he provided global oversight of the programmes for Child Survival and Development and Universal Child Immunisation. From 1990 to1995, he provided support for follow up to the mid-decade goals of the World Summit for Children. Before joining UNICEF, he was deputy Minister of Education in Burma where he master-minded the literacy campaign. Since retiring from UNICEF, he has been Clinical Professor in public health at Tulane University and a member of the technical expert committee of the International Trachoma Initiative.

Mary Racelis, a sociologist from the Philippines, was UNICEF's Senior Policy Adviser on Family and Child Welfare from 1979-83. In this capacity, she was also responsible for programme issues relating to women and community participation and from1981-83 she served also as Chairperson of the Global Staff Association. From 1983 until her retirement in 1992, she was UNICEF Regional Director for Eastern and Southern Africa, based in Nairobi, Kenya.

Richard Reid joined UNICEF from Save the Children in 1980. He served thereafter as Representative in Nigeria; Representative in Turkey; Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa; Director of Public Affairs; and regional head of the Former Socialist Countries until retirement in 1995. Earlier he was a Peace Corps country director, and head-master at Robert College in Istanbul, where he now teaches international relations at Bilgi University.

Jon Rohde, a doctor and public health specialist, was a key adviser to Jim Grant on Child Survival and Development from 1980 to 1995 and, from 1990 to 1997, UNICEF's Representative in India. Before this, he had worked in Indonesia for Rockefeller Foundation, in Bangladesh on cholera research and in Haiti as a Director with Management Sciences for Health (MSH). Since leaving UNICEF, he has directed the MSH EQUITY Project restructuring health services in South Africa.

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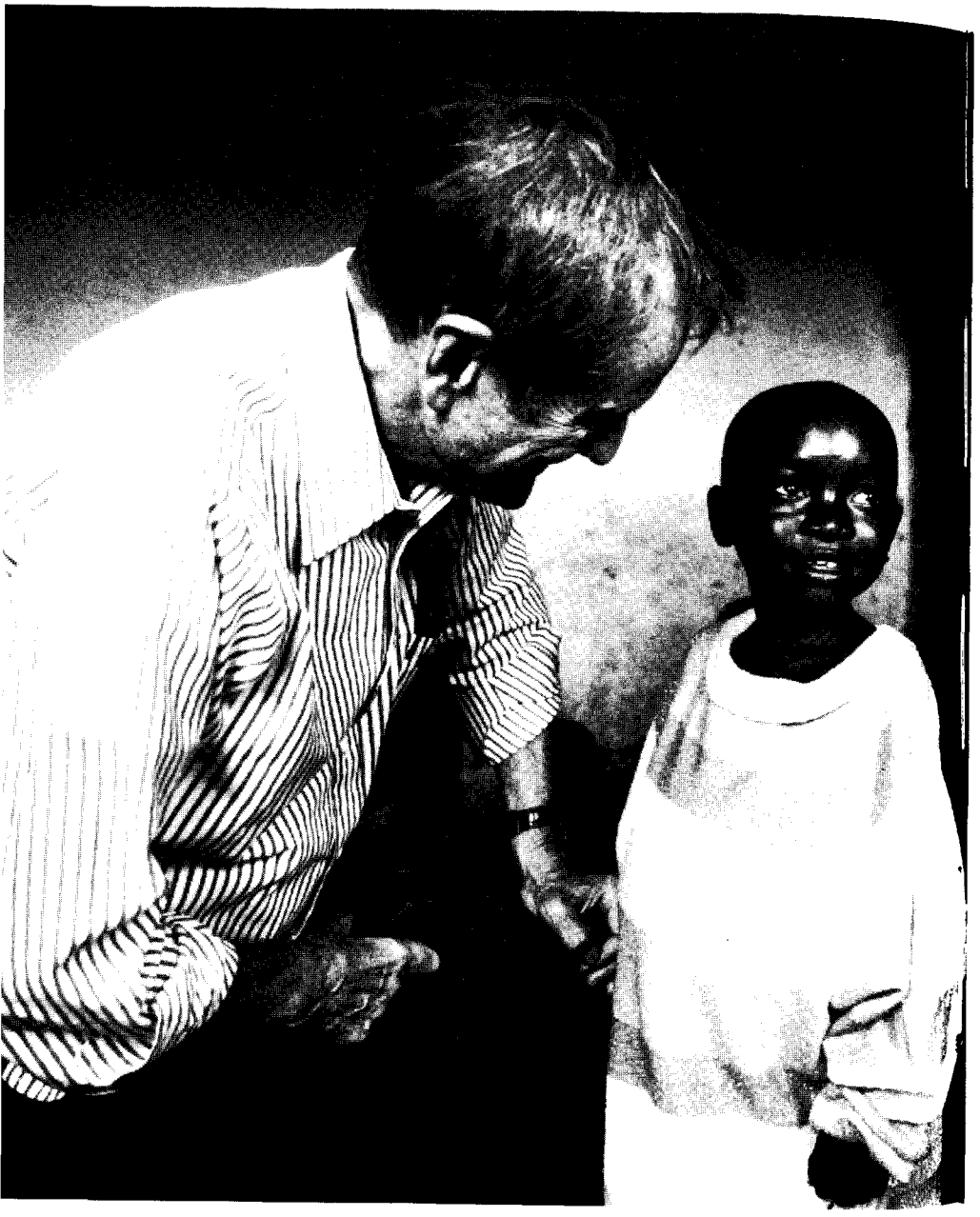

Stopping wars for children

by Richard Reid

It wasn't Jim Grant who invented the idea of stopping wars to reach and protect children. Nils Thedin, for many years the head of the Swedish National Committee for UNICEF, did that – and he persisted in pushing his idea of 'children as a zone of peace' when few would listen. But it was Jim who in time saw the beauty of Thedin's idea and made it operational.

A 'zone' was a conceptual place. Children were scattered everywhere in countries at war. But a period of time – a 'period of tranquility' – was something that Jim Grant thought might be concrete and sustainable. If a forceful demand for a period of child protection could be laid out persuasively, in comprehensive terms, to the antagonists in a conflict area, it might lead to more than calling a halt in the shooting to reach children. It could also be a dramatic demonstration of the potential force of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. And it could be an opening wedge for broader humanitarian interventions in war.

Jim Grant applied the idea of military stand-downs for children in the wars in El Salvador in 1985, Lebanon in 1987, Sudan in 1989 and Iraq in 1991. The conflicts in each place were halted for 'periods of tranquility' – ranging in length from several hours to months. Each was a high-risk juggling act. Each produced remarkable, sometimes spectacular results that were documented. None would have worked without the steady hand and personal magic of Jim Grant.

This is an account of his leadership in those efforts.

Sudan

Was Jim Grant like other people? Those of us who knew him would have laughed out loud at the suggestion. He had the energy of a particle accelerator. He thrived on stress; it seemed to nourish him. The same was true for marathon working hours and the burdens of responsibility – OK, add more weight, I'm ready, he seemed to say.

Whatever the big picture was, Jim could see it whole, nuances and operational details, start to finish, usually before others had even begun to imagine it. He woke up in the morning in his airplane seat, beaming, because he already had in his head a fast-forward film of exactly how the day, and the days to follow, would unfold – along with a fall-back plan or two in case they unfolded differently.

Did he ever tire or lose his cheer? Not on my watch. He led by robust example – which is to say that he drew others along with him at flank speed as he half-jogged across desert terrain, worked his way through refugee camps with spindly three-year-olds in his arms, drafted telexes in jeeps, and sat up until three in the morning coaxing agreements out of prime ministers. At six the same morning he would be out of bed, jabbing a pencil at a map over breakfast, laughing and insisting, *'It's doable. It's doable!'*

For all the sunshine he brought, though, Jim also wanted results. There was a twinkle in his eye; behind it there was a glint. Trying to tell him *'no'* was as hopeless as wrestling with an angel. You knew he would finally prevail.

Yet Jim Grant almost never showed impatience. He never fumed when things went wrong – even big things. Usually he was there with another strategy as good as the original, but if not, he was philosophical. He listened, he understood, he forgave.

I only saw Jim Grant angry once. It was on a hot evening in April 1989, in Khartoum, Sudan. The UN agencies, led by UNICEF, were at the break point of an effort to use a three month ceasefire in the Sudanese civil war, a 'Period of Tranquility', to make the country's single train line run before the rainy season started. Jim himself had engineered the ceasefire by bringing around Prime Minister Sadiq el Mahdi and John Garang, the leader of the rebel Sudan People's Liberation Army. To pump up international pressure on them, he had pulled political stops from Washington to Moscow to Addis Ababa. One hundred and ten thousand tons of food grain had to reach the south quickly if Operation Lifeline Sudan, the multi-agency UN

effort Jim was leading, was to stave off an estimated half million deaths by famine and disease – deaths mainly of young children and women. Of course the cargo planes that Jim and the donors had assembled were important, and so were the truck routes and barges on the newly opened Nile, but without the train and its delivery capacity, Operation Lifeline Sudan would fizzle.

All of this was chancy. It had taken a full-scale resurrection to get the train line between Muglad and Aweil running. For the better part of ten years, some said more, nothing had rolled down those narrow-gauge rails. The war had made the line too dangerous. It ran through the territory of bandit militias. Where sand or grass hadn't covered the rails, whole sections of track had sprung. Ties had been stolen. To clear the way and cobble the tracks back together again, the government was dragooning hundreds of laborers from Khartoum. They were mainly Muslim Arabs with little sympathy for the rebel Christians in the South. And there were all-night negotiations with the trainmen's union to fix wages and figure out a risk-indemnity scale.

So the meeting among the 20-odd people in the conference room in Khartoum that evening was one of tense expectation. In the city, anyone who read or watched TV was talking about American and European news bulletins on the ceasefire – and the train. The Sudan story had become a global item.

Around the table were government ministers and Relief and Rehabilitation Committee officials, donor ambassadors, NGO representatives, UN agency people of different ranks, and two of us from UNICEF besides Jim Grant. All had come to be briefed by Jim on how the train's morning trial run out of Muglad had gone. Some, though, were murmuring about rumors that the train had been shot up and boarded.

One of the government ministers looked uncomfortable. He was an army general from a prominent family, who was known to head a clan that controlled a large militia operating south of Muglad. He had pledged to Jim that his people would leave the train alone. Apparently things had turned out differently.

Jim began to speak, measuring his syllables. I saw a flush on his cheeks. He looked straight at the general, and then at each of the people in the room.

'We've been let down,' he said. *'Someone has let us down.'*

Dead silence.

'There was an attack on the train this morning by an armed militia.' People rustled in their seats but no one spoke. *'Three members of the train crew were*

shot. They're in the hospital, expected to live. Some of the freight cars were badly damaged – probably too damaged to use again. I wonder how this happened?'

He waited. No one spoke.

'We're here to save lives. Not endanger them. All of us. Isn't that right?' He almost shouted the words.

'It will take all of us,' he said, *'All of us in this room. We've come too far to be tripped up now. The UN Secretary General has charged me with making this operation work. I plan do to that.'*

He looked around the room at everyone again, slowly, one by one, and last at the general. *'With your help.'* He pronounced each of the three words separately. Everyone looked away from the general.

'If you know anyone else who wants to try to stop this train, tell them hands off. Hands off! Or we'll shine the headlights of the world on them.'

Jim sat back.

'I don't have anything else, Mr. Chairman. The train will do another trial run the day after tomorrow. The engineers and crew say they're ready. With your permission, we'll meet again that evening.'

A week later, after the train had made a maiden run to Aweil and unloaded with no mishaps, Jim drank kharkade with the general who headed the militia clan, and his wife, at an outdoor restaurant next to the Nile. Then they had dinner. The tables were packed together and full, but the place was quieter than usual.

Jim was telling stories – about children's vaccines crossing icy mountain streams in Turkey on the backs of donkeys, and government doctors being peaceably abducted during the El Salvador ceasefire to vaccinate kids on the rebel side of the lines. Heads were turning his way, lighting up with smiles.

'Can you imagine that?' the general shouted. *'Can you imagine?'*

The next day Jim flew back to New York. The general became one of the government's big supporters of Operation Lifeline Sudan. At a meeting two weeks or so later, sitting next to me, he turned and said, out of the blue, *'Mr. Grant is a great man. Yes. A great man.'*

Negotiations: the Government

It was easy enough to imagine that Sadiq el Mahdi was the great-great grandson of the Mahdi who had once swept across the desert and taken the

measure of Chinese Gordon a few miles from where we sat waiting. His robe rippled as he crossed the hall in four-foot strides. He has a dark face, a nose like a scythe, and startling white teeth. He dressed in white from his burnoose to his slippers. He filled the room.

It was early March, 1989, at the Prime Minister's in Khartoum.

'Ah, Mr. Grant! We have met. You are welcome. Yes.'

As a student, Sadiq el Mahdi had headed the Oxford Union.

'Mr. Prime Minster, we are honoured to have your time.'

'You may have as much of it as you wish. Rather, I should say as much as you can endure. Which is what my ministers no doubt think, but never say. Yes.'

'That is kind of you, Excellency. I am sure your ministers are too loyal and busy to have such thoughts... I bring you the warm good wishes of the Secretary General. He has charged me with getting to the root of a humanitarian problem that afflicts many countries today. Countries troubled by civil conflict. Sudan especially, because of its size and challenges. And I would ask your good help in addressing this problem. If it can be done here, it can be done anywhere.'

'That is intriguing, Mr. Grant. 'It?' Do you mean the war? This war is imposed on us by false leaders and ideological bandits who say they want independence. This is a sovereign, unitary state. If they attack us and threaten the state, we have to respond. And crush the revolt. As we are doing. That has a simple logic.'

Jim nodded.

'Once that is done, we can stop fighting. I know that is what you want, Mr. Grant. To save the children. Admirable. I too want that.'

'I know that, Mr. Prime Minister.'

'They are slaughtering thousands.'

'Yes. Thousands may have fallen in combat, Mr. Prime Minister. I fear for a larger number – four million. They are not soldiers. Children. If the war goes on to the start of the rains, a quarter of a million will be dead by the end of August. Another half million will be hit so hard by hunger and disease that they will be impaired as long as they live.'

'No, no, not that many. That cannot be true. That's worse than Ethiopia.'

'It is worse *than Ethiopia, Mr. Prime Minister. It was worse with the drought and the fighting in the south two years ago, and it will still be worse this year. The signs are there.'*

'No one has shown them to me.' For a moment the Prime Minister's composure hardened. *'Take these facts to the rebels, Mr. Grant. They will just look at you. They buzz like gnats. They want a Dinka state.'*

'With your permission, I will talk to them.'

'You have it. Go to Ethiopia if you want. They are in a little town called Nazret. See the rebels.'

'With your permission, sir. Your written permission as the head of this government.'

'You will have it, or my final spoken word, this week. What would the United Nations expect to get from them?'

'An agreement to stop attacking long enough for us to get to the people before the rains, and prevent all those deaths. Prevent a humanitarian disaster that will make the world shudder.'

'Well, now, they will never stop until we mop them up. They're a loose gang of bandit opportunists who can't even agree on siege strategy. Look at Wau! But let's say they agree. What will you have?'

'Maybe half a solution, Mr. Prime Minister.'

'The other half?'

'Is for you and your army to do the same thing. With the rains, everything will be stuck fast. But at least the soldiers – on both sides – will have food and supplies to sit it out. Not the civilians who are fleeing from both sides. Not the little children.'

'Go see them, Mr. Grant. I say it: everyone in this room has now heard it. See them.'

He leaned forward with both fists before him on the table.

'But this is your initiative, a United Nations gesture, not to be construed as recognition of any kind... I do not like it. We permit it as a humanitarian shot in the dark. Not this government's position.'

'Of course I understand, Excellency. This undertaking comes from us, not the Government of Sudan. But let us take a hypothesis. Let us suppose that they agree. That the agreement from their side is as ironclad as battlefield agreements can be made. How might your government respond?'

'I enjoy your company, but I dislike this topic, Mr. Grant. Go see them. We will see. We will see. You will join me at dinner tonight?'

'Yes, Sir. Inshallah. Thank you.'

Jim Grant laid it all out before Sadiq el Mahdi that night at dinner. Within a month he, the Prime Minister, would host and chair in Khartoum a major international conference on the Sudan humanitarian emergency. The meeting would draw donor country ambassadors, heads of UN agencies, main NGOs, and the media. It would create and launch a coordinated multi-agency, multinational relief effort called Operation Lifeline Sudan. Before May, tons of food, medicine, seeds, animal vaccines, and fishnets, the staples of life, would stream into the south with the Prime Minister's blessing, and his government would join in monitoring the flow.

It took the Prime Minister a few weeks of wrangling with military and fundamentalist elements to squeeze out of his government a willingness to look at the UN relief plan – and a possible ceasefire. In the meantime, this writer went to a golf course in Addis Ababa for a clandestine meeting with an SPLA man on how and where Jim Grant could meet the rebel leadership – and John Garang.

Negotiations: the rebels

Kongor was a scattering of flimsy houses on the escarpments and dry savannah of south-central Sudan, somewhere between Pibor Post and Rumbek, far from the train line, set on a ruined, seldom used road. The Red Cross had made a base there, with a clinic that served a catchment area almost the size of Junglei Province. People would trek for days to come in for shots and treatment.

Jim Grant had come to Kongor by Cessna and jeep to meet with John Garang, the rebel leader, and a group of rebel field commanders. It was a baking hot day in the third week of April 1989. Three of us from UNICEF had come with Jim. The SPLA was in a triumphalist frame of mind. Step by step, they had taken all of the southern half of the country except for the army garrison towns and their perimeters. Now that they were on a roll, it would be hard to talk them into laying down their arms for three months. For us there were urgent humanitarian reasons, but would they buy?

A tall, solemn Garang, standing with his generals behind him, received us under a mango tree. He seldom came this far into Sudan except covertly, and when he did, he stayed on the move; his headquarters base was 600 miles east, in Ethiopia. He opened his arms and motioned to Jim to sit down on a stool across from him at the base of the tree. We followed. There were introductions and an exchange of compliments. Garang's voice was a mix of African/English and flat mid-western

American that he must have brought back from his university work in Iowa. Jim began without preamble.

'Dr. Garang, I'll be in London tomorrow, facing some hard questions from the media about the refugee and hunger situation here in your country, and I need your help in getting ready for them.'

'We'll give whatever help we can, Mr. Grant. I wonder if you have asked Sadiq and his people for their help.'

'Yes, I have, and I think we'll get it.'

A polite smile.

'You think. What have you asked them?'

'To stop fighting in May for three months.'

'May I ask what it is you want from us?'

'The same thing.'

'Well.' His eyebrows went up.

'In London tomorrow, what will you tell them?'

'What the Prime Minister has told me, and anything you may authorize me to say from your side.'

'Hold on, Mr. Grant. We are winning this war. You can see that. Before long we'll have Juba.'

'Why should you stop?'

'Yes. Why should we?' His commanders were whispering among themselves.

'In good sense any war should stop. All wars should stop. But the UN isn't asking you precisely that, Mr. Garang.'

'Then what?'

'A break in the fighting. Enough time for us to properly move in food and supplies. A period of tranquility. It's been done for the sake of children in El Salvador and Lebanon.'

'Why?'

'Dr. Garang, I know you're not just a resistance movement leader. You're a family man.' Jim smiled broadly and looked him in the eye.

'Can I ask how many children you have?'

Garang's commanders laughed and covered their mouths. Jim went on.

'You have four million!'

Loud laughter erupted. Garang chuckled and studied Jim. He shrugged and spread his hands.

'Am I such a mighty man?'

'Well, if you look at it, you'll see you are. No one in the south has more real power, more control – or more ability to make things happen. In an important way, doesn't that make you the father of all the children here?'

'Well .'

'There are about four million, if you count the babies up to the 12 year-olds. And most of them are in a bad way that will become critical once the rains come.'

'Do we take on that responsibility, Mr. Grant? We are an army.'

'Maybe that's all you were once,' Jim said. 'But now you're the de facto government. Your commanders here are like district commissioners. Governors. I hear about schools and well-clearing.'

'Yes?'

'And so you are already acting like the father of the poor and needy in the south. It falls to the leader to be the protector. It goes beyond fighting a war. Sometimes opportunity can take leadership to another level. I think those four million children are an opportunity.'

'I'm not sure you people in the United Nations understand our big opportunity now, Mr. Grant. Our fight is on the upswing. We have a chance for freedom. For autonomy. Look at this map.' A commander passed him a map that he showed to Jim, who studied it and looked up.

'After the rains, will your chances be any less? Won't both sides be immobilized before long, anyway? Isn't it time to show the world something besides rotting bodies in the desert?' Jim leaned forward. He spoke quietly.

'If your forces stand down, starting the week after next, and the government troops do the same, we can start moving that food grain without danger. And it will be on the historical record that you chose humanitarian principle over military advantage.'

'Military victory, Mr. Grant.'

'I believe you're disposed to this kind of humane effort, Dr. Garang. You've set up your own relief group. We can supply it, lend you people, help you build it up.'

Garang stood up, excused himself, and walked a distance into the bright sunshine with his commanders.

They were back in ten minutes. Garang sat on his stool and looked at Jim without speaking.

'Can I tell the Prime Minister that you are ready for a military stand down from the end of next month?' Jim waited.

'I have great doubts. We are a decentralized movement. Our forces are scattered.'

'I speak to you today as the leader of a people. As I have spoken to other leaders around the world.'

'You make things hard, Mr. Grant.'

'No, Dr. Garang. You chose a hard life, and you are bearing it and sometimes smiling. This hard act will lift your heart. When can I hear from you?'

Garang winced and shook his head. For several minutes he turned away to speak to his commanders in Dinka.

'Saturday, Sir. Mr. Lam Akol here will bring you our decision. I make no promises.'

'Saturday it is. I will tell the Prime Minister the question is open until then. We will count on this. Four million children.'

They shook hands.

'You are a hard man, Mr. Grant. I believe you want to do the right thing.'

'Thank you. I play a weak hand except when you consider the children.'

On Saturday we received word through SPLA sources in Addis Ababa and by radio in Khartoum that the rebels would observe a three month period of tranquility. Lying open to us now, cleared of ambushes and roadblocks for the first time, was an area the size of France and Germany. And if there weren't four million children in it, there were fully three. Jim Grant had his work cut out for him.

It had to be short work, because time was running out. Jim won agreement from the Khartoum government for a radical addition to the food delivery plan – a cross-border scheme that would see trucks bring food up into the south of Sudan from a UN storage base to be set up at Lokichokio in Northwest Kenya. Operation Lifeline Sudan began to take on a life of its own. By mid-May, with the rains not far off, thousands of people had hands on involvement in the operation: the Khartoum bureaucracy, the increasingly large UN field staff, UN guards and volunteers for the barge and train routes, SPLA soldiers and non-military administrators, large and small NGOs, and the Red Cross in vital parallel actions. The Sudanese army and the SPLA had backed away from the supply routes, except to join in clearance and secondary transport deliveries.

There were setbacks and human costs. I saw Jim choke up as he passed among the beds at the Red Cross field hospital in Lokichokio, where several Kenyan UN drivers lay with burns and bullet wounds from a road ambush by a raider tribe. But the corridors of tranquility held for the three months Jim had planned. Operation Lifeline Sudan did stave off disaster. The 110,000 tons of food were delivered, unevenly but sufficiently, and there was no famine. Child deaths for the year beginning in May 1989 were not measurably higher than in non-emergency years.

Just as important for Jim Grant was the precedent Operation Lifeline Sudan established: the humanitarian imperative to separate the sides, even in a major war with extended battle lines, long enough to protect vulnerable populations. Like Archimedes with his fulcrum, Jim leveraged this precedent often afterward, in places as diverse as Ethopia , Angola, Iraq, and the former Yugoslavia. And he made sure it was enshrined in the 1990 Declaration of the World Summit for Children, which urged that *'periods of tranquility and special relief corridors be observed for the benefit of children, where war and violence... are taking,place.'* More than 150 heads of state or government signed that Declaration.

After Operation Lifeline Sudan, I began to see that when Jim Grant went into war zones and negotiated these periods of tranquility to save children, he might be up to something larger. He was up to peace, wasn't he? War by war, he was refining the formula.

Lebanon

Sudan's was a low-intensity war, spread over thousands of miles, a chronic infection that had sapped the country for eight years. Lebanon's was more like epilepsy – a kind of armed communal epilepsy, chronic for more than a decade and much more immediately violent than Sudan. Six factions in a time warp, blasting each other at close quarters in a small, urbanized country.

Jim Grant knew the country. He had visited Beirut and gone up and down the coast more than once in the early 1980s. Now, in the summer of 1987, Jim was focusing on Lebanon with a special intent. Lebanon was the conspicuous laggard in an Arab region that was leading the world in child immunization percentages. It had dropped off the tables. Universal child immunization was the keystone goal of the Child Survival Revolution. Jim Grant was determined that his global team would meet that goal – everywhere.

In Lebanon Jim clearly saw the trophy aspect – the demonstration value. The days of tranquility in El Salvador in 1985 had had a powerful knock on effect across Central America. It was time to show again, in another region familiar with war, that the impossible wasn't far fetched. Incentives were the

fuel of Jim Grant's advocacy. He was looking beyond Lebanon to other countries where civil wars meant unvaccinated child populations.

Because the fighting in Lebanon reached everywhere and never let up, there had been no countrywide immunization for at least five years. The central health ministry office was a shell. Except in a few private hospitals, the case reporting system was moribund. Nobody knew how many children were dying from the vaccine preventable diseases. What was feared most by health professionals working with the UNICEF office was a measles epidemic in the winter. This spurred Jim's thinking. Measles runs in cycles, and in towns and cities with high population density it can kill and handicap unvaccinated young children faster than any other communicable childhood infection. The general malnutrition in the country would make the impact even worse.

I was in charge of the UNICEF regional office in Amman at the time. For once I wasn't too far behind Jim. The thought of an immunization campaign in Lebanon came to both of our minds at about the same time. We imagined three rounds of four days each in the fall, separated by a month each. We pictured not just the blessing and support of the factions and militias, but their active participation. Flowers sticking out of gun barrels! An 80 per cent immunization target for the country – 80 per cent of the country's under-fives vaccinated with all the shots and their repeats. Better coverage than the USA.

We discussed it in his office in New York in May, 1987. I could tell that the bug had bitten him.

'What do you think, Richard ? Can they stop? These militias. I mean, do they have the communication and chain of command?'

'Oh yes. They can stop on a dime. They've bought all the electronics there are.'

'That was the problem in China. Bad communications or none. Especially the Nationalists, and there we were between the lines, trying to get food to starving people... Do you think they would stop?'

'I don't know. I hope so.'

'I think they might, Richard. They're religious people. The Shiites. Sheikh Fadlallah. The Maronites. Also, I think they're probably tired of being the world's...'

'Thugs. Crazy gunners.'

'Thugs. After all, it's been more than ten years, hasn't it? I expect most of them are family men. They read the European newspapers, they watch European TV... What will you tell them?'

'I won't. Raymond or André will. They could go to Berri or Gemayel and say, 'Why can't Lebanon stand tall for a while, and prove it's not the sewer of the world?' '

'Too strong, Richard.' He grinned. *'The schools?'*

'Can open up easily to be vaccination points. It will be a thrill for the teachers.'

'Going back to school?'

'Getting back to school after all these years!'

'And the media?'

'The media are the most sophisticated in the region. They're dying to do something constructive. The vaccines can come by boat from Cyprus, or better, by road from Damascus, because we absolutely need to make Syria an owner of this. The country's so small you don't need much of a cold chain.'

'Pretty good, Richard.'

'We have a good teacher.'

'Okay, onward and upward! We'll stay in touch.'

Jim Grant radiated such inspirational karma and created such trust that there were hundreds of UNICEF staff who would climb any mountain at his bidding. In this he absolutely stood out among the other UN heads of agency – only the late Brad Morse of UNDP had the gift.

Jim reached out and connected with everyone he met – the shy and the surly, the high and the low. He put nervous new heads of state at ease; you could see them relax and begin to smile. He was wonderful with frightened children. But it seemed that he saved the best for staff at all levels – especially field staff. He learned and remembered their names and those of their wives and children. He looked out for them. Tears came to his eyes when he learned they were ill or hurt. Staff sacrifices always impressed him. The toil and risk in the lives of national staff – local UNICEF programme officers, drivers, others impressed him particularly.

'You know,' I remember him saying, *'these people are amazing, aren't they? They're our backbone! The internationals come and go every few years, they get evacuated, but it's these people, the nationals, who stay on and keep slogging. God knows where UNICEF would be without them.'*

One of them was Raymond Naimy.

Naimy, a Lebanese engineer, was UNICEF's resident programme officer in Beirut. He was the effective head of the office when the idea of a national immunization campaign in Lebanon began to take shape. There probably

wouldn't have been a campaign idea if Raymond hadn't been there. He and Jim went back years. The improbable work of Raymond's emergency repair teams in Beirut from the early '80s onward was one of UNICEF's brightest achievements before the Child Survival and Development Revolution caught on. Raymond and his teams worked under artillery and sniper fire to mend broken water mains and put damaged pumping stations back in operation. The work never ended; pipes and equipment would be smashed, cobbled back into working order, and smashed again. For one stretch of about two years, the UNICEF teams were Beirut's water supply department. If the water ran, it was because of them.

Raymond Naimy got to be known by the militia commanders and their leaders. When it suited them, they agreed to stop shooting for several hours so that he and his teams could finish the repairs. It was seen by all that, like few people with leverage in Beirut, Raymond had no agenda except to keep the water running. In the city's unreal circumstances, a kind of badge of honour attached to this work, and it attached to UNICEF.

It was on this reputation that Jim Grant pinned his hopes for a national immunization campaign – a plan that needed to win over all the factions. All of them and their client populations had suffered dry days and then drunk Raymond's water and been glad of it. Raymond, with these contacts, would be the campaign's natural point man and organizing focus. Of course he did not know this yet.

This writer and a UNICEF colleague, Andre Roberfroid, flew from Amman on a June day in 1987 to take the campaign scheme to Raymond. It was a trip usually made by road through Syria and the Chouf Mountains to keep a low profile. As we got off the plane in Beirut we learned that yet another hostage kidnapping – the snatching of a western journalist – had taken place two hours earlier on the road from the airport.

Raymond met us, polite, smiling, relaxed. The embodiment of Mr. Cool.

'How's Mr. Grant?'

'Tearing around like always. Sends his best.'

He took us to his banged-up sedan outside the terminal, explaining that hijackers weren't interested in ugly cars. We drove into the city. And then Raymond took us around and around in circles for an hour. At one point we came up against a tank in an alley.

'I took Mr. Grant a safer way,' he laughed.

'What's so special about Mr. Grant?'

'Oh, you know. He's kind of like a god to the staff. To my wife... Was it three rounds of immunization he's asking for? I think we can do it. We'll do it.'

'The staff have never done any mass immunization here, have they?'

'That's right.' The three of us pondered this.

'Doesn't matter. It's your water credentials with the faction leaders that Mr. Grant's counting on.'

'Oh, my,' he laughed. *'That man.'*

Raymond Naimy's access to the decision-makers was even better than Jim had hoped. Within days, he and André began to meet with Beirut's shakers and movers – the Christian Falange leader, Gemayel, Nabih Berri of the Shiites, the Druze leader Walid Jumblatt in his redoubt, Sheikh Fadlallah of the Party of God, the heads of the Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches.

As they made their rounds to the fortified villas, past the snipers and bodyguards, the two UNICEF men encountered surprise and a kind of relief. In one way or another, all the leaders conceded that immunization across the country was a good idea, a righteous idea, especially if it might stave off an epidemic. Raymond and André told them, as Jim Grant had suggested, that more unvaccinated children could die in the winter from measles and other vaccine preventable diseases than had died in the whole war up to then. There was skepticism from the military commanders, who feared that the other factions would take tactical advantage of the breaks in the fighting. Raymond was able to convince them that this wouldn't happen because of the interlocking nature of the ceasefire.

In August 1987, all the Beirut staff – water engineers, social workers, refugee camp officers, drivers – spent two to three weeks in training, learning the ins and outs of an immunization campaign. They did field trials in quiet neighborhoods to practice what they had learned. Government and private doctors, nurses, NGO members, and teachers were brought into the training. An upbeat, hugely effective television and radio buildup bracketed the country from late August. Door-to-door household surveys located and enumerated all under fives. The country was divided into manageable zones, each zone was put in charge of an immunization team with a roster of infants and children to be vaccinated, and vaccination stations were designated and readied. These stations were schools, mosques, and churches as often as they were health centres. The militias and private armies understood that they would have a main backup role in transport and communications. In Damascus, the commander of the Syrian army in Lebanon pledged his support.

On the eve of the first round of the campaign, all the gears seemed ready to mesh. In New York, Jim Grant met to review the Lebanon initiative with UN Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, and two of his under secretaries. He took from the Secretary General a letter to the Lebanese Prime Minister, saluting the immunization campaign as a signal of human priority and hope to the world. The letter was put in this writer's hand for delivery. I took it to Prime Minister Salim el Hoss on 21 September, 1987 – the first day of the first campaign round.

'Maybe this will be a step in a direction no one can imagine yet,' he said, reading the text. *'We need to hope so.'* He looked up.

'I expect this was Mr. Grant's idea.'

It all held together. The days of tranquility kept Lebanon at peace for four days in September and four more each in October and November. The armed roadblocks at the Green Line and in the fortified neighborhoods gave way and opened up. Cold boxes and vaccine carriers were hauled across boundaries that had only been crossed by tanks and tracer bullets before. Gunmen did put flowers in the barrels of their AK-47s – this writer saw them. Naturally there were hitches. For all of Raymond Naimy's teams' alphabetized scheduling and prior notice to parents, mothers and fathers still mobbed some vaccination stations and created chaos during the first days of the first round. But after that, and in October and November, the campaign ran like a clock. Eighty two per cent of the under fives were fully immunized. There was no measles outbreak in Lebanon that winter.

'Well, what do you think, Boss?'

Jim Grant looked at us.

'I think we have to take our hats off to Raymond and his team. One more down – how many to go? Onward and upward! Come on over here to the map. Let's look at this region of yours.'

Iraq

We watched as they waved Yevgeny Primakov through the Iranian border crossing at Karan with as little fanfare as possible. He was coming out of Iraq after the last failed Russian persuasion mission to Saddam Hussein. His two cars with the darkened windows left on the road back to Tehran just as we were checking through with our UN passports, headed the other way.

We were a mixed UNICEF-WHO team of seven – four doctors, a nutritionist, a water engineer, and the UNICEF regional director. Waiting with us that morning, 16 February, 1991, were 15 Iranian drivers, 12 long haul trailer trucks loaded with 52 tons of emergency supplies for children and mothers, and the three land cruisers that had led our convoy out of Tehran and across the Zagros Mountains the day before. We had stopped for the night at the provincial town of Bakhtaran, short of the border, in order to be at the crossing the following day at a good hour. In the little hotel there, I spoke by satellite phone with Jim Grant in New York and learned that the allied command in Riyadh had agreed to stop bombing for a six hour period the next day. This was long enough for us to take the convoy from the border and across the desert to Baghdad.

'Well, good luck, Richard,' Jim said. 'You can go in peace. This is a wonderful opportunity. Godspeed!'

Jim Grant's decision to send a child relief mission into Baghdad at the height of the Gulf War seemed rash to many. Saddam Hussein might spurn the gesture. Or welcome it with open arms to try to use it to his own propaganda advantage. There was the element of physical risk. Bombs were failing. Would mission members become collateral damage statistics? CNN and Peter Arnett were giving the world non stop coverage of what was happening under the bombing – the country blacked out, people foraging for food, a civilian bomb shelter incinerated. From this, though, a sense that 'the other side' might need and deserve emergency help was also beginning to dawn in Europe and America.

Jim shared with me in January 1991, his own sense of how fast the quality of life in Baghdad must be falling. Iraq had been an energy-dependent country with high-tech habits. He knew that an average of 1,100 Iraqi babies were being born everyday, and that Iraqi's medical stocks were low because of the Health Ministry's dependence on constant re-supply by air from Europe. From messages brought to Amman by Iraqi UNICEF staff, he learned that the country was down to its last days of child vaccines and childbirth supplies. There was no running water, either. All six water purification and pumping plants were down for the duration. Toilets had stopped working. Much of the population was drawing water for cooking and home use from the Tigris River, which was also being used as a waste sluice. No one in the allied leadership had had a civilian disaster in mind when the air war started, but one was happening. How serious was it? What could be done to reach the vulnerable,

especially the children, and put some kind of life back into the health system?

Jim kept his finger on the political pulse at the same time. He was in touch by phone with editorial offices, NGOs, donor embassies, the State Department, and UNICEF national committees around the world to get a feeling for public opinion. Through close contacts like President Mubarak of Egypt he sounded out the Arab reaction.

As his thinking began to crystallize, Jim indirectly reached another old acquaintance, one of the most sensitively placed – Tariq Aziz. Two years earlier, as the Iraq-Iran war was ending, I had stood by in Baghdad as Jim joked and reviewed common experiences with the Foreign Minister. Jim was in Aziz's office then to finalize the hand over of 300 Japanese jeeps he had personally obtained from Tokyo to rebuild and extend Iraq's child health infrastructure, particularly vaccination stations and primary health care training centres. That big gift out of the blue had made an impression on the Iraqi leadership. The Aziz connection minimized the prospect of mischief from Baghdad.

There were still miles to go. The Secretary General, Perez de Cuellar, was convinced of the rightness of the mission, but beneath him were layers of nay-saying and uncertainty. LIN partner agencies, including some whose mandates corresponded most closely to Iraq's critical needs, had to be dragged into agreement. Valuable time passed as Jim and this writer traveled about, making the case that Iraqi children were not to be confused with the Republican Guard. A few members of the LIN Sanctions Committee in New York bitterly fought the mission, insisting to Jim that our delivery of high-energy biscuits, vaccines, and midwife kits could provide Saddam Hussein with war material. But one by one the obstacles evaporated, and Jim had a green light.

It was nearing noon when the last of the drivers checked their loads, and the eight foot wide white LIN markings on the roofs of their trailer rigs, and rolled off onto the highway to Baghdad. The departure was two hours behind schedule but the sky was overcast and we were nervously confident that Jim Grant's bargain with Riyadh would hold. We knew we were being observed. Over our own road noise we could often hear the rumble of fighter jets criss-crossing overhead.

The only sign of war we could see for four hours as we passed villages, towns, and empty desert was the blackened wreckage of electrical power stations. Every one seemed to have been bombed to the ground. There was

no vehicle traffic on the four-lane highway, but in all directions we could see people carrying buckets and jerry cans for water.

Jim Grant had worked out with the Iraqis a tight protocol for the security and distribution of the supplies we brought. Sticking to this, we left the highway at Baquba, outside Baghdad, and parked the trucks for offloading at a main medical storage depot presumably near no bomb targets. Two of our group stayed there to monitor the process. The rest of the team proceeded to Baghdad in the land cruisers.

At five in the evening we were at the El Rashid Hotel, which was to be the team's base for the week of this mission. We located the CNN work space in the hotel basement and used their satellite hookup to call Jim Grant.

'Everyone OK? No air action on the road? Wonderful! You're watching the offloading? Great! We did it, didn't we? Be careful. Make the most of it.'

An hour or two later, the sky lit up and the bombing resumed and continued for three hours.

At first light the next morning and for each of the six days that followed, the UN team fanned out across Baghdad, the suburbs, and into the south, visiting homes, health stations, markets, water installations, and hospitals, asking questions and filling our notebooks. In the evenings at the El Rashid we compared and combined notes by candlelight. Afterward, on the basement satellite phone, we sent summaries back to Jim Grant and, as we heard his pencil scratch, I could picture him filling another of the small brown pocket-sized notepads he used to buy by the dozen at the grocery store.

We saw strange sights and appalling ones. Small boys flying kites and nonchalantly skipping about during daylight air raids; older children refusing to leave the sides of their parents, clutching at their sleeves; in the midst of an otherwise untouched downtown area that reminded me of Los Angeles, high mounds of dark rubble that had once been the national telecommunications complex; well-dressed people carrying home tree branches they had pulled off in the park; the smoking cavity of the hotel-size Amiria bomb shelter, its rubble still hot enough underfoot to be felt through one's shoes.

Skeptics had warned Jim Grant before the mission that a supply delivery to Baghdad would be a dangerous, high profile gesture making no difference in the end. They were wrong. After the convoy had unloaded, Health Ministry inventories showed 60 to 80 per cent increases in stocks of vaccines, syringes, midwife kits, and selected essential drugs. Team members surveyed and

confirmed this. The new vaccines and syringes were put to work immediately in an emergency epidemic control programme. Included also in the convoy's delivery were scores of emergency medical kits, each containing the crisis supplies, drugs and surgical tools a doctor would need to serve 10,000 people for three months.

Beyond the emergency supplies, the mission had a catalytic effect in opening up Iraq and laying out the country's humanitarian needs. What the team members first diagnosed, and conveyed in their mission report, provided a basic map of conditions and needs that would be used by university study teams and other assistance groups that arrived in Iraq over the following weeks and months. The mission's findings also had an effect in causing the Sanctions Committee in New York to ease some of its main restrictions. Much of what Jim Grant had hoped the mission might achieve was already working like yeast.

Jim always preached that the only way to reach UNICEF's objectives for children was to build up political will. That was everything. He saw the Iraq mission as a way to build global political will. This happened. More reports came back, a tide of public concern began to rise, Croatia and Bosnia came into the news, and politicians paid attention.

Later that year, the halls of the UN General Assembly buzzed with talk about the world's obligation to put the lives of the innocent before state sovereignty. Speeches were made. A European foreign minister said that the right to intervene in war for humanitarian ends was *'the most truly innovative concept of the remaining decade of this century.'* It was Jim Grant's concept they were talking about.

The President's necktie

The din was huge and the wide reception room seemed small as a crowd of the great and good milled around the White House Christmas tree. In the midst of it, taking congratulations, talking over the noise, his face alight, was Jim Grant.

It was 21 December, 1993. The event was the launching of *The State of World's Children Report,* with President Clinton standing by to give it his special blessing. Jim was showing people his Save the Children necktie, a lively confection that always provoked comment. It gave him a handy advocacy pretext with people he was meeting for the first time.

Presently an Oval Office aide appeared at Jim's shoulder and invited him to come to a nearby alcove for a brief chat with the President before the ceremony. Jim excused himself and followed. As Jim and the aide re-told it, this is what happened in the alcove.

'Mr. Grant, welcome! And congratulations. I'd hoped we could talk a little before we go out there. I'm one of your biggest fans.'

'Thank you very much, Mr. President. You're making this a big day for us.'

'Say, I like that tie of yours! Where did you get it?'

'Save the Children. If you like it, you can have it.' (Begins to remove tie.) *'Here, put it on. You can wear it to the ceremony. It'll be a big hit.'*

'Well, sure. You're right.' (Laughs.) *'Here.'* (Removes his tie.) *'You can take mine. Not bad, huh?'*

That was how Jim Grant left the White House wearing the President's tie. We never saw it on him again. Millions and millions watching TV must have seen Jim's on the President that day, though. Staff weren't sure who came out of the exchange best. Jim apparently found a re-supply channel, because a few days later he was back sporting the tie with the daisy chain of children splashed across it.