

# THE GLOBE AND MAIL

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## THE DECADE YOU MISSED / THE OTHER 2000s

### Ten years that shook, rattled, rolled and helped repair the world

By DOUG SAUNDERS

At the turn of the century, people didn't just worry their computers would break. They imagined nations dissolving and 'tribes' ruling in 'the coming anarchy.' Instead, stability grew and major blows were struck against hunger, ignorance and want. Believe it or not, argues Doug Saunders, all the tumult was worth it

If, toward the end of 1999, you had wanted a vision of the decade ahead, you would have been advised to visit a place called Jardim Angela, a ramshackle slum of Sao Paulo, Brazil.

A United Nations agency had just declared it the single most violent place on Earth. It seemed to be buffeted by all the trends that the decade was said to promise - rampaging teenaged gangs armed with assault rifles, high rates of AIDS, religious intolerance, battles over scarce fuel and water, an alarmingly fast-growing population, and a near absence of anything resembling government or civil society.

"Everything here was falling apart, becoming violent, and there was nothing safe for my sons - no country to help me any more," Rosa Maria dos Santos Souza, a 63-year-old mother of four, told me.

Ten years ago, many people predicted this sort of place was the future: "The withering away of central governments, the rise of tribal and regional domains, the unchecked spread of disease, and the growing pervasiveness of war" would be the defining factors in the early 21st century that would "confront our civilization," the U.S. writer Robert Kaplan predicted in *The Coming Anarchy*, a highly influential 2000 book about the decade to come.

He was far from alone: Entire shelves creaked with volumes anticipating the disaster that would be this decade - the coming bad times.

To go by conventional media vision now appearing in magazine and TV decade-in-review features, it amply lived up to the most grotesque millenarian prophecies. What

else do you say about a decade that began in earnest with a huge terrorist attack, followed by two intense wars and more terrorism, ending with a complete financial collapse, undercut with fear of an overheating planet?

But there has been another, perhaps more important decade. It is the decade we missed, while we were captivated by dramas in a handful of faraway countries and major financial districts.

Those wars and acts of terrorism have been symbolically significant, but limited: They engaged, directly and indirectly, perhaps 2 per cent of the world's population, during a decade when there have been fewer conflicts than at any time in modern history.

I visited Jardim Angela twice this year and found it radically changed. Suddenly, there was a strong presence of government there, with schools and a community-based police force. Drugs and AIDS were no longer major problems. People had cellphones and home computers, and there were jobs and schools.

Ms. Souza told me that her sons had become graduates, and the land under her shack had quadrupled in value.

What had happened?

Jardim Angela, and countless places like it, had been missed by most of the horrors that grabbed headlines in the 2000s. But they'd been touched by Earth-transforming forces no one had seen coming in 1999.

## **SO MUCH FOR TRIBES AND CORPORATISM - THE STATE STRIKES BACK**

Halfway through the decade, I stood on a bridge at the edge of the Ibar River in the southern Balkans, and watched to see if this would be the place where the world fell apart. Below me I saw bunches of flowers marking the spot where a boy was said to have been chased by a pack of pitbulls to his drowning death.

NATO soldiers were all around me, poised for a deadly war between Orthodox Christians and Muslims, part of a wave in which ever-weaker states were expected to splinter into ethnic factions, in wake of the conflicts that dominated the 1990s.

Five years later, we're still waiting. The river flows through Kosovo, now a semi-recognized country whose 2008 separation from Serbia, whether it was a good idea or not, at least happened without the anticipated noise and pain. Serbia was too busy building a stronger economy and trying to join the European Union to let its people repeat the slaughter of the previous era.

After all the predictions of tribal fragmentation, Kosovo was one of only three places in the world that did split away from larger nations. In the other two - Montenegro, which also left Serbia, and East Timor, which won its formal independence from Indonesia - it also happened without a conflagration.

The decade's grand narrative - and Canada's defining political event - did indeed involve the world's premier example of a failed state: Afghanistan's tribal shards, among others, are likely to keep the world busy for some time, presuming anyone can still afford multinational military coalitions.

Yet the states that seemed most likely to fail - the former Yugoslavia, Nigeria, Indonesia, Chile and Russia - spent the decade mending themselves into relatively stable places. The horrific Hindu-Muslim slaughter that tore across India at the beginning of the decade did not rip the country apart, as expected, but actually brought about eight years of rule by a multiethnic unity government. Even Canada enjoyed a decade largely free from national-unity threats.

As a result, the worst sort of predictions simply didn't materialize. The floods of refugees into neighbouring countries, so central to all those millenarian scenarios, actually fell last year to the lowest level since 1976 after declining throughout the decade, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The major corporation, which in the 1990s seemed poised to overtake the nation-state as the world's dominant institution, has spent the decade being surpassed, humbled, and in the end rescued by the resurgent state.

In the West, the laissez-faire, minimal-state ideologies made famous by Margaret Thatcher were driven out of business. On Sept. 11, 2001, it became immediately apparent that strongly defended borders, active militaries and vigilant national governments would be central to the decade ahead.

And in the autumn and winter of 2008, the Western state took on a new role, as the guarantor and sometimes owner of corporations and financial institutions.

For all the talk of globalization, and the many ways national borders have become irrelevant, it was the nation-state that held the balance of power.

Other institutions fizzled. The European Union did become a monetary powerhouse, as the euro (launched in 1999) became the world's other currency, and this may have prevented any further balkanization. But Europe failed to become the global superpower many expected -- a fate cemented by the appointment of a mild,

bureaucratic leadership who reflect a new EU constitution devoted more to internal coherence than external might.

The World Trade Organization failed, over the entire 10 years, to produce an international agreement. The United Nations sank into near-irrelevance after it was bypassed in the Iraq War runup and upstaged by the Group of Eight and then the Group of 20. NATO appears to be on its last legs. We are left with plain, old-fashioned countries.

### **THE BUBBLE AND THE BRIC: THE END OF THE THIRD WORLD**

It wasn't only in the wealthy world that the state returned to prominence.

Three days after Christmas in 2004, I stood on a beach sprinkled with the corpses of children on the eastern edge of Sri Lanka and saw help begin to arrive. The Boxing Day tsunami was the decade's largest test of international aid, but it wasn't 20th-century-style aid that came first.

What I saw were Chinese-government vessels coming to deliver \$83-million (U.S.) in aid. They were followed by Indian rescue ships with one of the world's largest operations, and later Russian generator trucks. These countries, which had been recipients of foreign aid, became world leaders in providing it.

It was part of a phenomenon known, in a term coined in 2001, as BRIC - Brazil, Russia, India and China.

Accounting for 43 per cent of the world's population, these formerly unstable countries saw the rise of sizable middle-class communities, economic growth rates typically exceeding 8 per cent a year and huge improvements in standards of living in all income groups.

It is not just the four BRIC countries that grew and consolidated. Across South America and most of Asia, the Middle East and Africa, dozens of countries became stable, connected and able to address their worst problems.

"Our old thinking about the 'first' and 'third' worlds is a completely dead concept," says Todd Moss of Washington's Center for Global Development. "Even in the poor countries that are not part of the BRIC emerging markets, you're still getting urban centres that are cosmopolitan, globally integrated and forces in the world economy. The distribution of economic and decision-making power has shifted dramatically in the last 10 years."

In a sense, what happened during this decade was a shift of growth and prosperity from the workers of North America and Europe, who saw their incomes freeze (albeit at high levels), to the workers of the poor countries, who saw double-digit growth in earnings and wealth.

"The period of this turbo-capitalism - it was a bubble, as we've seen, but it was a really good period," says Branko Milanovic, a chief economist with the World Bank. "In three entire major regions which had declined from the 1980s to 2000 - Africa, the former Communist world and Latin America - they have all returned to growth, and had an amazing period for seven years, quite substantial growth rates between 2000 and 2007."

And when the bubble popped in 2008, it mainly popped on the United States and Europe (Canada is now studied around the world as *The Country that Dodged the Bullet*). The poorer countries saw their growth slow or halt, but none of them had accumulated the bad mortgages and over-leveraged corporations of the rich world. They are losing out on investment from the West, but they have kept their gains.

At some point, after the current economic crisis has run its course, economists will begin to ask of this decade's boom: Was it worth it? The sea of capital and credit - of freely available risk, really - ended up overextending and then bankrupting a great many people, families and corporations, not to mention entire countries such as Iceland and Hungary.

But assuming the damage doesn't get much worse, the answer will have to be yes: In the places that needed it most, that wave of capital left great human gains that far outweigh the unemployment and foreclosures.

"Public health, education, life expectancy, infant mortality - almost all those indicators have gotten better almost everywhere," says Mr. Moss. "Even in countries that have had conflict, you're still seeing tremendous improvements in health and education indicators."

Most significant, perhaps, is the strong suggestion that sub-Saharan Africa is finally, after a long period of chaos, in a position to take part in the growth that has changed Asia and South America. This, too, is because the nation-state has become more of a presence.

"The image of Africa as a marginal disaster case is mostly gone," says Mr. Moss, a specialist in African development. "It still has the most problems with 'bad neighbourhoods,' but we really have over the last decade seen about two dozen countries grow at good rates, 4 per cent-plus, over that period - they have joined the global community in a way that hadn't happened in the eighties and nineties."

## TWILIGHT OF THE PLAGUE YEARS: TURNING A CORNER ON AIDS

The decade began with all eyes turned to Africa, and a message of horror. In July of 2000, an 82-year-old Nelson Mandela took to the stage at an international AIDS conference in Durban, South Africa and warned the world about "one of the greatest threats humankind has faced, and certainly the greatest after the end of the great wars of the previous century."

The figures looked terrifying. The United Nations had concluded that HIV prevalence in southern Africa had hit levels "considerably higher than had previously been thought possible." Swaziland reported AIDS rates of 42.7 per cent among pregnant women. South Africa saw 320,000 deaths a year; Nigeria, 220,000.

If the effects in Africa were any guide, the poorer three-quarters of the world was going to be devastated by AIDS. The United Nations warned that HIV would "decimate human populations." The Worldwatch Institute predicted that AIDS "threatens to engulf India."

But something surprising happened: The spread of the disease was stemmed. In India, China and northern Africa, a concerted effort by governments and agencies changed the behaviour of entire populations. In Asia, basic primary health services were established, and the disease was frozen in its tracks. In most of Africa, it was brought under control, with new-infection rates dropping off fast.

"The worst predictions of national collapse, rising levels of crime, economic stagnation and general malaise arising from AIDS haven't come about," says Alan Whiteside, a health economist at South Africa's University of KwaZulu-Natal, who is widely recognized as the world's leading expert on the spread and prevention of AIDS.

"Today," he says, "we have a much better handle on the epidemic. What we see is that AIDS is catastrophic across parts of southern Africa particularly, it's problematic across some of eastern Africa, and in some populations in Ukraine and Russia. For the rest of the world, it isn't an issue."

The AIDS success was part of a far larger triumph of preventative medicine in the largest poor countries. Basic health care became cheaper, economists say, and that made more things possible.

The decade also saw 700 million children vaccinated against measles by 2008, a vast project that prevented 4.3 million deaths and reduced the disease's spread by almost 80 per cent. Malaria was cut in half in much of the world through a huge public campaign.

And possibly the most profound effect of the lower cost of health care was the spread of family planning and birth control.

"It would surprise me if AIDS didn't cease to be an epidemic by the end of this coming decade," says Mr. Whiteside. "The prevalence rate will remain high, because you have it for life, but if present trends continue, it will no longer be an epidemic by the middle of this decade."

### **THE AGE OF THE URBANITE: POPULATION BOMB FIZZLES**

Many of these accomplishments - political stability, the reduction of poverty, the spread of affordable health and education and the damping-down of AIDS and measles crises - were due to this decade's most enduring historic milestone.

In 2008, for the first time since humans started forming settlements in Mesopotamia 10,000 years ago, there were more people living in cities than in rural areas.

"People have moved in this decade at a greater pace than we've seen, in a greater variety of ways," says Ronald Skeldon, an expert on migration with the University of Sussex and the British government. "If you were to define what happened this decade, the movement to the urban areas would be the defining characteristic, along with the related fall in fertility rates."

The transfer from rural to urban areas was especially marked in Asia, home to the majority of the world's population.

This great migration had profound effects: It reduced poverty and malnutrition rates, because the largest killer of humans is rural poverty. It reduced global warming, because urban populations produce fewer emissions per capita than rural ones. And it reduced population-growth rates, because urbanized people everywhere have far fewer children.

"For those of us in the development community, it's totally game-changing," says Mr. Moss. "It's people moving from rural areas - where children are merely an asset and an insurance policy - to urban areas, where they are a careful investment."

Birth rates plummeted as urbanization and education (especially of women) took hold far faster than anyone would have thought. Population growth ended in surprising places such as Iran, Turkey and Lebanon, and dropped fast in India and Saudi Arabia. (However, it rose in Afghanistan and Pakistan).

The world's total fertility rate - the average number of children per woman - fell more sharply than expected, from 2.82 children to 2.67.

At this rate, the United Nations expects the world's population to stop growing some time around 2050, after peaking at nine billion. If a dozen key countries were to spend money on serious family-planning programs of the sort that quelled population growth in Iran and Turkey, the peak could be closer to eight billion.

In that case, the number of people older than 65 will rise fast, hitting two billion by 2035. The explosive problem of young, angry men, which has driven the violence of the past decade, will be replaced with the less destructive - though more expensive - problem of huge populations of old, state-dependent people.

### **BELIEF IN A TIME OF LONG-DISTANCE LEAPS OF FAITH**

The sight became commonplace in empty fields and abandoned building sites along highways and on the edges of towns around the world - giant, white, mushroom-like formations, surrounded by crowds.

From Kampala to Sao Paulo, the decade was marked by the overnight appearance of these big tents, each one holding a couple of thousand people and a Pentecostal preacher.

While the western world after the World Trade Center attack was focused on the repercussions of Islam's move northward, the forces of evangelical Christianity were making an even bigger expansion to the south and east.

A new age has begun in which religions are no longer primarily identified with countries or regions. "The big development of this decade is that the major religious communities are becoming untethered from their traditional heartland - and that's true of Islam, Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism," says Timothy Shah, a world-religion expert with the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life.

The intensely personal, morally demanding Pentecostal faith is by far the fastest-growing religion in the world, now with 640 million followers and double-digit growth rates every year.

Pentecostals and their theological cousins now make up perhaps a third of Brazil's population, up from a fifth at the decade's outset, and 60 per cent of Guatemala's and Kenya's. A third of South Africans are now Pentecostal, and 10 per cent of India's population. A number of surveys now indicate that there are more than 40 million



Protestants in China (along with 15 million Catholics), with Pentecostals by far the largest group.

It is becoming the predominant religion of the poor, a serious challenge to Muslim, Catholic and animist traditions. It's a faith that suits newly urbanized people escaping from the monolithic worldviews of their villages and to an individualist, aspirational form of worship. Its adherents are also the most likely, according to polls, to want their leaders to take a political role.

"You're seeing these homegrown Islamic movements in Europe and North America," says Mr. Shah, "so that places like Denmark are becoming exporters of Islamic radicalism. And places like sub-Saharan Africa are becoming major exporters of Christian radicalism."

The new evangelism made incursions into social and political life that were sometimes for the better (advocating against drug addiction and prostitution) and sometimes worse (lobbying to have homosexuality made a crime and birth control forbidden).

In the 2000s, the religious conflicts that in modern times have usually been local or regional become global and systemic. As the centre of gravity of Christianity moved south, the Church of England became far more African, both demographically and in theology. Meanwhile, a Roman Catholic pope embraced once-forbidden evangelical movements in his faith in order to win over souls in lands conquered by Pentecostals and Muslims.

And the state did come in second here: Hundreds of millions of people, according to numerous surveys, now identify themselves as "Christian" or "Muslim" before any national, regional, ethnic or linguistic identity. Numerous studies in Turkey and Iran showed that people had become far less interested in political Islam, turning to a more personal identification.

Possibly because of this intense personalization of faith, this was also a period during which no state was taken over by theocrats: India finally abandoned its flirtation with Hindu nationalist government in 2004, while Turkey's Justice and Development Party turned out to be a moderate secular force.

Afghanistan and Pakistan remain in the balance, once again the dangerous potential exceptions.

## **TECHNOLOGY: THE RISE OF SEND-BUTTON POLITICS**

If those white-mushroom domes of the Pentecostals were the emblem of one face of globalization, another was surely represented by the rapid rise of the "dish city" - the poor housing district characterized by hundreds of TV satellite dishes pointed at signals coming from some other country.

If the 1980s and 1990s marked the age of connectivity in North America and Europe, this was overwhelmingly the decade when information technology became the chief instrument of the world's poor.

In Brazilian slums such as Jardim Angela, there is now almost 100 per cent cable-TV penetration, 1.5 televisions per household and a DVD player for every three houses. Half of all homes have cellphone service and a third have computers, half of them with broadband Internet.

Other poor countries don't lag far behind: It is hard to find a slum-dweller or a rural villager, anywhere except the very most deprived patches of the world, without a cellphone in hand and a TV at home. In Mumbai, Lagos, Dhaka and Manila, cable and cellphones usually reach the shantytowns years before water and sewage do.

This is having a pointed effect on politics. On one hand, it has eroded national and ideological identities: It is likely a key reason why people around the world identify as Muslim, Christian, Slavic or Chinese (even if they're third-generation Chinese-Canadians) above any national identity.

On the other hand, it has removed from political regimes their old tool of control through their lock on radio, television and newspapers.

In Libya in 2004, months after the country had begun having some contact with the outside world and still very much a closed society, I found myself in Internet cafes with 17-year-olds who knew in detail the political workings of Europe and the United States, to say nothing of the complete and detailed meanings of Eminem's lyrics.

They knew everything that was wrong with Moammar Gadhafi's regime, and talked about it every day with people in Syria, Morocco, Switzerland and Britain.

In Sri Lanka this year, the government was able to stir up Sinhalese-nationalist hysteria by sending provocative text messages to everyone in the country at once.

On the other hand, we saw vividly in Tehran this year that universal access to Web-connected mobile phones (and in relatively prosperous Iran, few communities are too poor to have them) can make a government's crimes and excesses known to the entire country, and the entire world, within seconds.

Beatings and imprisonment can keep this knowledge from turning into a counterrevolution, but it can't stop it from spreading.

## **THE OTHER RESOURCE CRISIS - THE FOOD-FUEL CONNECTION**

Everyone expected resource wars as scarce petroleum and water supplies led nations and communities to battle over their access. That didn't quite happen; something less violent but more dramatic did.

The threshold occurred early in 2006, when the price of oil, propelled by Chinese and Indian demand, reached somewhere between \$55 and \$60 (U.S.) a barrel. At that point, all at once, the world's investors realized that other forms of fuel - notably from vegetable sources such as corn - could be refined and burned at the same price or less.

From that point onward, the price of food became directly linked to the price of energy. The two have followed one another up and down since, with huge repercussions. The global food riots of 2008, the first events of their kind in three decades, were a direct effect: The rapid rise in the price of grains hit the dinner plates of a billion people.

That did not last long, but it has drawn attention to food-supply problems that plague the world.

"Food products and fuel products became closely linked as a single commodity - agricultural commodities are now looked at as an energy source," says Keith Wiebe, an analyst with the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. "The effects of this are being felt everywhere, in farms and agricultural industries, in markets, in food supplies and nutrition levels."

None of these have to do with absolute food supply or growing capacity: Both China and India have more than enough stockpiles to keep their countries fed through a year-long drought. The world has more than enough fertile farmland to feed more than nine billion people well. Indeed, for the first half of this decade, food surpluses remained a widespread problem.

The rise of the food-fuel "uni-commodity" may have done the world a favour: It drew attention to the fact that much of that fertile farmland produces nothing at all. Almost a third of the "black earth" land in Russia and Ukraine, among the world's most fertile growing areas, has gone uncultivated for a decade due to lack of investment.

Much of Africa's best land, of which there is perhaps more than anywhere in the world, is incapable of growing anything because there is no money for proper production-level farming, no ownership of large enough plots of land, and no transportation links to carry it to market.

"This crisis has really drawn attention to the undercapitalization of agriculture, and the failure of many countries and regions to develop productive industrial agriculture capacity," says Mr. Wiebe.

But now that this has become both a food-supply and an energy problem for many countries, there seems to be, at long last, a rush of investment into agriculture.

### **INTO THE TUMULTUOUS TENS**

This will not be an easy time ahead: Wealthy countries are facing a 3 per cent cut in their economy for as long as a decade while they pay off their bailout debts. Aging populations will force them to pay steeper bills for pensions and medicine. And they will probably have to pay for carbon-emission reductions, just as they are attempting to extricate themselves from the financial crisis.

The war in Afghanistan, and its repercussions in Pakistan, are not going to be easy to resolve. And the cultural tensions caused by immigration are not going to go away: Most Western countries, to cover all those costs, will be forced to take in hundreds of thousands of people from the developing world each year.

In the past decade, we avoided many worse fates through a series of developments that most of us missed. In the future, we'll have to pay closer attention. The southern and eastern three-quarters of the globe are pivotal to the areas that have the greatest effect on us - energy and emissions, exports and equities, technology and terrorism.

We have adapted in certain ways - by shifting our military expenditures from Europe to Central Asia; by pursuing the Millennium Development Goals, the UN's plan to reduce the most extreme forms of poverty by 2015; and by replacing the worn-out G8 with former Prime Minister Paul Martin's idea of a G20. In the decade ahead we will have to work even harder just to keep pace.

All we know for sure is that it will not be a repeat of the past 10 years. In 2007, the statistician-philosopher Nassim Nicholas Taleb coined what may be the decade's most descriptive axiom: "History does not crawl, it jumps." History has exploded from the least likely corners; spurious events unsettled our surest expectations. The 2010s will be volatile, unpredictable, dangerous - but not what we hope, and not what we fear.

*Doug Saunders is a member of The Globe and Mail's European bureau.*

## **DECODING THE DECADE: THE FUTURE SO FAR**

### **MARGARET ATWOOD, AUTHOR, THE YEAR OF THE FLOOD**

"The most positive and far-reaching event would be Bill McKibben's huge round-the-world 350 climate change event [a global, grassroots campaign to address the issue], the largest of its kind ever mounted. In the history of our species on the planet, the first decade of the 21st century may well be the one in which people finally woke up to their perilous situation in a swiftly deteriorating biosphere and elected to change course."

### **ROGER MARTIN, DEAN, ROTMAN SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT**

"In the world of commerce, I would pick November 10, 2001. That was the day the first iPod was shipped. To me, it heralded kind of an interesting, ironic intersection of trends.

In terms of consumers, what it heralded was individualization - the power to say, "No, I'm not going to buy a CD with 12 songs on it that will only play in the order you have decided for me. I will buy the songs I want, when I want." The consumer wants to be treated as an individual.

But Apple didn't just announce iPod; it announced iPod and iTunes simultaneously. What that heralded was also the era of the business ecosystem - a gigantic system that a corporation orchestrates and manages. The two trends were more momentous than any of us had realized. It's not that iPod caused it, but iPod signalled it."

### **BRUCE MAU, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, BRUCE MAU DESIGN**

"Obviously, there's an event in America at the beginning of the decade with the attack on New York and Washington that, without a doubt, transformed our lives. But for me, that's sort of the negative side. The more exciting moment happened at the other end of the decade, and that was when Obama took the stage in Denver and accepted his nomination as the Democratic candidate for the presidency. The interesting difference is that one thing happened to us, the other we produced ourselves. That transformation from receiver to producer was more profound and certainly more powerful.

The world was a different place as of that moment: We had a man named Barack Obama who was running for president."

**PETER MANSBRIDGE, CBC'S THE NATIONAL**

"The easy answer on so many levels is 9/11. In many ways, the decade has been defined by that - not only the conflicts that started as a result of it, but also in the way we live. You can't fly anywhere now without being impacted by what happened - what you can carry with you, what you can wear, what you have to do to get onboard a plane, which is a pretty normal piece of daily life for so many people.

Journalism has been affected too, in terms of where we're placed around the world to tell its stories. Because of the crunch on resources, so much money was spent on covering Afghanistan and Iraq that other places can't be covered now."

**JEFF RUBIN, AUTHOR, WHY YOUR WORLD IS ABOUT TO GET A WHOLE LOT SMALLER, FORMER CIBC CHIEF ECONOMIST**

"In 2007, when oil prices went into the triple-digit range, it defined the end of an era: the end of cheap and abundant oil. I think that we're going to come back and look at that event as a real watershed in so many respects because it's going to change the world and impact our lives in so many fundamental ways."

**KURT BROWNING, FOUR-TIME WORLD CHAMPION FIGURE SKATER**

"For me, the defining event of this decade has been the war. My Dad didn't go to war, so I've never really understood the concept of it, but I was driving down Highway 401 recently going towards Toronto - the part that's the Highway of Heroes - and it was the day that one of our boys was coming home horizontal. I think that moment made the war real for me: all those people lined up on bridge after bridge, waiting for the boy to come home.

It's embarrassing that that's my little moment when others are raising children without a father now. God knows what the war has done for them.

I'm lucky and ashamed to say that that was the closest experience I've had to war - where all those people were lined up on bridge after bridge, waiting for the boy to come home."

**MARGARET MACMILLAN, HISTORIAN**

"We've lived through such incredible turbulence and change that there are many defining moments in many different fields from environmental to economic to political to military. It's been a chaotic decade. The Lehman Brothers collapse, for example, was one defining moment. There's this expression that "banks are too big to fail." So when Lehman Brothers did, that said something about the state of capitalism in the 21st century. There was also the failure of Sept. 11 in terms of American vulnerability. And then there's the defining moment of President Obama's inaugural address. So the defining moment really depends on what you're looking at."

**CRAIG KIELBURGER, ACTIVIST, FOUNDER, FREE THE CHILDREN AND ME TO WE**

"The Millennium Development Goals started the decade with enormous hope. In the largest-ever gathering of heads of states, 192 nations committed to confronting the most pressing social challenges of our time: extreme poverty, child mortality, HIV/AIDS, and achieving sustainable development. The goals held the potential to transform the lives of the three billion people - almost half of humanity - who live on less than \$2.50 a day.

Ten years have passed, and we now mark the failure of most of these indicators. We are ending the decade with wealthy nations dragging their feet at the Copenhagen Conference while climate change ravages Africa, and a financial crisis triggered by Wall Street causing ripples around the world. Our failure to meet the millennium goals is all too telling of the decade and the reality for most of the planet."