

# The Long View

*Ted Turner's plans include goading other donors to join his campaign to save the world*



ERIK PETERSEN

**Ted Turner says he remains committed to the grand-scale philanthropic causes he cares most about, such as curbing population growth and slowing global warming: "I've never looked at this as giving money away. I see it as investing in the future of humanity."**

**By Caroline Preston**

**T**ED TURNER has never wanted for ambition. As a yachtsman, he captured the America's Cup, sailing's highest honor. As a businessman, he founded the first 24-hour television news station and went on to build a broadcast-media empire. And six years ago, at 63, Mr. Turner helped create a restaurant chain to save bison and inject environmentalism into the restaurant business.

His philanthropy has likewise been characterized by outsize aspirations.

In 1997 Mr. Turner famously shocked the nonprofit world by promising \$1-billion to benefit the United Nations.

Four years later, he pledged up to \$250-million—roughly \$70-million of which he has paid—to create a charity that seeks to prevent nuclear warfare.

He has also given more than \$135-million to the Turner Foundation, an Atlanta grant maker that supports environmental causes.

Mr. Turner's giving has sometimes fallen short of expectations, both because of his stock-market losses and the loftiness of his goals. And while he is still

a billionaire who intends to give away the bulk of his fortune—worth about \$2.3-billion, compared with a high of nearly \$10-billion in 2000—he's taken on the role of evangelist in recent years, exhorting those with deeper pockets to join him in the causes he's most passionate about, such as controlling nuclear proliferation, curbing population growth, and slowing global warming.

The United Nations Foundation, which Mr. Turner founded in 1998 with the expectation that it would close after a decade, has now embraced ambitious fund-raising plans to help transform it into a permanent institution.

Mr. Turner says he sees his philanthropy as fighting threats that could imperil humankind.

"I've never looked at this as giving money away," he says. "I see it as investing in the future of humanity."

## Starting 'Small'

Mr. Turner says he started thinking about philanthropy around the time he began making money in a big way. He created the Turner Foundation in 1990 with \$2.5-million.

"I started in a very small way with the Turner Foundation, but it grew very fast as my wealth grew," he says. "I grew it as fast as I could."

Passionate about the outdoors since his childhood, Mr. Turner chose to focus on environmental causes.

Laura Seydel, his eldest daughter, recalls how her father would weed the lawn by hand with his children instead of using chemicals. He traded his Cadillac for a Toyota Corolla during the 1973 oil embargo and today drives a hybrid Toyota Prius.

Mr. Turner's son Teddy says that Jane Fonda, the actress and political activist whom Mr. Turner started dating in the late 1980s and married in 1991, also played a role in helping him create the foundation and shaping his views on philanthropy. (The couple divorced in 2001.)

"She had a big influence on Ted and on all of us," says Teddy Turner, who owns a boatyard in Charleston, S.C. "I'm not sure he wouldn't have done it on his own, but she certainly accelerated it."

One of Mr. Turner's aims in creating the foundation was to involve his children in philanthropy. All five are on its

board, and one of Mr. Turner's grandchildren serves as an honorary trustee.

Mr. Turner's \$1-billion pledge to U.N. causes, however, was what defined him as a philanthropist. That gift is often credited with setting a new bar for big donations.

Around the same time, Mr. Turner sought to shame other billionaires into giving more of their money. He slammed *Forbes* magazine's list of the 400 richest Americans and urged the creation of a list of the biggest donors. *Slate*, *BusinessWeek*, and this newspaper now publish such lists.

"It definitely has had an impact," Mr. Turner says of the lists, noting that he believes the richest people are giving twice as much as they did a decade ago. "Some people still don't give. But many do."

While Mr. Turner says he sees many of the country's biggest philanthropists giving away their money wisely, he is loathe to take credit.

"You'd have to ask them," he says of what motivated his fellow billionaires to give. "But they are doing great

*Continued on Page 20*

## Ten Years Later, Turner's U.N. Fund Continues to Evolve

WHEN TED TURNER pledged \$1-billion in 1997 to benefit the United Nations, not even he had much of a clue as to how the gift might be used.

He initially wanted to buy the United States' debt to the world organization and then sue the American government for the money it owed him. After revising that plan and working out the logistics of creating the United Nations Foundation a year later, Mr. Turner envisioned the fund would close after operating for 10 years.

Plans for the foundation have continued to evolve. It now intends to stick around for the long haul, building on its role as a hub for companies, individuals, and charities interested in working with the United Nations. It also hopes to provide ordinary Americans with a straightforward way to support international causes.

"We would like to be, in 10 years, the community foundation for the world," says Timothy E. Wirth, the fund's president and a former Democratic senator from Colorado. "People who want to become involved with a big global problem may have a vehicle to do that, such as their church or service organization. But they may also decide to do it through some aspect of what the U.N. does."

To date, the U.N. Foundation has helped mobilize more than \$700-million in private donations for United Nations causes, in addition to the \$692-million that Mr. Turner has so far contributed to the fund.

It has built partnerships around fighting childhood diseases, promoting renewable energy, advancing women's rights, and other issues. An effort with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Rotary International, the World Health Organization, and other institutions, for example, helped to reduce the number of countries plagued by polio from 30 to four.

A collaboration among the American Red Cross, Unicef, WHO, and others contributed to a 90-percent drop in measles deaths in Africa. Approximately 70,000 people have donated to buy bed nets that help prevent the spread of malaria through the foundation's Nothing but Nets campaign.

"It would have been a waste of an important resource if we didn't try to prolong the potential of the foundation," says Gro Harlem Brundtland, a foundation trustee and a former head of the World Health Organization. "We've proven that it's possible, through partnerships and the mobilizing of outside resources, enthusiasm, and campaigning, to support U.N. causes."

### 'In a Blue Minute'

The U.N. Foundation will need considerable help from donors if it is to survive once Mr. Turner's money dries up. The CNN founder, whose wealth has plummeted from a high of nearly \$10-billion in 2000 to roughly \$2.3-billion, declined to say if he would give more to the organization beyond his \$1-billion pledge.

He says he's disappointed not to have been able to put more money into the foundation.



MIKE DUBOSE/UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE

**The Nothing but Nets campaign, overseen by the United Nations Foundation, generated donations from 70,000 people to pay for mosquito nets to prevent the spread of malaria in countries like Nigeria.**

"I just wish I hadn't had the misfortunes I did with the AOL Time Warner merger," Mr. Turner says. "If I had a little more money I'd put another billion into the U.N. Foundation in a blue minute, because it's been such a huge success."

The foundation will use roughly \$170-million of Mr. Turner's pledge—now set to be paid by 2015, instead of by now as he first promised—to create an endowment. But the organization hopes to keep operating with an annual budget of about \$100-million.

That means it will need to add more to its endowment and continue seeking outside donations toward the campaigns it supports in order to keep going at that rate and to keep its operations running. The Gates foundation has provided the first large unrestricted grant, \$10-million over five years.

Kathy Calvin, chief operating officer, says the biggest obstacle for fund raisers will be convincing Americans that a foundation started by a billionaire needs their help.

Some people probably think Mr. Turner didn't fulfill his commitment, she says, or that he endowed the institution from the outset.

For his part, Mr. Turner is meeting with other philanthropists in hopes of securing financial help. The financiers Warren Buffett and Peter G. Peterson have stepped in to help another of his charities, the Nuclear Threat Initiative, and U.N. Foundation leaders say they would like to find similar backers. The U.N. Foundation might also make changes in its board as it looks to increase donations.

Today, its trustees include such in-

ternational-development experts and political leaders as Muhammad Yunus, the founder of Grameen Bank, and Andrew Young, former mayor of Atlanta and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations. But Ms. Calvin says the foundation is considering including philanthropists and communications experts, among others.

The foundation is simultaneously seeking new ways to save money. It is being selective about the projects it starts and examining how much it spends on events and travel.

"I don't think we can anticipate what we'll look like in 2015," says Ms. Calvin. "But we're anticipating what we need to do to get there."

### Seeking Advice

The foundation is also re-evaluating how it can support the United Nations. Over the next 18 months or so, the fund will be soliciting advice from government and U.N. officials, business leaders, and others on how it should operate in the future.

Mr. Wirth says the foundation might open offices in places such as Beijing and Dubai to build support for the United Nations in other countries.

U.N. and charity leaders say they are pleased that the U.N. Foundation is forging ahead.

Many U.N. officials were deeply worried that Mr. Turner's money would give him undue influence over the world body. They also questioned whether a private foundation had any role to play in U.N. affairs.

But much of that skepticism has dried up over the last decade, says Will Kennedy, senior program officer with the United Nations Fund for Interna-

tional Partnerships, which was created to manage the U.N.'s relationship with Mr. Turner's foundation. Meanwhile, the foundation has helped build support at the United Nations for the notion that governments, businesses, and philanthropic organizations need to work together to solve social problems.

"When we talk about public-private partnerships, it's pretty mainstream language," he says. "Ten years ago, it was really just rhetoric."

### A Helpful Partner

Grant makers who have worked with the U.N. Foundation say the organization has broadened the influence of their giving.

"We've looked to organizations like the U.N. Foundation to help think about how to extend our grant making by forming partnerships with other agencies where we can leverage our resources," says Joe Cerrell, the Gates foundation's director of global health policy and advocacy.

Some charity leaders say the foundation has made it easier for them to work with the behemoth that is the United Nations.

Says Charles F. MacCormack, president of Save the Children: "They know their way around the labyrinthian corridors on First Avenue and 44th Street, and they can steer you to the people who can get things done."

Mr. Wirth, the foundation's president, says he's hopeful that donors will see the value in working with the United Nations.

"The U.N. has an enormous mandate," he says. "It can't possibly do everything it's being asked to do by itself."

—CAROLINE PRESTON

## Media Mogul Says the World Needs to Prepare for Another 'Renaissance'

Continued from Page 18

things. Bill Gates, Warren Buffett, they are doing great things."

For his part, Mr. Turner says he looks to the examples of Andrew Carnegie and the Rockefeller family.

He says that George Soros, the investor and political activist, also has had an impact on his thinking. "He inspires me," says Mr. Turner, "with his background in Eastern Europe, growing up under Communism, and going back and putting billions of dollars into those countries. He single-handedly helped bring those countries out of poverty."

### 'Some Shaking Up'

Mr. Turner has, at times, been critical of other donors for being too parochial in their thinking.

"Philanthropy needed some new ideas and some shaking up," he said in a 2004 interview with the public-broadcasting talk-show host Charlie Rose. "There's nothing wrong with giving to your church or your symphony or your opera or your museum or your university. Those things are all worthwhile things to give to. But we shouldn't be giving 98 percent of our money to those things and only 2 percent to international aid and 2 percent to the environment."

While Mr. Turner has given \$6.4-million each to Brown University and two other educational institutions he and his children have attended, those gifts are dwarfed by his giving to foreign and environmental causes. Much of his philanthropy, meanwhile, has been highly experimental.

When Mr. Turner pledged \$1-billion to the United Nations—then roughly a third of his wealth—his goal was in part to shame the United States into paying its dues to the world organization. After consultation with U.N. officials and others, Mr. Turner created the United Nations Foundation to distribute the gift. The fund aims to build support for the United Nations among the American public and government and to



Ted Turner says philanthropy should help empower women, and he insists that at least half of the U.N. Foundation's board be female. Here, he meets with a young woman from Jordan to discuss the foundation's work.

JAMAL NASRALLAH/EPA/CORBIS

help the U.N. advance its goals of improving global health, fighting poverty and violence, and protecting the environment.

Despite its impromptu beginnings, Mr. Turner says he believes the foundation has been a big success.

He likens himself and the fund's leaders to Christopher Columbus. "He didn't know where he was when he left. He didn't know where he was when he got there.

And he didn't know where he'd been when he got back." And now, Mr. Turner says, "he's father of his country."

When Mr. Turner set up the Nuclear Threat Initiative in 2001, he took a risk in supporting a cause that many people consider the responsibility of governments. The charity has since carved out a role for itself advocating for new policies to curb nuclear weapons and helping governments take steps to cut down on their spread. For example, a \$5-million donation from the organization helped the American, Russian, Yugoslav, and Serbian governments transfer weapons-quality uranium from a reactor near Belgrade to Russia for blending into nuclear fuel.

Mr. Turner's philanthropy has been characterized by aggressive efforts to convince governments to change their behavior.

Timothy E. Wirth, president of the U.N. Foundation and a former Democratic senator from Colorado, says that many foundations make a big mistake in not doing the same.

"Most philanthropy is gun shy of getting involved with major governmental institutions," he says. "But I summarize it this way: Why did Willie Sutton rob banks? Because that's where the money was. Why work with governments? Because that's where the power is."

### 'Plan B 3.0'

Mr. Turner has become something of a spokesman and fund

raiser for the causes he is passionate about. Spend more than a few minutes with him and he'll probably invoke at least one of the three main threats he sees facing humankind: climate change, population growth, and nuclear warfare.

He says he first became concerned with these threats through "reading and study," and he is quick to suggest a reading list to get others up to speed. (He says he recently bought \$50,000 worth of Lester Brown's *Plan B 3.0: Mobilizing to Save Civilization* and sent copies to politicians, scholars, and friends.)

Often, the causes he cares about loop together in his speech.

After starting a discussion of how the world needs to phase out fossil fuels and replace them with clean, renewable energy, he stops short.

"It doesn't make much sense to build a whole new energy regime, with all the work and trillions of dollars it's going to take, and then blow it up with a nuclear weapon," he says. "You have to solve both problems."

While Mr. Turner warns that the consequences of climate change, in particular, are imminent—in an interview with Charlie Rose earlier this year he suggested global warming left unchecked could lead to cannibalism in 30 or 40 years—he thinks environmental degradation and other global problems are solvable if the world starts paying attention.

"If we can make it through the

next 25 or 50 years, I think we'll be fine," he told a crowd of U.N. officials and charity leaders in April at an event celebrating the U.N. Foundation's 10th anniversary.

"But we need to go through a renaissance like we did at the end of the Dark Ages. And we have to convince those that aren't with us yet that they need to join in," he said. "If we do that, we'll be fine. If we don't, God help us all."

### Nuclear Goals

Mr. Turner's role at the charities he's created is primarily that of visionary.

He has long advocated the abolition of nuclear weapons, a controversial objective and one that Sam Nunn, the former Democratic senator from Georgia and the Nuclear Threat Initiative's co-chair, didn't at first share.

But over time, Mr. Nunn has come to see a nuclear-free world as a critical goal. Mr. Turner, in turn, has begun to appreciate the more-modest steps necessary to achieve the abolition of nuclear weapons, says Charles B. Curtis, president of the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

"For Ted, it's a vision issue. That's how he approaches business and life," says Mr. Curtis. "But he understands that if all you have is the vision, without dealing with any of the hard problems on the path toward that vision, then you have an empty program."

Mr. Wirth agrees. "He doesn't do something unless he's thought about it very carefully, but he's not an incrementalist," he says of Mr.

## Charities Founded by Ted Turner

**Captain Planet Foundation** (Atlanta): Founded by Ted Turner in 1990 to engage children in protecting the environment. The charity has been supported through grants from the Turner Foundation.

**The Nuclear Threat Initiative** (Washington): Created in 2001 with a pledge of up to \$250-million in stock. After a sharp decline in the value of stock held by Mr. Turner, he ended up paying \$74-million to the charity. The organization seeks to prevent nuclear, chemical, and biological warfare.

**The Turner Endangered Species Fund** (Bozeman, Mont.): Created in 1997, the charity is supported through grants from the Turner Foundation.

**The Turner Foundation** (Atlanta): Established in 1990, the grant maker supports environmental causes. Mr. Turner has given \$135-million to the foundation to date. The grant maker, which does not have an endowment, gives \$10-million to \$12-million each year.

**The United Nations Foundation** (Washington): Established in 1998 with a \$1-billion pledge to benefit causes advanced by the United Nations. Mr. Turner has paid \$692-million on that pledge to date.

Turner. "He has a big appetite, but it's a well-informed appetite."

Mr. Turner tries to ensure that the charities he supports reflect his vision of a better world. He insists that at least half of the U.N. Foundation board be made up of women.

"Feminist is the wrong word," says Mr. Wirth. "But he's a great believer in empowering women."

#### Value Plunged

Perhaps the biggest setback for Mr. Turner's charities has been his stock-market losses.

The Turner Foundation was forced to lay off half of its staff members and suspend grant making for a year in 2003 when the value of AOL Time Warner stock, from which Mr. Turner derived most of his wealth, plummeted.

The grant maker coped, in part, by moving toward invitation-only grant making. The Nuclear Threat Initiative has attracted other donors, the financiers Warren Buffett and Peter G. Peterson among them. Mr. Turner has provided the charity with about \$74-million, far less than the \$250-million he'd hoped to give.

The United Nations Foundation has evolved from a grant-making organization to one that focuses primarily on forging partnerships around key problems championed by the world body. Mr. Turner is visiting other philanthropists and making introductions for the fund's staff members in an attempt to help the foundation survive beyond 2014, when his pledge will be completed.

Kathy Calvin, chief operating officer with the U.N. Foundation, says Mr. Turner is well-suited to the role of fund raiser.

"There are a lot of founders who wouldn't be comfortable making room for other donors," she says. "But Ted's always described himself as just another banana in the bunch."

Mr. Turner's declining wealth has shaped his own thinking on philanthropy.

"I've seen him grow more and more interested in leverage," says Mr. Curtis. "It's not just his money, it's the ability of his money to inspire others."

In addition to the financial constraints, some observers would say Mr. Turner's philanthropic goals have been too ambitious or misguided.

"I don't think the U.N. has been terribly effective, so I don't think it's a terrific investment," says Terrence Scanlon, president of the Capital Research Center, a think tank in Washington.

The United States famously sidelined the United Nations in declaring war with Iraq in 2003. Allegations of corruption at a U.N. program that provided food aid to Iraq when the country was under embargo also rattled the world body. And the United States is still behind on its payments to the United Nations.

Mr. Turner acknowledges that there's been no sea change in relations between the United States and the United Nations.

"We've made a little progress," he says. "The U.S. hasn't pulled out of the U.N. We won't have Bush to kick around in a few months, and all three presidential

candidates are talking about much stronger international engagement."

Mr. Turner says he'll give most of his money to charitable causes, rather than leaving it to his family. But he's reluctant to say which organizations might benefit.

"I change my will every few years based on new information I'm getting," he says. "You'll have to wait until I'm gone to find out."

Despite the scale of the problems he sees facing the globe, Mr. Turner remains optimistic about the potential of his giving to effect great change.

Asked what he hopes the U.N. Foundation might achieve over its next 10 years, he smiles and says: "We'd like to solve all the world's problems."

## Companies Expect Giving to Hold Steady

By Brennen Jensen

Despite a weakening economy, corporate giving grew by 5.6 percent last year, according to preliminary findings of a new report.

The Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy, in New York, based the findings on a survey of 155 companies, 69 of which were on *Fortune* magazine's latest list of the 100 most-profitable companies.

The median amount these corporations gave last year was slightly more than \$26-million—meaning half gave more and half gave less. That was an increase from a median of \$24.7-million given in 2006.

Roughly two thirds of the corporations increased their giving in 2007, sometimes despite their own dip in profits. More than half of the companies reporting lower profits last year increased their charitable donations. Of the eight companies reporting losses in 2007, seven increased their giving.

#### 'Neutral' Impact

In one of the survey questions, corporate leaders were asked how important the economy should be in determining contributions. Over 80 percent responded that economic conditions should have an "unimportant" or "neutral" impact on corporate giving.

Nearly 90 percent of corporate leaders who responded to the survey said companies should maintain cash reserves or endowments to sustain their giving during economic slowdowns.

Based on those findings, the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy predicts that corporate giving will at least remain steady for 2008, despite a national economy that continues to soften.

The committee will release a full analysis of its findings in August or September.

More information can be found online at <http://www.corporatephilanthropy.org>.

**"Hello, Mr. Lybunt."**

**Executive Summary for LYBUNT, James**

	James Lybunt 423 S. Brantley Street Fort Dodge, IA 50501 Tel: 515-555-7160 j.lybunt@home.com	Largest Gift: \$400.00 on 9/20/2006 Last Gift: \$400.00 on 9/20/2006 Average Gift: \$88.75 See Donation Details
Change photo...	James Lybunt Immanuel Lutheran Church 2528 41st Avenue S.W. P.O. Box 1314	Largest Pledge: N/A Last Pledge: N/A Outstanding Pledge Amount: N/A
First Membership: \$500.00 on		Next Renewal Date:
		See Membership History
Last Gift Date: 5/20/2006 Last Gift Amt: \$400.00 Total Gift Amt: \$710.00 Pledges/Outstand: \$0.00	Constituencies: Former Board Member Volunteer	Funds: BLG, EDU, FRS, BAM Campaigns: PEX, ARC, PEX, HHW Appeals: NEWS, HPA
Maiden Name: Hanson Spouse Name: Frances Board Cntess: Newsletter: AICConst / FBOARD.VOL		

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