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MacNeil/Lehrer Television Programme.
Discussion with Robert Mac Neil (Anchor)
Mr. James Grant (Executive Director, UNICEF)
Colonel Fred Peck (U.S. Envoy)
Ms. Charlayne Hunter-Gault (Focus - Somalia Diary)
Ambassador Robert Oakley (U.S. Envoy)
Ms. Marian Wright Edelman (Children's Defense Fund)

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MAC NEIL/LEHRER NEWSHOUR

Friday, December 25, 1992

WNET, New York, New York

CHRISTMAS

SHOW #4528

ANCHOR: ROBERT MAC NEIL

**CORRESPONDENT: CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT,
NEWSMAKER**

**NEWSMAKER:
(Interview Concerning
Situation in Somalia) ROBERT OAKLEY, U.S. Envoy**

**CORRESPONDENT: CHARLAYNE HUNTER-GAULT,
FOCUS - SOMALIA DIARY
(Christmas in Somalia)**

**FOCUS - THE STATE OF THE CHILDREN:
(State of Children in the World) JAMES GRANT, UNICEF**

**MARIAN WRIGHT EDELMAN, Children's
Defense Fund**

**ESSAY: ROGER ROSENBLATT, SEASON'S
GREETINGS (Essay on Extending
Holiday Cheer)**

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MAC NEIL/LEHRER NEWSHOUR SHOW #4528 FRIDAY, DECEMBER 25, 1992

MR. MAC NEIL: Good evening. I'm Robert MacNeil in New York. After our summary of the news this Christmas Day, we have a Newsmaker interview with the top U.S. diplomat in Somalia, Amb. Robert Oakley. Next, the latest entry in Charlayne Hunter-Gault's Somalia Diary, then a discussion on problems facing the world's children, and finally essayist Roger Rosenblatt on spreading holiday cheer.

NEWS SUMMARY

MR. MAC NEIL: Operation Restore Hope forces today took control of the Somali town of Oddur. It is the sixth of eight target areas to be secured by the U.S.-led coalition. French Foreign Legion troops and U.S. Marines moved into Oddur just after dawn. There was no opposition from the gunmen who'd often stolen shipments of food aid to the town. Soldiers cleared large numbers of land mines on their way in. And a Marine spokesman in the capital told reporters more such work would have to be done before relief shipments could be stepped up.

COLONEL FRED PECK, Marine Spokesman: There are reports that a lot of mines in the area around the approaches to the Oddur airfield, particularly the small plastic mines, foot poppers. Oddur was not the scene of any large scale fighting, but it has been fortified, I guess, by the side that was occupying it.

MR. MAC NEIL: A group of U.S. and British journalists in Bardera were attacked today by an angry mob of Somalis. It happened just one day after U.S. Marines arrived in the town. The Somalis threw rocks and sticks at the journalists apparently because their guards were from a rival clan. They were rescued by a group of Marines but not before a BBC reporter's car was stolen at knife point. We'll have an interview with the U.S. special envoy to Somalia and more of Charlayne Hunter-Gault's Somalia Diary right after the News Summary. Lebanon today appealed to the United States to intervene on behalf of the Palestinians deported from Israel. A group of more than 400 suspected Islamic militants has been stranded between Lebanese and Israeli-controlled territory for more than a week. Lebanon has blocked shipments of humanitarian aid to them. Today Israel did the same as another wave of violence erupted in the occupied territories. The bloodshed in the Mideast was also the subject of Pope John Paul II's annual Christmas message. We have two reports narrated by David Simmons of Worldwide Television News, beginning with Israel.

MR. SIMMONS: The hastily convened meeting divided the Israeli cabinet. It decided narrowly to block relief supplies to the deportees.

ODED BEN-AMI, Israeli Defense Ministry Spokesman: It is very easy to bring the convoy from Lebanon directly from Beirut to the place where members of the Hamas and Islamic Jihad are. The government of Israel does not see any good reason to respond positively to the request of the International Red Cross Committee to bring this convoy through the security zone.

MR. SIMMONS: Meanwhile, the deportees were bracing themselves for the beginning of a second week stranded in subzero temperatures in the hills of South Lebanon. Their makeshift camp had been covered with snow overnight, and they shivered with cold as they made the best use of such fuel as they had left. However much of a propaganda coup it may be, there's no sign of their ordeal coming to an end. Their plight sparked more angry reaction in the occupied territories. In Gaza City, hundreds of Palestinians took to the streets in the latest of a series of almost daily protests against the Israeli occupying forces. Ten people, including a young girl, have already been killed and eighty injured in clashes over the past week. A hail of stones was enough to make the Palestinians' point, but not sufficient to deter Israeli troops from making several arrests. In a gesture of defiance, armed supporters of the Muslim fundamentalist Hamas movement drove through a cheering crowd. From the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope John Paul delivered his traditional address. It was a plea for peace at Christmas. Thousands of people stood in the rain to hear the Pope condemning world leaders for allowing their citizens to live in a world of conflict and

suffering. He had harsh words for what he called the climate of hating Israel, where the peace process has once again given way to violence. And the pontiff spoke of the inhuman violence in Bosnia, a land torn apart by civil war. He appealed directly to political leaders to end violence and killing in the world. He stressed the importance of love of fellow humans and the love of God as vital ingredients in dealing with problems of government, and said that violence does not lead to peaceful solutions. The crowd responded with warm applause as the Pope went on to say that sometimes the earth seems really deaf and impenetrable to the presence of a God who came to heal the wounds opened in humanity's side. Millions of others watched the televised broadcast worldwide. It was screened live in 65 countries.

MR. MAC NEIL: That's our summary of the news on this Christmas Day. Now it's on to a Newsmaker interview in Somalia, Charlayne Hunter-Gault's Somalia Diary, the state of the world's children, and a Rosenblatt essay.

NEWSMAKER

MR. MAC NEIL: As we reported earlier, U.S.-led forces moved deeper into Somalia today on their mercy mission. American Marines and French Legionnaires cautiously secured the outlying towns Bardera and Oddur, two areas laid waste by famine and gang warfare. The vanguard of that action was once again led by America's top diplomat in the country, Robert Oakley. Over the past few weeks, he has successfully marshalled the cooperation of local warlords in an effort to pave a peaceful way for the relief operations. He spoke with Charlayne Hunter-Gault yesterday in Mogadishu.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Mr. Ambassador, thank you for joining us once again. You've been in the last two days both in Bardera and Oddur. What is the situation there?

ROBERT OAKLEY, U.S. Envoy: I found Bardera depressing. It is in the middle of a zone where there's been the most fighting and the most hunger. And there's been an awful lot of looting up there by various technicals and other groups over the past several weeks, and they found it hard to believe that peace was at hand and that with the arrival of the U.S. Marines today they're going to be entering a totally different era, where they can start thinking about peaceful things rather than worrying about wars and famine, and so they were slower, I think, to realize that good things are coming than some of the other places. Oddur, I think, will snap back very quickly.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: But how did that manifest itself to slower, to recognition?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: There were not too many community leaders who showed up and Gen. Warsami and I had a considerable debate about which way the future was going to take. He kept saying there was going to -- there was going to be a lot more war. I said, no, there isn't. You have to start thinking as a man of peace, and I'm not sure he relishes that. I suspect it'll take two or three weeks before people realize that there isn't going to be any more war and that they can come out of their hiding and begin to participate in activities, begin to play a role in community affairs and in their own lives.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: What about the fighting there and how has that left the condition of the people?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Well, the condition was all right, you know, but I'd say their psychic condition I found more depressing than their physical condition, at least in the city, but the city is not the most depressed area. Outside that there are big pockets of hunger and disease.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How soon do you anticipate that food would be given to those people?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: The Marines go in with at least as much food as they do ammunition these days. Now that they've understood that there's not going to be any serious opposition and the

opposition's understood they'd better not oppose the Marines, and there will be food flights going in, a lot of them, I think, starting today and continuing.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Boutros Boutros-Ghali and United Nations people still seem to have a very different idea of what the mission of the joint forces is here in Somalia. He continues to insist that the U.S.-led forces disarm the entire population. What kind of communication is going on between the United States and the U.N.? Why do you have this very different view of things?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: I think Boutros-Ghali wants us to create a condition where the follow-up U.N. peacekeeping operation will have as few difficulties as possible, that we should eliminate, according to the report, all the major military forces and all the gangs, if you will. I think that he has an exaggerated view of the threat that would be left behind, and I think he has an exaggerated view of what one can practically do in a short period of time. I think that as he sees what is actually happening his judgment on which way things are going is going to change.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Some of the aid agencies have made the same criticism, or at least expressed the same concern that if the joint forces don't secure the entire population, the bad guys will just be moved to the next neighborhood and the next neighborhood, and then soon as the forces move out, they'll return and that in the end, it'll be more of a disaster than it was before they came in. How do you assuage that kind of concern if it's assuageable?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: I think it's assuageable, Charlayne, by the things that will happen. Once again, you remember two weeks ago everyone was very, very nervous, saying the United States was going to be in the middle of a war, and how can they go in there, it's so dangerous. Now, we're only saying in two weeks you haven't solved all the problems; you haven't disarmed everybody. We've taken at least 100 technicals. The U.N. has an estimate of 300 technicals in the country. At least 100 technicals have been put in cold storage under the supervision of the United States; they're never going to be back out in action. And that's a big step, but that really is done here in Mogadishu, and a little bit in Baldoa. As one moves into Kismayu and into Bardera and elsewhere, the same practice will be applied, and more and more technicals will be put out of circulation permanently. And that will be a big part of the armament of the larger organized groups. There are some that have moved up out of the area of responsibility of the U.S.-led command up in Galkayo, and we'll have to find a way to deal with that, but certainly the planning that we've done, and when we sit down and talk to the Secretary General, I think he'll appreciate that there should be enough force in the peacekeeping phase to deal with any difficulties that may lie behind. It's certainly not the objective of the United States to have a peacekeeping phase that's not able to deal with the problems.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: So you don't see any change in the mission as you have thus far stated it and are implementing it, securing the eight regions and letting it go at that. That's still the mission.

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Well, that may change. It depends. I notice that Secretary of State Eagleburger was in New York this week talking to the Secretary General, and there may be some things that are going to be worked out, but if you look at what Secretary of Defense Cheney and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Powell said in their press conference right before this whole thing began, they made it clear the United States is going to be here participating with other countries and that, for example, we're going to leave the Marine unit off the coast and probably I wouldn't be surprised the carrier unit off the coast, as well as some units here on the ground, therefore, there'll be enough resources here to do the job in the second phase just as there are in the first phase, because the job will be so much less by the time the second phase begins. And I'm not sure that's fully understood in New York.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How fast are other countries sending in forces to become a part of the joint task force?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: They're coming in rapidly. A ship full of a couple of thousand at least

Italians is supposed to be coming in tomorrow on Christmas Day. The French forces are already up in Oddur. The Belgians have been down at Kismayu. The Canadians are coming in all the time. They're going to be up in the middle with the Marines, and a number of other countries have promised several hundred or in some cases a thousand or more troops, so the problem is not too few; the question is where to put them.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How concerned are you about reports that Muslim fundamentalists are not happy with the presence of U.S. troops and, indeed, might begin attacking them?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: I'm not too worried about the situation here yet. Most of it is political and rhetorical, rather than any serious rather military action. As long as it remains at that level, we don't think it is a serious threat.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Let's talk for a moment about the U.N. force that presumably will take over once the U.S. forces feel that they have secured enough of the country to allow that. Boutros-Ghali apparently has turned down a request that the U.N. start planning a new peacekeeping force as America withdraws. He's still not satisfied that the country is secure, and he has criticized the U.S. for suggesting that only a lightly armed U.N. force be here, that, saying that they need heavy, heavier arms, and they need money for heavier arms to do this job. How do you respond to all that?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Well, I just finished reading his report, and it's very interesting, because what he now says in fine print about what one should do about collecting arms is very close to the policy that we have laid out, that is, get as many of the heavy weapons as possible and see what you can do to induce the local population to cooperate in giving up small arms but recognizing that one is not going to be able to get all of them. Now we have, I think, made it clear to him -- certainly, I know the planning that Gen. Johnston has been engaged in recognizes there may be some of these small groups that will retain some heavy arms, that we can't find them all hidden around the country, therefore, the U.N. troops are going to have to have the ability to deal with them. They're going to require the same sort of heavy military presence we have here now, because we'll take care of most of that threat, but we certainly are not going to be able to get all of it in just a matter of several weeks.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: But he says that he's not sure that the member states will give him the money to arm the U.N. forces as he feels they should be armed.

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Well, I don't know precisely at what level he feels they should be armed, because he says he has not yet sat down and talked in detail to our military about an exchange of views about what would be necessary, and he also said his views were based upon only 10 days of what we'd been able to do in the field, and until we're settled in in Kismayu and Bardera, as well as Baidoa, and have been able to do more of what is planned in the countryside in-between, it's going to be hard to have a better assessment, and of course, this report was also written before almost a hundred technicals were put in cold storage here, having moved them out of the city of Mogadishu. But I think that there's a considerable narrowing of the gap in the past week between the United States and the United Nations, and I think it will continue to narrow as our forces and those who are working with them show what they can do on the ground.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How do you assess the progress towards some kind of political stability here now that you've got the warlords quiet for the most part and the technicals off the street? And I know you've been as busy as a bee.

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Charlayne, we've been here two weeks, and various intelligent journalists, a media person I talked to a while ago, said they thought it might take three years before one had a political consensus here. But things are moving along slowly. I think that's to be expected. It's going to move at a different pace in different parts of the country too. I think it's certainly going to take several months before the outlines of the political future is going to become

apparent. That would be my best bet.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Is it turning out to be harder or easier than you thought?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Well, in some ways, the Somali people have responded more rapidly, and certainly the U.S. forces and those that are working with them have been able to move more rapidly than they had anticipated into the Interior. And I think there's more food getting out to more people than had been planned in the beginning. They're almost a month ahead of schedule in terms of getting to Oddur and over the weekend Jalalaxi and Belet Huen. And moving things out from there is going to take -- be the next phase. But they're starting that second phase and moving out from the regional centers a month ahead of the time they've planned. On the political front, it's just about as I had expected, but at least there's no fighting in most of the places. Certainly it's stopped here in Mogadishu, and it's stopping wherever you find U.S. troops. And that's better. There's a lot of political maneuvering going on, but we're used to that in the United States and elsewhere in the world, and better to have the maneuvering against each other politically than shooting each other.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Ambassador, is the American embassy here to stay now?

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: Sure. It's been here to stay ever since we ran the flag up again on I guess the 11th of December.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Well, thank you for joining us.

AMB. ROBERT OAKLEY: You're welcome.

FOCUS - SOMALIA DIARY

MR. MAC NEIL: There were few signs of Christmas in Somalia today, but Charlayne found many people showing new evidence of peace as they compared this December to last.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: It was a Christmas tree like no other, put up by American troops near the airport tarmac in Baidoa for a Christmas like no other in a land where Christmas never comes. The vast majority of Somalis are Muslim, and while past foreign occupations have left some traces of their presence here, until now there's been no trace of Christmas. Thus, Christmas Day and December 25, 1992, had very different meanings for the people who now find themselves so closely if not inextricably bound on this day. At the house we rented for our two-week stay in Somalia, it was a day like any other day. Opening up this well had been an ongoing project since we arrived two weeks ago. Every morning, Mohammad Ali descended into its depth, far beyond where the eye could see, to laboriously scoop out the sand at the bottom, with the expectation that at some point in the future he would strike water.

MOHAMMAD ALI: (speaking through interpreter) In the morning I wake up with the intention of working for my children, and this is one of the few jobs I managed to get, to dig up sand so that at the end of the day my children will be able to get bread, and here are you fellows who are having a nice time taking these pictures for whatever reason you might need it.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How is this day different from a year ago the same day?

MOHAMMAD ALI: (speaking through interpreter) December 25, 1991 was a very bad time. There was a lot of fighting, and we were not sure whether we'd be able to get work and if we do, we would have no guarantee that when we end that day, we'll be able to reach home. We work hard, we don't loot, and whatever we earn is what we will use on our children, and at least we are guaranteed safe passage home.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Our driver, Sald Abdille, is a 23-year-old former soldier who joined the opposition forces against Siad Bari. Like thousands of young Somalis with no job and no hope for

Jobs, Said, who completed eighth grade, signed on to drive for journalists at any hour of the day for rates of upwards of \$200 a day.

SAID ABDILLE, Driver: (speaking through interpreter) Exactly one year ago the whole of Mogadishu was covered in blood. There was a lot of fighting. There was a lot of shooting. There was a lot of fear generally all over the city, and in the whole country at large. Today's date is completely different from last year's date, because we are experiencing some degree of security and peace.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Dr. Shaffe Mohammed owns this and the other house where he lives. He is one of the few professional Somalis who stayed behind when the civil war broke out, however, he sent his wife and their three children out of the country and has not seen them in two years. During the fighting, looters took most of his medical instruments. Today he sees few patients, spending most of his time repairing and overseeing repairs on his house.

DR. SHAFFE MOHAMMED: (speaking through interpreter) In December '91, it was the time of the fiercest fighting in Mogadishu, and I had to move my family out of Mogadishu to Bardera and then from there on, organize their movement on to Kenya, and as I have told you earlier, some of my children were already in Canada. Some of my children have left the country even during peacetime because there was tension increasing every day, and we thought maybe sooner or later this thing was going to explode, so under pressure from my wife, we decided to take some of them out much earlier. I was a bit reluctant to let them go because I thought maybe this thing would cool down, but when my wife pressurized me too much, I decided to let her go with the kids. I remained with two of them, hoping that maybe things would change, and when fighting started, it was very difficult for me to stay with them peacefully. We believe and we hope that there will be peace this year, and that we will be able to start a normal life again.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Prof. Amed Warfa is a botanist by training, now working in the political section of the United Nations in Somalia or UNOSOM. His job includes talking to all sides of the vast Somali political divide.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: For you, what is the difference between December 25, 1992, and December 25, 1991?

PROF. AMED WARFA, U.N. Somalia: In December 1991, we had very, very bitter fight between the warring factions, especially in Mogadishu, one faction led by Mr. Aidid and the other faction led by Ali Mahdi. Last time I was very much engaged about the possibility of stopping fighting. Today I am campaigning for the possibility of gathering, so it's very remarkable difference, you see, because one is you had first to stop them fighting. Today you are campaigning for gathering. At least they are not fighting today.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Here at Mogadishu's Diktor Hospital, severely crowded and under-staffed, doctors from the International Medical Corps have joined with Somali doctors to try and improve the quality and quantity of care here. Dr. Len Olmstead and Dr. Abbas Hassan work as a team in the hospital's operating theater. We first met them as they were treating a gunshot victim.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How is it different from this time last year?

DR. ABBAS HASSAN: People coming and patients coming here was mostly gunshot wound and injuries, grenades, something like that.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: So it was all casualties from fighting?

DR. ABBAS HASSAN: From fighting, yes.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: And this year?

DR. ABBAS HASSAN: And this year we get, especially this, we have casualty but we have less gunshots.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Less gunshots.

DR. ABBAS HASSAN: Less, less, because we have decreased more than 50 percent gunshots.

DR. LENNY OLMSTED, International Medical Care: Last December 25th, I was in the South Pacific, in the Samoa Islands, and once again I was away from my family. I tried to call them, had telephone contact. There was a hurricane at that time. There were a lot of casualties from that. We were cut off. We had no electricity. We had our problems then too, just a different place and different kind of problems.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Willet Weeks is director of the Horn of Africa program for Save The Children, an American-based aid agency concentrating on agricultural development.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: What does December 25, 1992 mean to you?

WILLET WEEKS, Save The Children: It means the time when Somalis finally have some hope for their future. A tremendous gift has arrived for them, and it's one that if it can be sustained until December 25, 1993, is going to be, I think, the biggest Christmas present Africa could ever have had.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How does December 25, 1992 differ for you, or from your perspective, from December 25, 1991?

WILLET WEEKS: December 25, 1991, Ethiopia, which is a neighboring country where we also work was under the domination of a communist dictatorship. The city here in Mogadishu was being blasted to smithereens. People were starving all over the Horn of Africa. Now large parts of Ethiopia and the rest of the Horn are pacified. People are feeding themselves again and producing their own food, and here in Somalia, at last, there is at least the hope that there's going to be peace, even if we hear gunfire still in the background right now.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: We first met Charles Petrie in an earlier interview. He is the former investment banker who is the liaison between the United Nations and the non-government aid agencies.

CHARLES PETRIE, U.N. Somalia: December 25th is Christmas, so I mean on the professional level it means a lot of work. I mean, we're in the middle of the deployment of the troops all over the country, so as far as I am concerned, a number of us, where we have to try and set up these coordination units as quickly as possible, we have to be, we have to be as quick as the deployment is. It's important to follow or to be in sync with the deployment, because the deployment is a unique opportunity. I've just come back from Kismayu where I spent five days. I arrived a few days before the troops were deployed and the level of insecurity was extremely high. Over the last ten days up to a hundred and sixty people have been killed, I mean, a specific tribe that was targeted by the dominating force in the area. The day the troops were deployed security came into town, and, I mean, the three days after deployment, the atmosphere had changed completely. On the personal level, it means my family who are in France right now, my three children whom I won't see.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How does December 25, 1992 differ from December 25, 1991?

CHARLES PETRIE: December 25, 1991 was also a sad, sad Christmas, because before coming here I had spent two years in the Sudan with the U.N. emergency unit there. On the 22nd of December 1991, the government started a massive campaign, destruction campaign of houses of displaced, which ultimately led to the destruction of 750,000 people's houses. Last year at this time I was

heavily involved in trying to assess the, the extent of the initial damage and to try and with a number of people to analyze and to understand what were going to be -- what were the government's plans. So in a sense it's been -- I mean, these are two consecutive Decembers of tragedy in Somalia, if you want.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: And away from your family?

CHARLES PETRIE: And away. At that time my family was there, but I saw them very little. Let's put it this way. The personal cost -- I mean, I cannot justify staying here if I am not working and if things are not moving, so I will go out in the field tomorrow because my family's not here, and were I to take the 25th of December off, I would rather take it off with my family, so if I am here, I have to work, and there is the work to be done.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Here at this concerned feeding center in Mogadishu, there are special biscuits today, but not because the day is special. It is because the people have special needs. These biscuits are high protein and easily digestible, a necessary requirement because of the near empty stomachs that have to receive and digest them.

FATUMA JAMA, Pan African Feeding Center: (speaking through interpreter) About this time last year we had a lot of fighting going on in this town, and we pass through trouble, we pass through war, we have pass through famine, but this year we are happy that at least some changes are here. We have no problems now. We are happy. We are safe.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: So December 25, 1992 is a good day for you?

FATUMA JAMA: (speaking through interpreter) It is a very important day for me, and it will be one of the days I will be able to remember.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: For most of the military personnel here in Somalia December 25, 1992 was Christmas all right, but it passed like every other day.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: It doesn't feel like Christmas?

MARINE: Not at all, not over here.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: What did you have to eat today?

MARINE: Corned beef hash. It was all right, something to eat at least.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Do you have any regrets?

MARINE: No.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Why?

MARINE: These people need it, and that's why I joined the Marine Corps for, to do what they tell us to do, and I'll do it.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: Well, how is this Christmas different from this time last year?

OTHER MARINE: Oh, you're actually giving something this year instead of kind of the same Christmas deal, giving and taking, you know, and stuff like that, but now this year you're just plain giving; you're not getting anything in return.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: How do you feel about that?

OTHER MARINE: It's kind of nice. At first, you know, when you're younger, you don't think you'd like it. Seeing the kids and how they react. They see you come into the country and everything, it's kind of nice.

MS. HUNTER-GAULT: And so it was on December 25, 1992, in Somalia. People gave whatever gifts they had.

(MARINE AND CHILDREN IN SOMALIA SINGING "JINGLE BELLS")

FOCUS - THE STATE OF CHILDREN

MR. MAC NEIL: We turn now to our Christmas Day look at the overwhelming problems facing the people of Somalia to a look at some very significant problems facing children in the rest of the world. Earlier this week, Judy Woodruff explored these issues.

MS. WOODRUFF: Last week, two reports on children were released detailing the daunting problems plaguing children around the globe. The United Nation's children's fund, or UNICEF, released a report that looked at why 13 million children die each year. Joining us in our New York studio to discuss the international picture is James Grant, executive director of UNICEF. In its annual State of America's Children Report, the Children's Defense Fund examined the major causes of poverty, illness, and death among American children. Here to tell us about the state of America's children is Marian Wright Edelman, the president of the Children's Defense Fund. Thank you both for being with us. James Grant, I want to begin with you in the international picture. What conclusion does your report, did your report draw about the state of the world's children at this point in history?

MR. GRANT: The conclusion it drew was that great numbers of children are in trouble. Some 13 million children die each year, 35,000 a day, but it, the hopeful note it struck was that 2/3 of these deaths could be readily prevented, and the 13 million deaths were primarily consequence of a mix of gross poverty, gross under-development, no school, lack of health facilities, and benign neglect by the power holders.

MS. WOODRUFF: What percentage of children are you talking about when you describe these sorts of conditions? What --

MR. GRANT: There would be a quarter of the children in the world that live in extremely difficult circumstances. The great advance, of course, is in the last 30 years we've moved from one-quarter of the children in the world that did fairly well to three-quarters.

MS. WOODRUFF: But getting back to that grim number, 13 million approximately dying every year, what from?

MR. GRANT: Well, they die from -- what actually kills them is malnutrition, but then malnutrition makes them much more susceptible of dying from diarrhea, about 3 million children die from the dehydration of diarrhea each year, 3 1/2 million children die from pneumonia, acute respiratory infections. Another 2 million children die because they haven't been fully vaccinated for measles, tetanus, DPT, another million die because their mothers haven't effectively breast fed them.

MS. WOODRUFF: Well, let me turn to you, Marian Edelman. Your organization released its report, as we just said, the Children's Defense Fund. What did you find? What has changed about the state, the status of America's children in the last year or so?

MS. EDELMAN: What has changed is that their conditions are getting worse. Children are getting poorer in the richest nation on earth. We now have 14.3 poor children. This is the largest number of children in poverty since 1965, and contrary to popular myth, most of these poor children are not black, they are not on welfare, they live in working families, they live in rural and suburban areas, and America has got to realize that child poverty now is a national problem. Children in

young families were particularly affected. They've lost almost 30 percent of their income since 1973, and today in America, 40 percent of all the children headed by someone in their household under 30 is poor.

MS. WOODRUFF: That's what you mean by young family?

MS. EDELMAN: Young family; the parent is 30 or under.

MS. WOODRUFF: How is this? How can this be in the country when you just heard Mr. Grant describe the international situation, and even though there's improvement there, there are so many countries that have conditions far worse than what we experience in the United States, how is it that in the richest country in the world this can be?

MS. EDELMAN: That's the question that I ask every day, and the plain fact is that children have not been a priority for our nation. Other industrialized nations would not permit these and do not permit these conditions to go. We're the only wealthy industrialized nation that allows children to be the poorest Americans. At a time when Jim Grant and UNICEF have done a remarkable job in getting the world's children immunized in so-called "developing nations," our children have faced declining immunization rate. Less than 60 percent of our preschool children in most states are fully immunized against preventable diseases. We have children in America dying from measles even though we know every dollar we invest saves ten dollars on the other end. The problem has been one of a decline. We've had economic recession, as you know, but we've also had an extraordinary set of structural problems in this economy that we have not come to grips with. We've had a shift in jobs from manufacturing to the service sector from America to abroad. Wages have declined precipitously among families and young families, and combined with economic recession and the changes in our economy, loss of health insurance, the cutbacks in federal programs and health have all added up to a crisis for millions of families and kids.

MS. WOODRUFF: And yet, as bad as things are, when you hear Dr. Grant, or Mr. Grant talk about malnutrition, people, children dying of, of starvation or the equivalent, pneumonia and so many other diseases, lack of the immunization that they need, don't most American children have it relatively better than most children around the world?

MS. EDELMAN: A majority do, but we have a quarter of children, one in five of all American children is poor. One of in four of our preschoolers -- and I was struck when Jim gave his figures -- that a quarter of American preschoolers are poor. Infants and toddlers are the poorest Americans. You know, and I think it's a human tragedy to hear Jim Grant's and UNICEF's speakers about the numbers of children who die every year in this world from preventable diseases, but as I have said repeatedly over the last weeks, it is a human and moral travesty that we have millions of American children in the richest nation on earth going hungry, that 8 million lack health care, that we have immunization rates that are below those of third world countries, and because we have the capacity to take care of our kids and don't. So we've got to wake up.

MS. WOODRUFF: Mr. Grant, how do you set a standard -- and I'm not in any sense trying to pit the two of you against one another -- but against what standard do you measure success in caring for children around the world? Because some countries, such as the United States, are capable of doing far more for their children than are so many other countries.

MR. GRANT: Well, the great contrast between the United States and the overall global scene is that in the last seven or eight years globally we have a revolution underway for children, both in the ethos toward them and what's actually happened to them, and in the United States in the past 10 years, in many ways we've seen a deterioration, and this is the shocking fact, that if you compare Mexico, where we released our state of the world's children report, with the United States, in the last 10 years with relative prosperity, the number of our children in the United States under the poverty line have almost doubled. Immunization rates have fallen, whereas in a city, in a place like Mexico, they, their child death rates are now coming down at four or five times the rate in the

United States. They're rapidly catching up with the United States. Their birth rates are plummeting. The immunization levels in Mexico are for the country as a whole 95 percent.

MS. WOODRUFF: So the standards change, is what you're saying? Expectations are different.

MR. GRANT: They're changing, and the developing countries are -- in a sense they were so far behind, confronted with their problem, their situation, we are now getting sort of a massive breakthrough on their front. And just this, we discovered Detroit, discovered that Japan was finding ways to produce cars better than them. Calcutta today, Mexico City today know how to immunize children much more effectively than does the United States. And just as Detroit is learning back from Japan, we need to begin to learn back from the developing world.

MS. WOODRUFF: Marian Edelman, the standard is different for this country, is it not, than it is for so many other people?

MS. EDELMAN: I would hope so, but we are the leader of the free world, but we have got simply to determine that we're going to put children first and to tie the crucial investment in our children with our work force needs. I was very pleased that President-elect Clinton invited me to Little Rock, along with many other child advocates, because it says that recognizes --

MS. WOODRUFF: For the economic summit.

MS. EDELMAN: For the economic summit, because he recognizes that investing in people and investing in children is -- this is a crucial strategy in any credible deficit reduction, because we've got to begin to talk about preventing problems, rather than waiting until after our kids have problems, and it's crucial to economic development in America and to our future work force and to an educated citizenry. So I'm hopeful that the priorities are going to be reversed and the families and kids are going to get far more attention.

MS. WOODRUFF: James Grant, when you talk about the world, you say at one point in your report, the world's people are in a position to even ameliorate or eradicate so many of the problems afflicting children. What is the evidence that you have that we're on the verge of some breakthrough?

MR. GRANT: Well, two -- if you look at the 13 million children that died last year, two-thirds of those we now have simple low cost solutions to their problems. Two million of them would not have died if we had gotten vaccinations to them against measles, against tetanus. Another 3 million died who would not have died if their parents had only known how to do a very simple oral rehydration therapy that can be done at home in the family. So one change that's coming is that we know how to approach it, and thanks to the communications revolution, we are able to reach everybody, inform them and motivate them, so this universal child immunization effort where 95 percent of the children in the third world are now reached by the vaccinations, virtually every hamlet in the whole wide world, 80 percent of the children by age one have had four or five encounters. In Nigeria, in Nepal, Indonesia, the vaccinator has replaced the postman as the most universal service, and then the great challenge of course has been how do you get the families to bring their children in before age one, and here is where the radio, the school teacher, the village priest have become the great communicators to inform them. These two come together; new technology, new capacities to communication, and leaders who've decided it's very good politics to do this.

MS. WOODRUFF: So medical and scientific breakthroughs as well as, as you pointed out, the political climate changing in something.

MR. GRANT: And in this sense, if I may say, the breakthrough in democracy is one of the greatest things that could happen to children because we find that everywhere where there is democracy, children fare better than where there's not. And if you look inside the United States, one reason why Washington, D.C. has such terrible situations is that it's the least democratic, the least

participatory of any political entity in the United States.

MS. WOODRUFF: Marian Edelman, he talked -- James Grant talked about a breakthrough potentially on the international level. Is any sort of breakthrough possible in the United States, or are we at the stage where it's going to take a long time to get us to a better place?

MS. EDELMAN: I think we're on the verge of a breakthrough with the new administration, with the new members of Congress, more women and more minority groups who have, many come from a children's background. We have gotten a growing consciousness in the religious community about the separating of children. We have a growing child advocacy movement in many states, and we have a growing recognition among many citizens now that we do have a crisis with our children. It's spread to the middle class. These are problems that are white and black and rich and poor, many middle class families are finding their children out of college unable to find a house or to find a job, and so I think of the politics of children as rowing, and we now have I think an understanding that we can either choose to invest up front, immunizing our children, giving our mothers prenatal care, or we're going to pay for it in more expensive ways later, so I think we are on the verge of a very major new era of attention to children and families.

MS. WOODRUFF: And the politics changed. Why? Because of a new President coming in? I mean, is there one thing you could point to, or is it accumulation of evidence that made people move in a different direction?

MS. EDELMAN: I think it's accumulation of evidence over a long period of time. I think it's the fact that the problem has reached crisis proportions all over the nation. I think there's an awareness now that a dollar in immunization -- people are shocked when they see that American children aren't immunized, that they see that we don't have health insurance for millions of kids, when they see the homeless, and they see the hunger. But we had eliminated, we did away with childhood hunger. We know what works. The technology is -- we know how to give mothers prenatal care, and so that our problem here in the United States now is just deciding to do it. Everybody says we ought to take care of the kids. Now I think that we're calling the question, the new members of Congress in the freshman class I met with last week, they're wonderful. They want to make children first, and I think things like Head Start and getting children ready for school, and we know these programs work, the charge now is to get it done, and I think that our new President-elect and the kind of people he's appointed will help us do that.

MS. WOODRUFF: Do you think it's realistic, James Grant, to be as optimistic on a global level as Marian Edelman is here in the United States?

MR. GRANT: Absolutely. The -- in a very real sense, the 1776 revolution, global revolution for children was 1990, when the convention and the rights to the child came into force, which 127 countries have now ratified, of which the U.S. is the only major country which has neither signed nor ratified. The world summit for children, the greatest gathering of heads of state in history for children, and 1990 was the year that over 80 percent of children age one were fully immunized in the third world, pulling them ahead of the United States at age five, demonstrating that words could be changed into deeds. And we're now in a situation where we know it can be done. The follow up to the world's summit for children has been excellent around the world, even in the United States. There's a -- the national program of the United States is at the printers at this moment from President Bush and that administration, and I would just say two things at this moment; one is that probably the greatest single global obscenity at this time is the fact that 13 million children die, two-thirds of whom could be readily preventable. You know, when you know how to relieve torment and don't, then in a sense we join the tormentors. That is an obscenity. Second, I would say that President Bush by his action responding to Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the U.N., the move into Somalia, was not only the greatest possible Christmas present in December of 1992 for the children of Somalia, which it was, but globally. This is the first time in world history that we've had such an action on the right to food. It represents a tremendous step forward in ethos. There was no other justification for going into Somalia. We've never before done that before in history. It's a

tremendous step forward.

MS. WOODRUFF: Do you feel the same way about that decision?

MS. EDELMAN: Oh, I'm very relieved and proud that the world community responded. Now I hope that America can become the leader of the free world by showing that the American dream can become real for all of its children and a domestic policy that puts children first will encourage our country also being a leader encouraging the rest of the world to put children first, so I -- I hope that the new nineties will be about fulfilling our responsibilities and nurturing the next generation that are going to run our world and run our nation, and so I am hoping that all Americans are going to join with this new president and with this new Congress to live up to our ethos and see that every child gets a chance to have a happy and productive future.

MS. WOODRUFF: Well, Marian Edelman and James Grant, we thank you both for being with us.

MS. EDELMAN: Thank you.

ESSAY - SEASON'S GREETINGS

MR. MAC NEIL: Finally tonight, essayist Roger Rosenblatt has some thoughts on extending holiday cheer.

ROGER ROSENBLATT: People are divided into two classes, said Max Beerbohm, guests and hosts. Both classes work at full tilt in the Christmas and Chanukah season. In fact, these holidays may be described as the season of guests and hosts. One night you're one; one night the other. One night you're offering hospitality; one night you're on the receiving end; passive one night, active the next. Being a guest or a host is a little like the exchange of presents in this season; you give and you take. There are no rules for either position. One sort of plays a role by ear, and there are very few models worth emulating of one role or another. Most guests in literature stay too long and say the wrong things. The worst guest in cultural history is the man who came to dinner who nearly obliterated the home he was invited to. The competition for worst host is more heated. The Borgias were pretty good hosts until they offered a drink. Count Dracula was an elegant host until he took one. In modern times, the most memorable host is probably Norman Bates of Alfred Hitchcock's "Psycho." So gracious a host was Norman and his mother that most guests at the Bates' motel checked out, yet stayed forever. The interesting thing about more normal guests and hosts is that one cannot succeed without the other. Good hosts make good guests and vice versa. Johnny Carson was a successful host on television because he always made his guests look good, and they appreciated his hospitality. Allstar Cooke of Masterpiece Theater was a different kind of TV host. His guests were the audience, yet, he made them feel like true guests in his home, and they responded with gratitude. A good host, like Charlie Rose of WNET in New York, lets his guests exist in their own light, bright or dull. A poorer host, like Dick Cavett, competes with his guests. The audience grows edgy. Generally, the relationship requires generosity at both ends. The host is generous, sharing his bounty. The guest is generous, encouraging him to do it. What all this amounts to in this season of festivities is the creation of millions of little social situations, dinner parties, cocktail parties, small dinners at someone's home in which people welcome or are welcomed by other people. One ought not to be startled by the appearance of these sudden civil communities. Yet, they occur rarely, mainly at this time of year. For the 50,000 years or so that human beings have stalked the earth we have still never learned together amiably in groups with any prolonged success. Look around today. A civil war here, racial hostility there, hatred for homosexuals, for foreigners, for others. Zoom in on Yugoslavia, zoom in on Somalia, where people are starving their own. Zoom in on Germany and its now murderous right wing revival. Where have we heard those songs before? The cooperation of the guest and the host says, in effect, that the other is you, a complimentary arrangement of mutual recognition, easier to create the dinner parties than for the great exercises in human relations, but theoretically workable on a larger scale if the spirit is willing. For the present, the congenial spirit seems only to be willing to act in small circles for a few weeks a year, these few weeks, when people shuttle back and forth among one another's houses, feeding one

another like welcome news. (people singing "Jingle Bells") Happy Chanukah! Merry Christmas! I'm Roger Rosenblatt.

RECAP

MR. MAC NEIL: Again the main stories of this Christmas Day, U.S. and French troops secured the Somali town of Oddur. Lebanon appealed to the United States to intervene on behalf of the Palestinian deportees, and in his Christmas address to the world, Pope John Paul II called for peace in the Middle East and the former Yugoslavia and gave thanks to the relief efforts in Somalia. That's the NewsHour for tonight. We'll be back on Monday night. Have a good holiday evening. I'm Robert MacNeil. Good night.