

FEDERAL POLICY BRIEFING
ADVANCING PEACE, SECURITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
WASHINGTON, DC
MARCH 17-19, 2013

Welcome and Opening Remarks

March 18, 2013, 8:30 - 9:00 am

Speakers:

- **Michael J. Hirschhorn**, Executive Director, IHRFG
- **Katherine Magraw**, Director, PSFG

Michael Hirschhorn opened the day by emphasizing the interconnectedness of human rights and peace and security, highlighting the human rights to peace and human rights organizations in Mexico working to address violations related to the drug war as example. He posed the question, “What is unique role for funders in addressing these issues?”

Katherine Magraw began by sharing a brief overview of the political climate:

- Fraught with uncertainty
- Budgetary debates offer opportunities to scale back the counterterrorism apparatus, but also pose risks for losing funding for issues we care about
- Despite being elected for a second term, opposition to Obama is relentless and gridlock can be expected
- There is competition over time and space on the political agenda
- Positive: For the 1st time in over a decade, U.S. wars are winding down and there is a clear end in sight. It is difficult to promote peace during wartime
- Negative: Despite the fact that wars are ending, U.S. military presence is as expansive as ever and has transformed policies and strategies that pose problems for human rights. This administration has sustained and intensified this apparatus.
- Funders can:
 - Think about how to make productive use of budgetary concerns;
 - Talk about tough issues of withdrawal from Afghanistan, policies in Libya and Syria

For funders to navigate in these opaque political waters, they need a sophisticated understanding of the issues and policies, which is the core purpose of the Federal Policy Briefing.