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**AMBASSADOR KENNETH QUINN TO RECEIVE INTERNATIONAL AWARD**

*Aegis Trust to honor his humanitarian work in countering genocide*

DES MOINES, IA – Today the international organization Aegis Trust announced it will honor Ambassador Kenneth Quinn, president of the Des Moines, IA-based World Food Prize Foundation, with its Champions of Humanity Distinguished Service Award. The award recognizes his service to Cambodia, first during the early 1970s in correctly identifying the genocidal policies of the Khmer Rouge prior to the genocide; and then in the 1990s, as U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia who developed an effective strategy to eradicate the remnants of the Khmer Rouge from Cambodia.

Ambassador Kenneth Quinn

The award was announced during the Iowa Hunger Summit, among the activities of the annual World Food Prize Week 2018 in Des Moines.

In the 20 years since the Champions of Humanity Distinguished Service Award was created, it has been given to only one other individual – Lieutenant-General (retired) Roméo A. Dallaire, for his service while he was the UN field commander in Rwanda prior to and during the genocide against the Tutsi in that country in 1994. He saved many lives while the international community failed to respond to the crisis.

“I hope everyone here understands how remarkable it is to have among us someone who not only saw a genocide coming and raised the alarm, but then played a leading role in responding to the humanitarian fallout of the Cambodian genocide and then found an ingenious way to eradicate the remnants of the perpetrators while he was the U.S. ambassador to Cambodia,” says James M. Smith, CBE, founder and chief executive officer of the Aegis Trust. “Iowa should be immensely proud to have a son who by ‘rising to the challenge’ has set an example to us all.”

The Aegis Trust was founded in 1999 to work toward the prediction, prevention and ultimate elimination of genocide. Headquartered in the United Kingdom, the organization works in several countries engaged in research, education and the dissemination of information and advice. Its activities include helping survivors to rebuild their lives, honoring the memory of victims of genocide, building long-term peace in post-genocide societies, and documenting the experiences of survivors, perpetrators and rescuers. It also works to confront the prejudice and beliefs that lead to genocide, provide evidence-based policy advice to decision-makers, and conducting research in places where genocide is a threat.

In 1973, Quinn was stationed as a young State Department officer along the Cambodian border and saw the Khmer Rouge burning down villages. He prepared a 40-page report, the first-ever report by anyone, that laid out in great detail the radical plans and ideology of the Khmer Rouge. The problem was that virtually no one within the U.S. government believed him. Two years later the genocide in Cambodia was carried out under the leadership of Pol Pot, killing more than 2 million people.

“Imagine if we had listened,” Smith says. “Imagine a world where we had used our ethical intelligence to prevent this conflict.”

Quinn will receive the Champion of Humanity Award next year in London. During his diplomatic career, he served on the National Security Council staff at the White House; at the U.S. mission to the United Nations in Vienna; as chairman of the U.S. Inter-agency Task Force on POW/MIAs; and as director of Iowa SHARES, the humanitarian campaign that sent Iowa doctors, nurses, medical supplies and food to starving Cambodian refugees.

A fluent speaker of Vietnamese, as interpreter for President Gerald Ford at the White House and personally negotiated the first ever entry by U.S. personnel into a Vietnamese prison to search for U.S. POW/MIAs. He was also a member of the first U.S. team to gain entry to a former Soviet prison in Russia.

Elected as a member of the American Academy of Diplomacy, Quinn has received numerous national honors and awards for his actions in multiple dangerous and violent situations. He is the only Foreign Service officer ever to have three times received the American Foreign Service Association Rivkin and Herter Awards for intellectual courage in challenging policy.

In 2014, Quinn became only the 23rd person in Iowa history to receive the prestigious Iowa Medal, the state’s highest citizen award, joining such illustrious Iowans as President Herbert Hoover, Vice President Henry A. Wallace, Professor George Washington Carver, Carrie Chapman Catt and Norman Borlaug, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1970 for his work in global agriculture. The World Food Prize was created in 1986 to fulfill his vision of honoring those who have made significant and measurable contributions to improving the world’s food supply.

The award will be formerly presented next year in London and Kigali, Rwanda, during early 2019.

In his remarks today, Dr Smith said, “It is very unusual to identify one person who has led a significant campaign to successfully fight a genocide ideology. We hope that this award, so justly deserved, will be an encouragement to us all about the power of one, the ability of individuals to make a difference, to save lives and to counter genocide through humanity.”

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