



POLICY POSITIONS OF THE IVORY EDUCATION INSTITUTE



THE IVORY
EDUCATION
INSTITUTE
IS A NONPROFIT
PUBLIC BENEFIT
ASSOCIATION
DEDICATED TO
ENHANCING
UNDERSTANDING
OF THE
HISTORIC,
PRACTICAL AND
CULTURAL
IMPORTANCE OF
IVORY

THE PRINCIPAL CONCERNS OF THE IVORY EDUCATION INSTITUTE

CREATING A SCARCITY OF IVORY WILL RAISE PRICES AND GIVE POACHERS EVEN GREATER REWARDS.

The laws of economics cannot be repealed by fond hopes or government fiat; unrealistic attitudes toward dealing with demand creates black markets.



PROHIBITION DID NOT END U.S. LIQUOR CONSUMPTION, THE WAR ON DRUGS HAS NOT PREVENTED NARCOTIC SALES, NEW TECHNOLOGY HAS NOT STOPPED ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION, AND “DECAPITATION” STRIKES HAVE NOT FINISHED OFF AL QAEDA OR ISIS.

Given this abysmal record, why does anyone think that banning ivory could have a beneficial outcome? Remember that alcohol consumption rose during Prohibition, the War on Drugs has been an expensive failure, illegal immigration is governed more by economics

than guards and decapitation brings new leadership. Isn't doing the same thing but expecting a different result Einstein's classic definition of insanity?

THERE IS NO CREDIBLE EVIDENCE THAT BANNING TRADE IN IVORY WILL END POACHING

Could it be that no such evidence exists and that a ban on trade will inflate the price of ivory and actually increase the horrors of poaching?

IF POACHERS KILL 35,000 ELEPHANTS EACH YEAR, WHERE ARE THE PRODUCTS THAT GENERATE THE PROFIT TO PAY THE CRIMINAL GANGS FOR THE TUSKS THEY TAKE?

Killing 96 elephants a day, every day, would produce more than 300,000 kilos of tusks — the weight of two Victorian houses or five Atlantis space shuttles. That would be enough to create millions of ivory objects each year. Who is buying them, what merchants are selling them, and where are the inventory of raw tusks being stored? Could the 96 elephant deaths per day — a number relentlessly repeated by animal interventionist groups — be, in fact, flawed?

BANNING ALL USES OF IVORY PUTS OUR CULTURE IN JEOPARDY.

Ivory has been a repository of civilized history since before Biblical times. A huge collection of ivory objects in museums and private hands — as well as thousands of masterpiece paintings — will inevitably deteriorate and be

ruined if they cannot be properly repaired or restored with original materials when required.

SCIENTIFIC DEVELOPMENTS IN THE IDENTIFICATION OF IVORY HAVE BEEN IGNORED.

Recent advances in nondestructive, noninvasive and relatively inexpensive methods of identifying the age and type of ivory have been documented involving absorption/desorption, positron annihilation and spectrographic analytic techniques. More cooperation and encouragement is needed to bring this science into everyday use.

MANAGED CONSERVATION IS IMPORTANT TO THE WELL BEING OF AFRICAN WILDLIFE AND THE ECONOMIES OF AFRICAN NATIONS.

Caring for African resources is an African responsibility. How is it right, then, for Western countries to satisfy domestic political pressures by dictating how African nations deal with their wildlife resources? Has the U.S., for one, managed its own wildlife — from overabundant deer, to coyotes encroaching on suburban homes, to wild horse populations on range land — been above reproach?



THE IRRATIONAL ASSAULT ON IVORY TODAY

Godfrey Harris

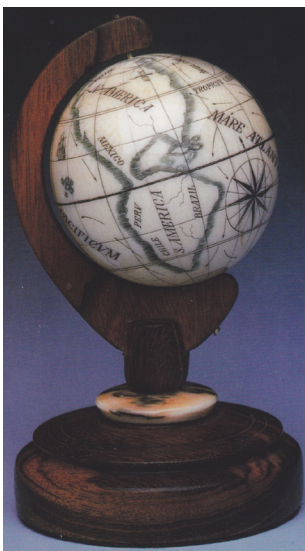
The current attack on all ivory objects is nothing more than a direct assault on our cultural heritage.

Banning all trade in ivory is no better than what the Taliban did to the Buddhist temples at Bamiyan, the Islamic State did to the ancient statues at Palmyra, or the Nazis did to the books burned in Berlin.

Each of these previous assaults have had some superficial justification — whether carried out in the name of God, in support of a holy writ, or to preserve societal order for one group or another.

The current blunt force ultimatum of the Wildlife Conservation Society is no different. It demands:

*Shut. Them.
Down. Legal
ivory markets
are a threat to el-
ephants.*



Where is the evidence for this statement? What is the connection between saving elephants and using extinct mammoth ivory? Won't ivory derived from abundant species satisfy some of the ivory demand and thus *save* endangered elephants?

By lumping *all* ivory as dangerous to *all* elephant populations, the unfettered ability to preserve objects will be lost to the detriment of the treasures of our cultural heritage.

How is this good? Ivory has been part of every major civilization since long before Biblical times and is one of the original recycled materials.

Do the nations at the CITES Conference of Parties 17 really want to obliterate a part of our common cultural heritage forever?



Do they want to ensure the ultimate destruction of all the great paintings of the last 500 years — the works of Da Vinci, Carravagio, Rembrandt, Manet, Renoir, and more — all of



whom used great quantities of ivory black pigment in their work that Picasso particularly welcomed as “deep and clear”?

Efforts to save elephant populations are absolutely necessary. But these efforts need not mirror the simplistic approach of the Wildlife Conservation Society. The Ivory Education Institute urges the delegates at CoP17 to adopt policies that —

- Develop techniques that permit regulated trade in ivory coming from nonendangered or extinct species; from animals dying of natural causes; from recycled ivory; from tusks arising out of approved cullings; and from all inventoried pre-1975 tusks in order to limit any incentive for a black market in ivory.
- Reflect the latest scientific advances in the age and identification of different types of ivory.
- Devise and sanction a market exchange that allows legal ivory to be bought and sold by an independent international agency with proceeds applied to improving managed conservation programs.

A BRIEF CULTURAL PRIMER ON IVORY

Godfrey Harris

After necessarily limited use of ivory in the early centuries of the Common Era, the first major wave of ivory came to Europe at the onset of the industrial revolution. Newly enriched entrepreneurs found themselves searching for ways to occupy their enforced leisure time. They settled on billiards — an activity that could keep them busy and satisfy their competitive instincts. Balls made from ivory had greater spring and added enormously to the game's excitement by rewarding those willing to take the risk of a banked or ricocheted shot.



The ivory needed for a billiard ball could only come from the solid one-third top of an elephant's tusk. Some of the rest was pulverized, charred and mixed with oil to become a lustrous black pigment used in nearly all the great masterpiece paintings from the 15th to the 20th century. The ivory scrap was also coveted by artisans creating handles, tools, jewelry, devotional objects, decorations, and much more for the emerging middle classes.



In the mid-19th century, ivory fulfilled a totally different need in the United States. It became an important part of the just developed, *upright* piano that helped change America. Because an ability to play the piano soon became as important to the marriage potential of daughters as the skills they evidenced in cooking, sewing and conversation, most families coveted one of these space-saving instruments in their parlors. The ivory keys lubricated and absorbed the perspiration from the fingertips of performers and enhanced their technique.



But piano keys as well as billiard balls showed a penchant for cracking and splitting in fast changing temperatures. The problem inspired the development of an artificial material that became the world's first plastic — celluloid. This man-made miracle material offered a good substitute for ivory. But it also offered entrepreneurs a lot more. Its great flexibility, unusual strength, and low cost inspired the creation and use of other plastic products.

After World War I, plastic came into wide use for a broad wide variety of consumer goods and significantly reduced the use of ivory. This continued in the United States and Europe until the late 1960s. Then, the feminist revolution as well as inflationary pressures brought women back into the workplace to fill professional positions. They wanted elegant, classic accessories to maintain their femininity.

Arbiters of fashion decreed that ivory jewelry could best answer the need. Soon large numbers of elephant herds in Africa came under pressure in the rush to supply all the brooches, bracelets, earrings, and other decorative items demanded by millions of modern professional women. Later, economic progress in East Asian countries added still more demand for ivory objects.



At the same time, populations in sub-Saharan Africa were expanding and began pushing against the great game preserves. The clash between humans and animals led to inevitable and significant losses to elephants. Western groups became alarmed but in their zeal to save elephants from poachers they did nothing to meet the needs of local communities who had to deal with the problems these animals caused.

As herds in some areas began to shrink, individual Western governments were urged to set a good example for Africa and East Asia by banning the import and export of all commer-

cial uses of ivory. But banning ivory has never made any sense to anyone with knowledge of other such attempts to change cultural history. Nevertheless, animal interventionist groups are determined to institute a worldwide ban on any type of commerce in any form of ivory of any age. No exceptions! Some countries and some groups are concerned that this approach is bound to fail.

One thing is certain. If a total ban on the trade and movement of ivory is enacted without any concomitant measures to modulate demand, a black market will inevitably arise, stimulating an increase in crime. Will more guns, helicopters and guard towers succeed in saving elephants or merely increase the value of ivory and stimulate more poaching? Consider the pickpockets who worked their trade among the crowds watching a public hanging of other pickpockets (see the two boys at the bottom right of the etching). This famously dramatizes what happens when the rewards of crime are more attractive to some than the fear of its consequences.



Godfrey Harris began his ivory collection at the age of 10 when he accompanied his father on an antique buying trip to London. His collection specializes in examples that show the uses of ivory for artistic, cultural, practical and scientific purposes. Harris has written more than 75 books, two on ivory. His latest book, Lobbycratic Governance — How to Limit the Power Technocrats and Lobbyists Wield Over Our Lives, discusses U.S. ivory policy as a case study. As a member of the International Ivory Society and Managing Director of the Ivory Education Institute, he has been actively involved in the politics of ivory since 2013.



IVORY EDUCATION INSTITUTE
DELEGATION TO THE
CONFERENCE OF PARTIES 17

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