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OPENING REMARKS:

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone. As a former Peace Corps volunteer myself in then-Zaire, it is a great honor for me to be able to just convene this event and to have you all here and to have an incredibly distinguished panel on this very important topic at a crucial time when, as we were discussing before, Congo hasn't quite gotten the press it has often deserved or required in the last few months with everything from the war in Lebanon this summer distracting attention to the ongoing crisis in Iraq.

My name is Mike O'Hanlon. I am going to moderate which really means try to get out of the way as fast as possible to give our distinguished presenters maximum time.

Ambassador Swing will speak first. He has only got about 45 minutes to be with us. He was extraordinarily kind to do this. He left Congo Saturday night. He has to be in New York for U.N. business, which after all is his employer and has some claim on his time, and needs to hear from him early this afternoon. So we will hear from him first. He will essentially give a keynote address.

As you all know, he is an extraordinarily distinguished diplomat who worked in the U.S. Foreign Service until his retirement in 2001, posted in five or six major African countries, spending time in Congo as well during that stretch. Upon his retirement, which lasted two months as I just learned, he immediately was summoned to go work in Western Sahara by the U.N. to be the Special Representative for the Secretary General there, and he has now been working in

the same kind of capacity in the Congo for three and a half years. So we will hear from him today.

After we hear his remarks which will last 20 or 25 minutes, you will have time to ask him questions directly, and we will have about 20 minutes for Q and A. Then I will introduce our panel consisting of Bill O'Neill, Susan Rice, and Anthony Gambino after that.

Without further ado, we are greatly honored, Ambassador Swing, to have you here. Thanks and we look forward to your remarks.

AMB. SWING: Good morning. Thank you very much, Michael. It is indeed a great honor for me to be here at Brookings. One doesn't get these invitations often, and I wanted to make sure that I took full advantage of it.

What a great pleasure and honor it is for me to be here with both my former boss, Susan Rice, and two former colleagues from the field: Bill O'Neill, we were together in Haiti, and of course, Tony Gambino, we have been together several times in former Zaire and now Congo.

I guess the good news for you is that my slide program is not going to work, so you just have to hear me. I normally have some animation with it, and I apologize. Let me go right to my remarks, and then I will take questions before I have to take off.

Four years ago, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was engulfed in what some came to call Africa's First World War. A lot of these phrases and statistics have become rather banal from overuse. But it is true; six foreign armies

and Congolese factions ravaged the country the size of Europe in the most deadly conflict since the Second World War. Nearly 4 million people died, 800,000 refugees were scattered the 9 neighboring countries, and some 3 million Congolese were internally displaced, and although many of them have come back, displacements continue. State services collapsed, and in an ironic and cruel twist of history, one of Africa's potentially richest countries became one of the world's poorest.

Today, the sad heritage of this silent war and the preceding years of chronic instability and corruption is still everywhere to be seen. An estimated 1,200 Congolese continue to die needlessly every day even now due to poverty, disease that is preventable, hunger, and violence including, I am sorry to say, continuing shocking levels of gender violence. In these unpromising circumstances, very few observers believed that the Congo, that perpetual heart of darkness, coming out of two wars over a period of five years, with virtually no roads, no history of democracy or multiparty elections in 40 years, no census in 20 years, no I.D. cards in memory, would ever be able to rise to the challenge of ending this conflict and holding its first democratic elections since independence in 1960.

But today, although there is a long road ahead, the country is full of hope and promise. There is a new spirit alive. Following a rather remarkable series of steps toward democracy, December 2005 saw the completion of a five-month process of registering 25 million out of an estimated 28 million eligible voters and the adoption in February of this year of a new constitution through a popular

referendum, a document that most had never seen and very few had ever read in this largely illiterate society. In the two-round election of July and October of this year, Congolese voters chose their leadership for the first time since independence 46 years ago in polls, with surprisingly few security incidents and declared free and fair by all international electoral observer missions, including those from the United States, the Carter Center, Europe, South Africa, and the Southern African Development Community.

The new National Assembly was inaugurated in September, 2006, and the first democratically elected President in the history of independent Congo, Joseph Kabila, was sworn in an inaugural ceremony on December 6th. The Provincial Assembly, shortly to be put in place, will in turn elect, in January, the Senators and the Governors and Deputy Governors. And so, the Congo now joins the majority of its nine neighbors that have held elections over the past three or four years.

The effects of the successful Congolese elections are already being felt in the Congo and throughout the Great Lakes Subregion. Only this past weekend in Nairobi, the Congo and its neighbors signed a “pact for security, stability, and development in the Great Lakes Region of Africa.” There are about 10 protocols in that particular pact -- one on non-aggression and mutual defense, another on illegal exploitation of natural resources, and others on genocide and sexual violence.

That is part one of my presentation. I would like to take it apart now and

look at some of the electoral ingredients that went into this election.

Obviously, the credit for the success of the elections lies first and overwhelmingly with the Congolese people. The Congolese people conducted themselves throughout with patience, courage, calm, great dignity, and steely determination. When the violence broke out on the 20th, 21st, and 22nd of August, it was confined totally to one district of Kinshasa. The rest of the town of seven or eight million people remained calm, and there was no disturbance elsewhere in the country. Their desire for change after four decades of dictatorship, corruption, chronic instability, and political drift punctuated by two deadly wars has been the main driving force of the electoral process. All of us who had the honor and privilege of witnessing this historic landmark have enormous admiration for the Congolese people in offering this lesson to the world; one senses among them a new sense of pride and refound dignity.

Credit also goes very significantly to the DRC's Independent Electoral Commission and its President, Abbé Malu-Malu. None of the members of that commission had ever voted. Starting from scratch and operating in a war-torn country with little to no infrastructure, poor communications, and limited transportation, it was the IEC, the Electoral Commission, that registered the 25 million voters, held the referendum and two combined elections; trained and managed 260,000 electoral workers, often in precarious security conditions. It delivered and recovered ballots to 50,000 polling stations across the country under tight deadlines, sometimes using dugout canoes, motorbikes, and bicycles to

transport the ballots. Despite criticism, pressure, and occasional threats from diverse quarters, the Electoral Commission was undaunted in carrying out its historic mission.

By way of contrast, there were 890 polling stations in Haiti's recent elections compared to 50,045 in the Congo. It took three helicopters to do the elections in Burundi, and we needed 60 in the Congo.

Credit also goes to the international community. Never in its history, has the DRC benefited from such sustained international support. An international coalition, an unlikely alliance, was forged to accompany the Congolese march to the polls. Five peace accords beginning with the Lusaka Agreement of July 1999, involving African countries, each accord bearing the name of an African city, more than 35 United Nations Security Council resolutions, South African, African Union, and Southern African Development Community involvement, a half billion dollars in international electoral funding, largely from the European Union and the United Nations peacekeeping budget, all contributed to the success. We should keep that \$500 million in perspective.

If you break it down per capita and the number of elections, it costs slightly more per capita than the elections in Haiti and one-third the cost of the elections in either Afghanistan or Liberia. A lot of money, but keep it in perspective.

The DRC is also host to the largest United Nations peacekeeping operation in history, known by its French acronym, MONUC, which has now lately been called Monique. While MONUC's air fleet of 100 aircraft is the largest in U.N.

peacekeeping history, as is its air safety record of 160,000 safe flying hours, MONUC's 17,000 Blue Helmets constitute the same size contingent as, earlier, the United Nations force in Sierra Leone, a country that is 1/24 the size of the Congo -- a lot of troops, a lot of ground to cover.

It should be noted that the Congolese elections are also the largest elections that the United Nations has ever sought to support in three ways -- the largest country, about the size of the United States east of the Mississippi; the largest electorate with 25 million, about 5 million more than the South African electorate; and the largest challenge, given the infrastructural and historical challenges that I mentioned earlier. In this regard, it is very important to point out that the United Nations at present is undertaking something in the Congo and the Sudan it has never done since peacekeeping began in 1948 formally; that is, to do peacekeeping and electoral support on a continent-size base with a major population—the Congo with 60 million and the Sudan with 40 million plus.

This brings me to my next point. How do you sustain such an operation? At a budget of a billion dollars a year, spending three million dollars a day, how do you sustain that kind of operation since it has never been done before?

Are member states of the U.N. prepared to sustain their commitments in such large countries sufficiently long to ensure that good elections produce longer term stability? People ask me often: What is the worst case scenario? For me, the worst case scenario is good elections, nothing changes.

Finally, the way ahead. Such tremendous achievements could be at risk

should the international community repeat some of its past record. While we have a relatively good record as the international community in post-conflict management leading to elections, we have sometimes neglected the importance of post-electoral support and management. Early disengagement following elections in Haiti and Timor Leste and elsewhere have resulted in the resumption of conflict a few years later, requiring new, more complex, and costlier international re-intervention. In Sierra Leone, Bosnia, and other countries, however, the international community stayed the course after elections, and today those countries are on a much better track toward permanent peace and stability. The challenges ahead therefore may be greater than those of the just completed transition.

These achievements could also be at risk if the DRC itself fails to learn from its past. Poorly functioning institutions, entrenched corruption, chronic economic mismanagement, repression of opposition, and ill disciplined and uncontrolled security forces led to the country's collapse earlier. Today, democratic elections have restored the legitimacy of the government, and there is hope that the opposition will enjoy political space. But the DRC's newly elected government will have to develop the country's economy and ensure that its vast riches benefit its population. Building a disciplined military and police will also be critical for stability and the rule of law.

The DRC, as you know, is a latent economic powerhouse. It has an estimated 10 percent of the world's hydroelectric potential, more than 50 percent

of all the remaining tropical hardwoods, and it is a cornucopia of mineral resources including diamonds, gold, copper, cobalt, coltan, cassiterite, and much more. With all these riches, the DRC need not depend for long on international aid if it seizes this chance to consolidate peace and start developing its economic potential.

A few concluding words: The DRC is the natural, as yet missing, pole of stability in the historically troubled region of Central Africa. We may not have noticed it, but this is the region, perhaps in the entire world, in which there have been the most number of peacekeeping missions, a total of 7 peacekeeping operations in 10 countries since that wave of independence in 1960.

Those of us on the ground therefore -- and I admit to great parochialism starting my seventh year in the Congo -- we view the just concluded Congolese elections to be the most important potentially for Africa since the 1994 elections in South Africa.

Why do I say that? There is a range of reasons, but I would single out three. First of all, as I stated in my opening remarks, Congo is one of the world's greatest humanitarian tragedies; secondly, it has enormous economic potential which I just mentioned; and thirdly, perhaps most importantly, the Congo is the key to stability in the only region of Africa that has never had a center of political gravity.

If Africa's worst conflict can be overcome, then so can other conflicts. For this to happen, however, the international community should not abandon the

DRC prematurely, but instead build a partnership with the newly elected authorities, consolidate peace, and promote economic recovery. The people of the Congo and Africa, in our view, deserve nothing less.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you very much, Ambassador.

We would like to please open it up to questions.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador. As a person from Congo, I want to congratulate you for what you have done in our country sincerely.

But by the same token, I am so troubled that in your speech you didn't talk about the conflict taking place in North Kivu. As you recall, the last time when you were here I asked of you that same question, and I warned you that what is going to happen, in effect, is happening. You have around 50,000 people running in the hilltop in the lower Kivu and the fighting going on.

Are you aware if the political parties that are requesting the problem find a political solution, and also the chief tribes in the North Kivu, all of them are asking that this problem find a political solution? What do you think about it, and what are you going to do about it?

AMB. SWING: Thank you very much. That is a very good question because there has been renewed fighting in North Kivu in the past few weeks, and it is of great concern. There was a confrontation between the 81st and the 83rd Brigade on the one hand and the other forces of the FARDC, the Congolese

Army, that displaced thousands of people who took to the road to go to Goma. Our North Kivu Brigade -- I am talking about the U.N.'s North Kivu Brigade -- an Indian brigade, helped stabilize the situation, helped get the people back home, and helped stop the hemorrhaging there. It broke out again after that, and it is this to which you are referring. There is still considerable instability there.

Several things I would say to this: First of all, the elections have already begun to change the situation in those conflict areas. People there, including the forces that you are speaking about, have understood it is a new chapter now. They are all looking for a way out of this. President Kabila himself was in Goma a few days after his inauguration. There are discussions that are ongoing between a government delegation and the forces that are loyal to Laurent Nkunda. The key to the issue ultimately is to remove the cause around which he is able to rally people, and that is right now a work in progress.

But I think there is a sense that there is a holistic approach to it now, combining military pressure with political discussion, and I am confident based on that, that a solution will be found and it won't be long in coming about.

QUESTIONER: Thank you, Mr. Ambassador.

I applaud the job you did in my country, but I say the Congolese drama is for more than one century. I don't want to open another debate in the debate we have now, but I have two main concerns.

My first concern is that in talking to an American Ambassador, I think that the main concern of the American policy is the fight against terrorism. And since

then, we heard that they call it Zionization, in my country, economic Zionization. The Congolese economy is mainly controlled by the Hezbollah, the Lebanese people, and I think you will find them in most of the Congolese country. Those guys are working out of the international financial and economic network. They are laundering the narco-dollar, working in the Congolese economy, trying to have the diamonds or different minerals and Congolese wealth. I don't know.

At that time, President Bush and the Congress and the American people are focused on the fight against the terrorists. We are seeing -- and I have here some newspapers, the *Times* of London and one from Belgium -- they made some research and they have information about the way those terrorists, mainly the Hezbollah, are taking the Congolese uranium. Today, as we are talking here, there are Congolese planes that are blocked in one African country with uranium. We are afraid that this uranium can serve to make a dirty bomb and maybe make a catastrophe in America. So it seems to us that the election process in my country did not take into account that drama that is to happen about the terrorist activity in my country. That is the first.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, please be quick because we have just a few minutes.

QUESTIONER: I will finish with the second point.

The Ambassador talked about the election in South Africa in 1994. Those elections could have been earlier than 1994. If it didn't happen, it was because Mandela refused. He was the main political leader in South Africa. He refused to

be part of an election that was not on the way that the people of South Africa wanted.

It seems to me that was the same in my county with Tshekedi as the Congolese Mandela. He was not part of these elections. So it seems to me that the future of this process can be put in -- sorry about my poor English -- can be, let us say, will not succeed because Tshekedi and the majority of the people who are with him are out of the process.

Thank you.

AMB. SWING: Let me respond very briefly on this. Obviously, one always has to be concerned about anything that might lead to terrorism. I am not aware of the matters that you are putting before the audience this morning.

The important thing, it seems to me, is first of all the elections were the essential first step. The real hard work begins now. Part of that has to do with making sure that the natural resources of the country are used for the good of the people. That means transparency in contracts, et cetera, so that people know what is being done with the riches of the country. That is the key thing, and for that, of course, we have to maintain the engagement of the Bretton Woods institutions. I can tell you that the World Bank and the IMF are still very much engaged. Although they for the moment have suspended their budget support, they are very much engaged. We expect further activity on their part very soon in the new year. That is the key thing, to make sure that everything is above board with the people, so that they know that their wealth is being used in their interest.

I, obviously, don't want to get back into the history of the South African elections. I am just delighted they produced a new South Africa, and we are now into the twelfth year of the new democracy in South Africa.

I can tell you this: *[French]* You can choose to exclude yourself, and the message of the Security Council was that no one should be excluded and no one should exclude themselves in the process, but these are political decisions that political leaders make.

I will tell you one thing, though, that it is very interesting that in the National Assembly, people say it is such a complicated electoral law, it will never work. You are going to have a fairly clear and stable majority. You are going to have an opposition that is large enough to exercise its function of control and checks and balances. Thirdly and most interesting is that every party that signed the Pretoria and Sun City Agreements and chose to take part in these elections has seats in that Parliament. So there is a large degree of political inclusivity built into the Parliament.

Next question?

MR. O'HANLON: Please, here in the front; actually, why don't we have two questions at the same time? So we will go with you and then sir right behind.

QUESTIONER: Welcome to Washington, D.C., Mr. Ambassador, and congratulations on these elections in the DRC. My question is two-fold.

We have seen that impunity and human rights abuses have been part of the problems in the Congo. With the elections, we have seen the legitimization of

people who are guilty of these human rights abuses moving forward. What is in place or what has the international community done?

In a way, I am addressing this question to you because MONUC represents that by default. What is in place or what are you doing to help the government resist the temptation to continue with this culture?

Particularly we have seen the arrest of Marie-Thérèse Nlandu Mpolo, going from a Presidential candidate to being arrested. Amnesty has adopted her as a person of conscience. Her case is still murky, and nobody seems to know what is happening. Would you please enlighten us?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Then Professor Kabita (?) who was our professor 25 plus years ago in Peace Corps in Bukavu, so we are delighted to see you here.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. Sir, I would like to congratulate for the elections as you said. I have two questions.

The first one is about what you said -- the key to the present problem in Kivu, in North Kivu is to remove the cause. I would like you to elaborate on that cause.

My second question is you did not mention at all one of the biggest problems in North Kivu which is the Interahamwe that have been there for years, involved in the two governments that happened in the past.

Thank you.

AMB. SWING: Since it is fresh, let me take the second question first.

When I referred to removing the cause, basically I was talking about the importance of imbedding in the new Congo the whole issue of protection of minority rights, and that I think is something that the government has taken very seriously. I think that the President in his inaugural speech laid out a roadmap which includes this, and I think you will see action in that regard very shortly.

On the FDLR, thank you very much for reminding me that I left out a major question because, as you know, the Interahamwe and the former Rwandan Army, the ex-FAR continue to be very present in both of the Kivus and continue to be a menace to the population. The regional understanding of that issue has evolved considerably over the last couple of years where everybody agrees that that is the particular menace, much less so than being a menace to the governments on the other side of the border.

We have, through our voluntary program, been able to repatriate 14,000 of the armed elements in the Kivus; of those, about two-thirds are the FDLR, the ex-FAR Interahamwe. We estimate that there are somewhere between 9,000 and 10,000 left from that original group. We have for some time now, and if I had my slideshow here, I would show you that we had a quantum leap. From December of 2003 until April of 2004, we quadrupled the number of FDLRs sent back home.

By the way, there is a very good record. The Rwandan World Bank record on repatriating these people is very good. They go into a World Bank finance program, and then each one of them goes back to their particular hill, their *colline*,

and starts a new life. That has worked very well and has encouraged others to go back.

But we are now down to the hardcore because many of these commanders are going to have to go to Arusha to stand trial before the ICTR. Obviously, they are resisting, and they are holding the others captive because as long as they have a lot of people around them, they are more protected. So people put their lives often at stake to enter MONUC's voluntary program. The result has been that we have had to add a lot of military pressure, and we have engaged in a number of battles. Last year at this time, we were engaged with the Congolese forces in a battle that killed more than 100. In this case, it was Ugandans, the 80th NALU groups that are still there.

So it is a lot to be done, but it is going to have to be again an approach that involves a program whereby we can secure them and transport them back to the reception centers in Rwanda. There are five of these now, paid for by the World Bank. But it has to be combined with constantly keeping them under pressure.

Of course, we now have homogenous brigades in both North and South Kivu; and in North Kivu and Pakistani South Kivu, we had a very small presence before; and there are now three Congolese army brigades in each of the Kivus and Ituri District. There is a lot going on there, more than perhaps meets the eye, but it remains, as you suggest, a major challenge for the future.

The earlier question and you both congratulated me. That is very generous of you. Thank you very much. We had an exceedingly modest role in all of this.

It was the Congolese people and the Independent Electoral Commission that deserve all the credit. We feel particularly honored and privileged to have been part of it, more as observers and with some technical assistance that we tried to provide.

The question of the human rights and the end to impunity was a major plank in the speech, in the roadmap laid out by President Kabila on the 6th of December. That is something the international community is exceedingly interested in, that along with reconciliation, justice has to come also. We have to understand, as you will better than others, that changing a political culture doesn't happen overnight. You make the first steps, and you continue steps down that road, but the transmutation of political culture is not an easy one and there is a lot of work to be done.

MR. O'HANLON: In the back in the purple shirt, please, right there, sir.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much. I do agree with you when you say that the DRC should not be left alone; it should be assisted for it to recover. But amid exploiting opportunities in the Congo right from the Administration itself to policing such a large country, I find that the results are very dim. What do you see? What could be done to quicken the process of recovery, such that even the neighboring countries could see a breakthrough?

As someone mentioned, some parts of Eastern Congo are already taken over by the Administration, by the foreigners, by the Interahamwe, and others like those. Is it very easy for a country like that, like Congo? What is the

international community trying to do so as to alleviate such problems of the Interahamwe which were aiding and helping the elections take place in the sovereign country of Congo?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Go ahead with that one, and we will do one last wrap-up with a couple more.

AMB. SWING: The evolution in thinking in Central Africa, I think, is quite evident over the last three years of four. I think there is a sense, certainly at the conference that we all attended in Nairobi over the weekend, that countries have increasingly recognized that their own national interests are best served by having a stable Congo with legitimate institutions, so that whatever else they may have thought before, that certainly is the current understanding and mind set, I think, of the leadership in those countries, and that is a very positive and significant evolution in approach and in thinking.

The FDLR, there were accusations that they may have at some point gotten involved in the elections. We are not aware of it. In any case, you have all of the observer mission reports to read. They deal with all kinds of issues such as this, and they came out with all but the same conclusion that while there were irregularities -- and of course I come from a part of the country that has had a few of their own. I am heading down to Miami shortly.

There were irregularities, but nothing that anyone would consider approaching systematic fraud. So I think that chapter has been written.

MR. O'HANLON: We will wrap up with these two right here in the front in the second row.

Apologies to the rest of you; I hope you can figure out a way to transform your question into one for the other panelists later on.

QUESTIONER: Ben Amachuchu (?) from Congo Peace Initiatives; thank you, Mr. Ambassador. I think you have received several times for the last two years, letters written by this organization sent through the U.N.

My question goes back to North Kivu because that is the area that started the two wars in 1998 and 1996. To be very specific because Kabita (?) asked a question that I didn't hear you answer, the process in Congo went well with the exception that 90 percent of Congolese Tutsis that have been in Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi have never been repatriated. As a result of that, we only have one member of Parliament who has been elected. One of the reasons that they are fighting in Eastern Congo is because many people feel like they have been excluded. What is the CEMAC going to do about it?

Two, there are allegations that are talking about this political problem that it is getting ethnic problems especially because between Kinshasa and the North Kivu governor, they are inciting violence trying to divide Hutus and Tutsis. If you ask very closely, you will find out that those who are fighting are two-fold, Congolese Hutus and Tutsis on one hand on the side of Laurent Nkunda and on the other hand with the government brigade. Would you please elaborate on that issue?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: The man with the last question, please.

QUESTIONER: Just the Bakunda (?) as well because the question will be we have seen in the BBC show, Kagame saying that he is the one supporting Nkunda in the Congo to make trouble, the same thing, because the war is starting in the Kivu and with Nkunda there and everybody fighting over there, we just want to know what the Ambassador will say about Kagame supporting military Nkunda to make trouble in the Congo.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: As you promised, yours is short and I hope also maybe relevant to the same general topic, we will throw it in.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. I am Faust Paria (?), former Human Rights Coordinator under Kingoma. My concern is about the fact that Congolese people are not paid salaries, especially the military. I don't know if Mr. Kabila has said something about it.

Thank you.

AMB. SWING: I will take them in reverse order here. First of all, I will take the lady's question first.

Relations have improved significantly in the subregion of the Great Lakes, and they have been particularly positive throughout the whole electoral campaign and voting period. We expect that to continue because of the reason that I mentioned, that people see a real interest now in supporting a new Congo which is

characterized by legitimate institutions, in other words, elected people representing the people and the ensuing stability that that will bring. So I think that all of these questions that have had to wait and didn't want to answer during the transition, this is another reason to stay the course. We shouldn't make a confusion between the end of the transition which ended with the inauguration of the President on December 6 and the end of the tasks of the transition, the work of the transition which is all laid in those peace accords, and a good deal of it hasn't been done.

The new army doesn't exist yet. Yes, they have trained 15 out of the 18 brigades that they wanted to train, but that goes to the further question about the salaries, if I might just link the two. They still are not adequately supported by the government or the international community, and we are in kind of a vicious circle now where the longer they are not supported, the more they engage in human rights violations and the more difficulty that makes for us to get international support for the troops. There is in place at present no administrative structure that will guarantee the regular payment of salaries and provision of food for the troops, which you can see right away the link between that and some of the violations that we are getting.

They have inadequate ammunition. We do joint military operations with the FARDC. We have been able to get enough money from New York to help them out here and there. So when we do an operation, obviously, you must have ammunition, you must have food, and have a number of other things, have the

vehicles. We do what we can, but that is a stop-gap measure. Clearly, one of the major, perhaps the major priority in the new period ahead is to try to finish the hard work of building an army.

I know I have a couple of military colleagues here, disguised in civilian dress, but they are here, and they will tell you that it is a medium to long-term process to build an army or a police force. Both of those are works in progress. They have made commendable progress, but there is a good long way to go down that road.

The other question going back to North Kivu, again, I think as I have said to you, I think the calculations have all changed. The elections are changing everything. The three major militia groups that are left in Ituri, threatening the population -- you have a group of the FRPI of a fellow named Cobra Matata; you have the FNI of Peter Karim; you have the MRC of Mathieu Ngoudjolo. All three of those men have now entered a demobilization and community reinsertion project because they are trying to get onto this fast moving train, trying to still get on it. So that is changing people's attitudes. They know now there is a full-fledged elected government in place, no longer a transitional government. I think that will change many of the things, including in North Kivu.

Now, I am, of course, a congenital optimist, so you have to reduce what I am saying by about 50 percent, but I think they will certainly get there with the support of the international community.

Unfortunately, CEMAC no longer exists. We haven't done the funeral, but

basically it went out of existence when President Kabila was sworn on the 6th of December because we were a transitional institution under Annex IV to the peace agreement, but we are no longer in existence. One of the issues that the international community faces is how does the international community organize itself so that it might be of maximum support to these new institutions who will need a lot of assistance.

I think I will let it go with that and wrap it up here because –

SPEAKER: (off mike)

AMB. SWING: I am not aware of that. We think right now that the problem is getting these hardline commanders to let these people go back, who desperately want to go home. They have been well treated. Some of them have actually been taken. If you take General Paul Wakasugi who went back in November of 2004, they are back in the army now. So there is a future for them there, and they would like to go back but they are being held hostage by the hardline commanders who have to go to trial on charges that we are all aware of.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you all for excellent questions, and thank you, Ambassador Swing.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: I would like now to move to the second phase of our event. By the way, let me thank please the Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement for all the work people have done to organize this event, especially Molly Browning and Steve Most. We are very grateful.

I am also grateful to the three panelists here, who are about to speak.

We are going to begin with Susan Rice who many of you know as the former Assistant Secretary of State in the Clinton Administration for African Affairs. I can assure she is also a delightful and wonderful colleague at Brookings and also an outstanding foreign policy analyst who has done many other things here at Brookings, including being Deputy Foreign Policy Advisor to the Kerry-Edwards Campaign. That was not actually formally at Brookings but during the time she has been here.

In any event, we are delighted to have Susan. She will speak first, and then we will go to Tony Gambino and Bill O'Neill.

Thank you, Susan.

MS. RICE: Thank you, Mike.

Thank you, Ambassador Swing.

I actually wanted to begin by congratulating and thanking Mike O'Hanlon whose idea this event was. Mike mentioned at the outset of this comments that he served in the Peace Corps in Zaire, but that only reveals a very small part of his enduring passion for the Congo. One of the great services he brings us as his colleagues at Brookings is a real commitment to see the issues of Central Africa not fall off the radar screen in an institution that doesn't have a formal sustained program on Africa.

Mike, you have done us all a great service, and we are all grateful.

I am particularly please to see so many friends and former colleagues here.

It is a worthy event to bring us all together.

Ambassador Swing has left, but I would be remiss if I just didn't express my personal admiration for Ambassador Swing's decades of service to the United States and now to the international community on behalf of the U.N. He is one of the finest Foreign Service Officers that our system has ever produced. He served our country with extreme distinction in a number of places but most recently, very importantly, as our Ambassador in Congo and in Haiti and now back with the United Nations. While you all did a good job of asking him important and tough questions, I just want to underscore what I think many of us feel, which is a great deal of gratitude to him for his extraordinary service.

Let me just briefly share with you some broad-brush thoughts about the challenges ahead. I think Ambassador Swing did an excellent of laying out what is obviously in many respects perhaps the greatest post-conflict challenge that certainly the United Nations and the international community have faced in any context anywhere. It goes without saying, and he went through the stakes at hand, but I just, without repeating what he said, underscore a few points about what we all have at stake in Congo.

Clearly, the region has an enormous amount at stake with nine countries bordering Congo and its 16 million people and Congo having been, as he suggested, really a vacuum in a region that has lacked an anchor state to pull it all together. Yet, as much as the people of Congo and the countries in the region have at stake in the future of this transition process, we here in Washington and

elsewhere in the international community should not for a second view the circumstances in the Congo as being merely the problem of the people of that region. It is our concern in many important ways as well.

First of all, by almost any measure, Congo is one of the two or three weakest states on the planet and weak in a way that has potential ramifications for us in the United States and other countries far afield. When you have an economy that is in the tank, when you have per capita GDP one of the lowest on the planet, persistent conflict in a country, and a government that has been unable to govern effectively, to secure its population, to secure its borders, to provide for the basic human needs of its people, you have a circumstance that is, first and foremost, of great risk to the people who live there but also of great risk to those farther afield because what happens in a country as vast and as strategically situated as Congo matters a great deal for those of us back here. Whether we are worried about precious minerals that have applications in mass destruction which are present in large quantities in Congo, whether we worry about the potential for Congo like other parts of the world to become training bases and staging bases for terrorist groups or criminal organizations, or perhaps more pressingly whether we worry about the potential for disease of various sorts to arise undetected and spread beyond borders, Congo is relevant in all of those respects. Finally and I would argue perhaps in the long term most importantly, Congo is one of the lungs of the planet with its extraordinary forest cover, its biodiversity, and its critical importance as look to deal with the problems that we can all feel today on

December 18th in Washington, D.C., as it is approaching 70 degrees.

So for all of those reasons, we have a great stake in what happens in the Congo, and yet as we review the bidding as to the extent of the international community and the United States engagement in this process going forward, I am not left with the confidence I would like to feel about the attention and support that will be devoted to Congo now that the elections are over. We, as the Ambassador said, absolutely must break the international community's tradition of neglect of post-election circumstances. I think in the case of Congo, this is a particular challenge. We have a transition at the United Nations where Kofi Annan is stepping down and a new Secretary General Ban Ki Moon will take over, and he has many, many challenges on his plate but not the experience and the familiarity and perhaps the personal commitment that Secretary General Annan had to the Congo and to the issues of Central Africa. I frankly worry that what one would have in any case with a new Secretary General, a steep learning curve, this learning curve is steeper for Ban Ki Moon in Africa and it is steeper still when you consider the many challenges on his plate from North Korea to Iran to the many issues of Africa.

Moreover, here in Washington, we face our own challenges. We have a government that is profoundly distracted and consumed by the debacle in Iraq. We have a lame-duck President whose will and ability to continue to remain active on issues beyond Iraq is questionable at best, and we have a new Congress whose interest and attention to these issues, I think, remains a big question mark.

And so, we are not well positioned to give this issue the attention it deserves, not to mention the other challenges on our plate in the same region such as the genocide in Darfur and very worryingly the brewing crisis in Somalia.

What are our imperatives going forward? I think there are several. First of all, we have to recognize and not lose sight of the enormous fragility of the situation in the Congo. We have learned from other post-conflict situations that the risk of conflict resuming is extremely high at least for a period of five years after a conflict has ended. I think frankly we can debate when to date the end of the conflict in the Congo. I personally would not date it any earlier than last month when the elections were held. We can still argue, as some of you have, the conflict continues critically in many parts of the country. And so, we have a high risk of conflict resumption.

There is a great deal of research that documents very convincingly that countries that have persistent and steady low GDP capita are at extremely high risk of conflict relative to other countries. A country with GDP per capita of \$250 a year, which is about where Congo is in GNI, terms has a risk of conflict over a five-year period, and this is not coming out of conflict where the risk is higher; this is at steady state of 15 percent over a five-year period. A country that achieves GDP per capita of \$1,500 a year faces a conflict risk of roughly 1 percent. So there is an enormous built-in challenge here which is at least in part economic in its nature. When you add to that Congo's history, the risk is even greater.

Of course, the fragility is in large part a function of the way the elections came out, the fact that Bemba has a strong following in large parts of the country, that geographically and otherwise, the country remains divided. The issue of Congo's neighbors which came up in the earlier discussion, I think, remains of concern despite the encouraging recent progress that Ambassador Swing pointed out. I think also, critically, we are obviously dealing with a country with no tradition of democracy and no democratic institutions.

The second imperative, beyond recognizing just how fragile the situation is, is learning the lessons of other post-conflict situations. Ambassador Swing mentioned a couple of these. But we have made the mistake again and again, we the international community, of pulling out peacekeeping forces almost as soon as elections have been completed. While that is not an immediate risk in the case of the Congo, I think if we don't recognize that the security challenges and the vacuum that MONUC has begun to fill will endure for years to come, we will be consigning Congo to a repeat of recent history.

Obviously, it takes two to tango. The government of Congo has to be willing to accept and embrace a continued international security presence, and the international community has to be willing to continue to invest in that presence. I don't think we can take that willingness on either side for granted.

Others will talk more about this, but the humanitarian imperatives in Congo are urgent. While we in the United States tend to do a better job of providing emergency humanitarian assistance and food aid than we do other forms of

assistance, the large appeal for Congo remains grossly under-funded, and this is also of concern.

We need to integrate the army in a genuine fashion and train it. While a lot of lip service has been given to that imperative, very little has been done practically either by the government or by friendly partners to bring that to fruition.

Secondly within the lessons learned category is a lesson about how we delivery post-conflict assistance. Our tendency in the international community is to frontload the aid. As soon as a transition is underway, we flood the country for a year or two with aid, and then we forget about it by year five. Well, Paul Collier and others who have done very important research on this subject have found that tends to be a mistake; that aid ought to peak really at year five in a post-conflict situation; that in the meantime, the humanitarian assistance, the peacekeeping assistance is critical and capacity-building is critical, so that you build at the institutional and the human level, the skills and the wherewithal to absorb and utilize that aid effectively; that we must have a far longer term vision of the amount and the sustainability of assistance as we ramp up to five years and then need to keep it at a sustained level thereafter. I hope that is not something we lose sight of in this incredibly complex situation of Congo.

Thirdly, the economy, we haven't a great deal of discussion about that thus far this morning, but in many ways the adage that was used in our electoral context back in 1992 that "It is the economy, stupid," applies to a substantial

extent in the context of Congo. While growth has achieved 6 plus percent over the last couple of years and projections are that might continue, that growth has been very inequitably distributed. It hasn't redounded to the benefit of the people in any meaningful way. There are huge needs at the human level. Yet at the fiscal level, the election year has led to just massive spending, fiscal profligacy inflation rising, the IMF program falling apart, and the fundamentals that are essential for Congo getting its institutional act together, being able to sustain GDP growth, and link it to the real needs of the people is a great question mark.

One of the great challenges for the international community is how it both helps Congo as it goes through this transition to make it sustainable, to provide something of a democracy dividend to the people who have suffered so long and deserve this so badly, and yet not at the same time encourage the government to continue with the kinds of bankrupt fiscal and monetary policies that it has pursued over the course of the last year in the run-up to the elections. That is going to be a major challenge, and I hope again that we are up to it.

Finally, I think it is critical that we here in Washington pay close attention to our own support for Congo. The President's budget will be submitted to Congress in early February, and I hope you all will do what I intend to do which is to turn quite quickly to the part that tells us what the Administration intends to do with respect to Congo. Congo, if past is prologue, is not well situated to do well in this kind of budget process. It is not a millennium challenge country; it is not a recipient of major PEPFAR dollars, and it is not what some in this town

would readily see as the United States' problem, i.e., it is not Liberia; it is not Iraq; it is not Afghanistan. It is in some ways in this town, an orphan, and that is a huge problem. We ought to hope for a budget request that recognizes the stakes we all have in Congo's transition, in Congo's success.

We have seen aggregate aid levels to Africa rise, but a great deal of that has been in the form of emergency humanitarian assistance and food aid and PEPFAR and the MC on the other hand. What has been lost are countries in the middle, countries that are struggling, countries that are weak or countries like Congo that are all of the above. And so, what is in that request and how Congress responds to that request, I think will be telling indicators of whether the United States is positioned to be a strong and constructive partner for Congo as it works its way through this critical period.

Thank you, Mike.

MR. O'HANLON: Thanks, Susan, for an excellent discussion and also for a very concrete question to leave us with as get focused on the next few weeks in the U.S. process and more broadly in the international effort.

We have now got my good friend, Tony Gambino, who I have been honored to know for 25 years. He was always sort of a big brother to me on all things having to do with Africa policy. He was a Peace Corps volunteer in Zaire back in the late seventies, early eighties. He had a number of jobs thereafter, including on the Hunger Committee on Capitol Hill, a policy director of InterAction, working in AID including the AID Administrator in Congo this

decade, and has also been involved in the election process the last few months with the Carter Center, and has finally been teaching at Princeton on this topic as well.

So, we are just delighted to have you here, Tony, and look forward to your remarks as well.

MR. GAMBINO: Thank you very much, Mike.

I, too, am going to focus on what the international community can do to help the Congolese in this critical time to move forward, and I am really happy to do that since I believe, as Ambassador Swing and Susan Rice clearly do, that the international community must continue to play a major role for this nascent, extremely fragile democratic process to succeed.

As Mike said, I did spend some weeks in the area around Goma and Eastern Congo that was subject to so many questions to Ambassador Swing as an election observer during the first round of Presidential elections which also included elections for the National Assembly. Those were held on July 30th. I will tell you that our Carter Center team arrived in Goma a week before the elections, and we traveled throughout the southern part of North Kivu Province, the area where General Nkunda and other rebel groups are active. Prior to election day, everywhere we went, we found both great enthusiasm for the elections mixed with equally great fear of violence on election day. When we traveled to some areas outside of Goma where rebel groups were active, the trip was considered dangerous enough that MONUC provided us with a military escort.

So what happened on election day? The day itself dawned calm and beautiful, and that is a perfect characterization for what happened that day. It was entirely calm, no incidents of violence whatsoever, in what many questioners correctly suggested is an extremely volatile subregion of the Congo.

Why was election day so calm? Ambassador Swing was overly modest in his comments because the central reason undoubtedly was the presence of MONUC armed forces. It is unthinkable that that part of North Kivu would have stayed so perfectly calm otherwise. With the security provided by MONUC, Congolese voted in massive numbers, over 90 percent and upwards in some of the areas where we were.

The general view of those in the international community engaged in the Congo was that the elections had to succeed. To that end, as was detailed in Ambassador Swing's presentation, enormous resources were provided, and these elections have succeeded.

But I want to talk more about the dangerous negative side of the Congo. I want to talk about many of the same areas that Ambassador Swing and Susan Rice named, but I want to take it down to some specifics. I want to talk about six key danger points.

Number one, security sector reform to date has been a failure. The Congolese Army is divided, ineffective, and feckless. Some of the most senior military officers, men like the Commander of the Air Force, John Numbi, and the Inspector General of the Armed Forces, General Ulenga (?), are brutal, violent,

and deeply corrupt. They do not believe in democracy. They believe in personal enrichment and advances. And I have named men who come from President Kabila's camp. Other spoilers come from myriad other factions. We have already heard about the Eastern Congo. It also has warlords. The associated process of Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration, DDR, has proceeded at best fitfully.

Number two, impunity still goes almost entirely unpunished, and it is worse than that. Armed violence is too often the route to riches and power. Thomas Lubanga, one of the worst thugs from Ituri now is in jail in the Hague -- that is good news -- but other thugs from Ituri about as bad as Lubanga aren't in jail anywhere. No; they are in the new Congolese Parliament. Other Ituri thugs, some of them mentioned by Ambassador Swing, have been integrated -- and I use that term very loosely -- into the Congolese Army. No other high ranking person other than Lubanga has been brought to justice.

That leads to my third point. Justice is rarely seen at any level in the Congo. One could discuss this at great length. I will not. It would take up too much time.

Number four, as both Ambassador Swing and Susan Rice said, corruption is rampant, and I would underscore the worst corruption is found, as a recent study unsurprisingly found, around President Kabila himself. Some of the President's most trusted advisors are recognized as among the most cynically corrupt.

Number five, social service provision -- I will focus on education and

health -- is in miserable shape. Some progress has been made in the health sector, but the education system is in full collapse. While I was Mission Director at USAID, we estimated that in rural areas where two-thirds of the Congolese live, maybe 5 percent of the girls, a little higher for boys, not much, but 5 percent of the girls finish enough primary school to be functionally literate and numerate, 5 percent. The Congo cannot move forward towards long-term broad-based sustainable economic development with an uneducated population.

Sixth and finally, although the Congolese economy has begun to grow, as Susan suggested and I completely agree with her point, this development has proceeded very unevenly. The Congo is probably the leading example in Africa, if not the world, of what is called the resource curse. I would say actually its per capita income today is as low as maybe \$75 to \$80. The temptation now is to concentrate development efforts overwhelmingly on the minerals and timber that international companies so desperately want to exploit, ignoring the desperate needs of most Congolese.

A terrifying list of problem; what to do? As Ambassador Swing said, President Kabila gave a stirring inaugural address. He said very good things. But were those words heartfelt, were they rhetorical, or were they a slap to the Congolese people and the international delegations attending his inauguration?

Well, let us look at President Kabila's record. The Congolese Government has done many good things since he became President in January, 2001, but I think after his five years in power, one has to conclude that his record so far is

extremely mixed. On the one hand, very positive in his commitment first to end the war and to begin a transition and then to make the transition succeed, these are tremendous accomplishments, and President Kabila gets much of the credit for helping to bring those about.

But his record is much less positive in actions taken or not taken to reform the Army and make DDR work, to fight corruption and improve governance, to promote broad-based economic development, to strengthen the justice system, to improve social services.

That list of negatives then provides the focus and agenda for international action. In my view, very much at the top of the list, the spoilers, particularly those near the center of power, people like Numbi and Ulenga (?), must be, at the very least, marginalized. These men and others like them arguably belong in prison for their various crimes, but at the minimum they have to be moved to the margins. So, first and foremost, deal with the spoilers.

Second, as has been said, the international community must refocus its energies on security sector reform and DDR. The Congo needs a small, reasonably effective army and effective police. It has neither right now. MONUC is essential in working with the Congolese to meet these benchmarks. I noted with great pleasure that U.N. Under Secretary Guehenno said the other day that MONUC needs to stay in the Congo for another three years. That makes sense.

If the issues I referred to are not addressed successfully prior to the

departure of MONUC, the likelihood that this transition to democracy will fail is extremely high. I really think people need to take to heart the points that Susan made about the five years after a transition. This transition will fail if some of these things are not accomplished over the next few years.

What about the other major problems? I could make a lot of points, but I want to offer one suggestion relating to the public sector and it has to do with salaries. I was glad to hear a question about that. The public sector in the Congo today is bloated, horribly inefficient, and thoroughly corrupt. The Congolese Government, as a top priority, has to come up with a new framework relating both to the size of the public sector and the salary structure for employees from civil servants at the Ministry of Finance to primary school teachers. Donors should offer to help the Congolese Government with public sector reform as long as the government takes serious steps to rationalize its size, shape, and functions.

I want to be clear that the calculation of this new framework in the first instance should be based on meeting the Millennium Development Goals. The Congo is far from meeting those goals by 2015, the target date.

Once reasonable figures are developed, the Congolese Government, working in particular with the IMF and World Bank, can estimate whether it has sufficient resources to implement the framework. If it doesn't, even with substantial downsizing as well may be the case, the right approach in my view is not to force the government to downsize again; rather it is for the donors to step up and over the next three to five years fill in the gap.

Why do I say that? The Congo can't have a well functioning army if, as is the case today and has been discussed already, many soldiers are either not paid at all or only receive a tiny fraction of their salary. The Congo will not have a functioning justice system nor will the Congolese Government take serious steps to end impunity if police, judges, and other judicial sector employees continue to be grotesquely underpaid. The official salaries for many of these jobs are about 5 to 10 percent of what people need to support their families at a minimal level.

The Congolese will not do a better job at meeting their health and education needs until key people in this sector receive adequate salaries. For example, the Chief Medical Officer in a health zone, that is a key government health official, receives about \$15 a month in salary. That person needs maybe \$100 to \$150 a month to live at the most minimal level. We are not talking about anything approaching the levels that we would consider minimal.

Similarly, I found teachers in rural areas of the Congo who are receiving, and only on an occasional basis, \$2 a month, \$24 a year in salary. Who in this room thinks that any kind of education system can be built on that?

Economic development efforts will flounder under the Congo's legendary corruption and kleptocracy unless this fundamental issue of adequate salaries is addressed, and this is going to require real donor coordinator, not the lip service one too often sees, and real commitment and transparency from the Congolese Government. There are reports that Antoine Kazinga who is almost certain to be named the new Prime Minister intends to tackle the corruption issue at the senior

level of government by insisting that all senior government officials have records of honesty. If he undertakes this, he should be given the strongest possible support from the international community.

Finally, I want to say a little bit about the role of the U.S. which Susan talked about some as well. We, of course, have not taken the lead in the Congo. The Europeans did along with MONUC regarding the elections, and the U.N. has played an essential role in other areas. Frankly, I do not think that the U.S. has to take a leadership role in the Congo, but it should adopt a position of providing enough assistance financially and diplomatically to help the Congo move forward. Unfortunately, in recent periods, we really haven't even met that minimal standard. But with the recent passage of Senator Obama's bill on the Congo, we have an extremely useful statement of U.S. interest in and commitment to furthering progress in the Congo, and among other things it has some positive sections on levels of development assistance to the Congo which could be helpful on the specific points that Susan Rice raised.

The international community has invested billions of dollars in helping the Congo get back on track. The Congolese have suffered incredibly over the last decade and for many decades prior to that. But with the right kind of assistance from MONUC, the U.S., and other international actors, the Congolese can continue to move forward with what I really want to call their miracle.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Tony, for a very, very cogent and hard-hitting and constructive presentation. I want to, before we go to Bill, ask you just a couple of quick, specific questions to set up the conversation that we will have a little bit of time for later.

You were talking about resources at the end and so was Susan. Just maybe in summary terms if I could just put three questions on the table, and these are big, broad questions, so you won't have time to do complete justice but just your impressions. The overall strength of MONUC, the overall level of international financial and development support, and the specific level of American support; if I hear you in broadest terms, it sounds like what you are saying is those all should go up, but the most important thing is to avoid decreasing them dramatically in the aftermath of the election. Is there anything you want to say about those three while the moment is fresh?

MR. GAMBINO: Sure, very quickly, first I want to endorse exactly the way Susan talked about it in terms of the timeframe and the issues at stake. We will get a report from the Secretary General, really prepared by Ambassador Swing and his staff, next month that will lay out where he thinks MONUC needs to go next. I think what he is suggesting and I agree is that while he would like more, he has enough to make things whole and to go forward with the basic job, but if anyone unwisely wanted to take it down too soon, then we would run into precisely the problems that have sketched out.

Second, on the overall levels, the Europeans in particular have made very

generous commitments in terms of what they are going to do in the future. I know the U.S. levels are under discussion in terms of the overall budget processes that Administrator Tobias has underway, and we will have to wait until February to see what the levels are for the next fiscal year.

But I think that I am more concerned about two things. One is accepting a least common denominator strategy which means saying we can let these spoilers go and let us just find a way to buy them off, keep it going, which will fail because at some point, MONUC will leave and they will still be there and they will bring the transition down. Similarly, regarding corruption and all the other deep problems, it is too easy to say well, let us kind of nibble around the edges, let us not take it on full, and that is why I tried to sketch out the deep problems that are there, but with an approach that I think the international community can take in concert.

We have the actors there. The Fund is there. The Bank is there. The major donors are there. This all can be done, but it requires a new kind of coordination that one rarely sees.

I am not necessarily pessimistic. I set out a minimal role for the U.S., so the hurdle is not that high if one accepts the role that I set out, particularly with pressure from Congress. I think pressure from Congress is going to be important, but if that pressure is forthcoming from Senator Obama and others, I would be fairly optimistic that the U.S. would step up.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

I can be very brief in introducing William O'Neill because he is simply one of the world's great experts on human rights and their role in development. He has done a great deal with the U.N. everywhere from Kosovo to other places in Africa including Congo and has written parts of the manual pertaining to this subject of human rights and development for the United Nations.

We are delighted to have you here and look forward to your remarks as well.

MR. O'NEILL: Thank you very much and thanks to Brookings for organizing this. I want to try to brief so that you all have plenty of time for questions and comments.

I was asked a few years by Brookings, as it was known then Brookings-SAIS, now it is Brookings-Bern Project on Internal Displacement, to look at the role of peacekeeping and the internally displaced and the role peacemakers might play in trying to protect the internally displaced. In that report, there is a small section on Congo, looking at the terrible events in 2003 in Bunia where there were some Uruguayan peacekeepers with a very weak mandate, very little resources, under incredible pressure from the some of the same thugs and spoilers you have heard about all morning, and at the cost of some of their lives actually managed to save several thousand lives, many have argued. In this report, I and others were arguing we need to really beef up how the U.N. can protect civilians, give them stronger mandates, give them resources.

I think now we are at one of those situations where the old adage of "Be

careful what you wish for, it may come true,” actually seems to have come true in Congo and MONUC’s role there, I think, presents one of the clearest cases of the evolution just in three years of U.N. peacekeeping in its approach to trying to protect civilians in conflict, post-conflict, and semi-conflict. So I am going to be focusing my brief remarks on that particular issue as it relates to Eastern Congo and MONUC.

Here, I want to first of all cite a very good recent report by the Stimson Center that looks at this issue more broadly calling protecting civilians on the ground “The Impossible Mandate?”, question mark. There is a question mark there. I think MONUC largely has shown that yes, it is possible to engage in what the Stimson Center report calls “coercive protection.”

We don’t have time to go into the traditional approaches at peacekeeping but briefly it usually was soldiers standing between two well-defined armed parties, trying to monitor a ceasefire or some kind of truce, and they rarely intervened and certainly did very little with regard to the civilian population of the country they were in. That has completely changed over the last 10 or 15 years, but even more so I would say, as I said in the last 3 years, where peacekeeping forces now in their mandates are specifically authorized to use their resources. The wording may differ depending on the resolutions, and even if you look at the resolutions for Congo, it has evolved to the point now where MONUC forces are taking in some cases offensive, preemptive, preventive action to try to protect the civilian population in general and the internally displaced in particular.

As the Ambassador mentioned, at one point, Congo had 3 million internally displaced. The number, I just checked the OCHA web site over the weekend; it is now down to 1.46 million more or less internally displaced. So that is real improvement in the last few years to literally halve the number of internally displaced in Congo.

Now that doesn't come without problems. Yes, great work, MONUC, with a wonderful force commander in the East and the brigades that the Ambassador talked about taking, again, great risks – 80 U.N. peacekeepers have lost their lives in Congo during this work. So, again, it is not without risk to them.

But it does create some challenges and problems. One is that in conducting these operations that are meant to protect people, you can create displacement, and this we have seen in Congolese where when the U.N. has gone in and engaged the spoilers, engaged militias, that people have had to flee because of the fighting. Now this is a very vulnerable population to begin with. UNHCR has shown that in some parts of Eastern Congo, people have been displaced once, twice, some of them, three times. When they see armored vehicles coming and the helicopters coming and bullets start flying, they are used to picking up and going.

The difference is the displacement recently tends to be shorter, that people get out, fighting is conducted, finishes, and then the U.N., again in an innovation that is fairly recent, has created rapid reaction teams with humanitarian agencies who are then poised with logistics and personnel to move into these areas and to

provide people the ability, once the security situation allows it, to return home and there they can find food, shelter, agricultural tools, whatever they might need to help get their lives back on track. Again, displacement that is created by a U.N. action is an issue. I am not saying it shouldn't do it. It means it is something you that have to anticipate and plan for, and I think the U.N. had done fairly well on this.

The other problem it creates, though, is reprisals, and here we have had cases documented where MONUC troops have gone in, protected people, engaged the bad guys, and then the bad guys move somewhere else and take it on someone else in quite brutal ways as is their fashion. Again, this is something I don't have the answer to. I think the U.N. is struggling with it, but is an issue that has arisen especially in Eastern Congo, the revenge or reprisal actions taken by some of these militias.

The third problem is that in conducting these operations, some of the U.N. troops themselves have committed human rights violations and war crimes. "War crimes" is too strong. Let us say human rights violations and abuses of the population. This is something the U.N. has to do a much better job at policing itself.

The fourth problem unique to Congo somewhat is that, as the Ambassador mentioned, there have been some joint operations. As we have heard, the new Congolese Army is less than stellar in its own performance. The problem then becomes that MONUC has become identified in some ways with the new

FARDC, and that creates all kinds of problems as you can imagine for MONUC. This is something that, again, is going to have to be addressed, picking up Tony's point in what to do about some of these problems that are created by a sort of proactive U.N. action. One, and I couldn't agree more, is there has to be serious steps taken to clean up the new army through, I would argue, dismissals and prosecutions. Clearly, some of these people have got to be held accountable. The word, impunity, again has come up several times this morning.

Jan Egeland, the recently retired Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs at the U.N., met with Kabila towards the end of last year and raised the issue of sexual violence, and Jan is known to speak quite directly. He said: Sexual violence is a cancer in Congo, Mr. President. What are you going to do about it?

From the reports of that meeting, Kabila responded: I would like to do something, but I am in a kind of tight political spot now. Wait until the elections. After the elections, then we can take action.

Well, now we have had the elections. So I think this is something that I would put as a top priority, taking up Kabila at his word. Now is the time to start going after those most seriously responsible for some of the terrible abuses committed by the Congolese Army. Nothing works better than prosecutions and holding people accountable.

I remember the Ambassador mentioned we were in Haiti at the same time, and I was involved in working with trying to reform the Haitian National Police,

various trainings, workshops. I remember one of the Haitian National Police Officers came up to me afterwards and said: These workshops are great, and we are learning a lot, but let me tell you I think one prosecution of a Haitian National Police Officer for human rights violations is worth about 100 of these workshops.

That has always stuck with me. I still believe in training and the workshops, but it has to be more than that. So we are talking about reforming the Congolese Army. Yes, they are going to need assistance. They are going to need training. They are going to need all kinds of things, but they also have to be held accountable. I don't think we should just have a blank check to support any institution in Congo, but certainly the army or police, without requiring on their side some accountability and action, visible and real action and not just words.

The other recommendations I would make looking forward, especially when it comes to this question of security sector reform and IDP protection -- and this relates more to the U.S. too -- is the arms trafficking and just the whole swath of violations of the sanctions. There was a team I know that just came back this weekend from Congo, looking at this specific issue, and I think their report will be out I hope soon, but it is clear that weapons are flowing in, mostly in, from other countries in the region. Here, this tripartite plus commission which the U.S. has a role in, I think needs to have a much stronger visible voice in trying to crack down on the arms flow into Congo.

Here, again, we come back to Rwanda. President Kagame really can control things when he wants to. He made that very clear in his own country. I

think if they really want to stop the weapons at least coming in from Rwanda, it could be done pretty quickly, and I think pressure needs to be exerted there.

Intelligence, too, I think the U.S. could do much more in sharing intelligence with MONUC and with others and the U.N. in general with regard to this arms trafficking, arms network, who is involved, and how to stop it.

Lastly, I think you can, again, have a wonderful MONUC, wonderful training, accountability, oversight on the security reform but to deal with the problems of Eastern Congo, the ones that have come up through your questions this morning already -- Ituri, the Kivus -- there has got to be a political strategy and a political approach to the question that was raised, the cause, the root cause of this violence and to lessen the appeal. In a way, what we are involved with, and I don't think the U.N. would ever use this word, but the U.N. and all of us really are involved in a kind of counter-insurgency campaign in Eastern Congo.

How do you address this violence and these sources of weapons and support, coerced or otherwise, of the militias? How do you cut that off, control it, and give Congo a chance to develop along the lines that Tony and Susan and the Ambassador laid out earlier this morning?

I would like to stop there.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: We have got about 20 minutes. We will start in the back. Louder, and could you please identify yourself fully?

QUESTIONER: My name is Dan Metzel (?).

I join the speakers in congratulating MONUC and others in holding a good exercise in a public open election. However, I cannot understand how it can be considered free and fair, given what happened before the election. Of course, the major candidates all had their private armies, and they weren't shy about using those armies.

The leader of the UDPS which I understand to be the major political party in Congo and the winner of many of the polls -- I think a majority of the polls that were carried out before he dropped out of the election -- Mr. Tshekedi made some requests of the MONUC and the Electoral Commission which were refused. One of those was security. I think a major reason for his dropping out of the election was that he didn't see the point in risking the lives of his followers and campaign staff as well as his own for something which didn't look like it was going to be free and fair. That was, of course, borne out in the pitched battles that occurred between Bemba supporting and Kabila supporters.

I wonder what we can do or what is being planned to help support the possibility of another election that would be free and fair. That is my first question.

MR. O'HANLON: What I am going to do is take three at a time and then for each series, go down the row and ask each panelist to respond to maybe just one. We will go ahead with you quickly on a follow-up, and then we will move along. Please wait for your microphone.

QUESTIONER: I am the President of the Washington office of the UDPS.

The UDPS is the main political party in Congo. We are the father and the mother of the Congolese position. I wanted Mr. Swing to be here because Mr. Swing and the international community, they have blood on their hands of the Congolese people. Welcome to the new era in Congo.

We didn't participate to the election because the transitional government, they did not do the job that we signed in South Africa with the U.S. and South Africa. We signed the agreement between the opposition and the transitional government. The first mission for the transitional government was to create a Congolese Army. Kabila and the transition, they didn't create a Congolese Army. We have today in Congo, Kabila with his forces, Bemba and his forces, and other groups also with their forces.

If in this country, the Republican Party has an army and the Democratic Party has an Army, are you going to have a democracy in the system?

The second argument, the international community gave money to organize the election, but in the Federal Electoral Commission -- even in this country, you have a Democrat, a Republican, and an Independent. The UDPS, the main opposition party, was not involved in the creation of the Federal Electoral Commission. Who did they put in the top? Abbé Malu-Malu, who is the First Advisor of the former President Kabila, as the leader of the main opposition party was just eliminated.

Mr. Tshekedi met with the U.N. Secretary Kofi Annan. We sent a memo. I went to the State Department. I gave them many memos about the situation.

What did they do? They just pushed the UDPS outside.

I am going to give you an example of how this election was fake. Look at the site on CNN. In the North of Goma, Nkunda is controlling an area the size of Rhode Island. In that area, the U.N., even the MONUC, they didn't even open the voting polls. But look at the electoral results that you have in your hands, Kabila won in that area with 2 million people. Where are these people?

You think that with this type of example in that area, show me. I have the results. I will send them to Ms. Rice and to Ambassador Swing. Do you think that with this type of organization, the way the Europeans organized the election by maintaining Kabila in power?

I will give you another example. My question is this: In history, give me an example of one country where a dictator has killed more than 30 million people and has been elected President and has been set in power and this is a democracy? Give me an answer.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, sir. This question here is the last one in this group, please. Just one second for the microphone. Please identify yourself.

QUESTIONER: I am from Kisingani, so my view would totally differ.

MS. RICE: What is your name?

QUESTIONER: Yuma, James Yuma (?).

People in Kisingani, they went through this terrible war. All they need right now is peace and to rebuild their lives that have been shattered by the war.

Also, to follow up just quickly on what Secretary Rice said about Congo

being an orphan today and Mr. Gambino saying that the U.S. shouldn't take the lead; it seems to me that we are dealing with synchronic centers. We don't take a look back at history. If one were to tell Mobutu in 1970 that by today the Congo would be orphaned from the U.S. or that the U.S. wouldn't be taking a lead, he would have been stunned because I think it is Congo, Zaire at the time, was the greatest ally of the U.S. in Central Africa. I don't want to get into conspiracy theories. I think the undoing of the Congo happened under your watch, Madam Secretary.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Tony, do you want to start?

MR. GAMBINO: Sure, I will try to be very brief.

As I said in my remarks, I really do believe that the elections were free and fair. I will say in terms of the one statement, I was in North Kivu, the area where General Nkunda is active. I visited those places. I saw the polling places. They were open.

QUESTIONER: (off mike)

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, you are done. It is Tony's turn, please.

MR. GAMBINO: They were open.

QUESTIONER: (off mike)

MR. GAMBINO: They were open; people were voting massively; and there were observers spread out throughout, both international and Congolese --

QUESTIONER: (off mike)

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, please stop.

MR. GAMBINO: -- including those representing a variety of points of view. They all agreed, the people who were on the ground, that people had voted massively and it was free and fair.

In addition, during the run-up to the election as we went around, we saw a variety of political parties including some who you would not expect to be popular in particular areas with their offices open, with their people campaigning, going around in cars with their megaphones. Many of them told us that they were worried that there was personal risk, but they continued to go out to do it, and as a general statement, nothing happened to them.

In terms of the question from Mr. Yuma (?) from Kisingani, what I tried to say -- I hope I said this in my remarks -- was that the U.S. need not take the lead. I didn't say the U.S. should not. But if you look at the facts on the ground right now, the United States has chosen for various reasons not to take the lead in the Congo. That is the fact of what the situation is today.

So I ask myself the question: Is it necessary for the international community and for the way forward -- as Mike posed the challenge for this panel -- for the U.S. to take the lead? I really don't believe that it is necessary. It is important for the U.S. to do more than it is presently doing, but the leadership role that has been taken by MONUC and others in the U.N. system and by the Europeans is, in my own judgment, sufficient if balanced with a little more from the United States and good movements from the Congolese to help this transition

continue to move forward and succeed.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Susan?

MS. RICE: I don't have a great deal to add to that. I think the reality is that the elections have been held; it was a massive undertaking; by the judgment of the international community, they were free and fair; and the challenge is to move forward. There will not be another set of elections, and we shouldn't fantasize that is the case in the near term.

The challenge is for the United States, the people of Congo, and the rest of the international community to step forward and deal with the very pressing and urgent impediments to progress that Tony outlined in such great detail. I hope that the people of Congo supported by those of you who are here who care deeply about your country will lead that effort and that our government will be active in supporting you.

MR. O'HANLON: Bill?

MR. O'NEILL: I have really nothing to add.

MR. O'HANLON: In the fifth row back, we had a couple of hands. I think, ma'am, in the green shirt and green jacket, did you have your hand up and then also four people down? No, I was wrong. Please go ahead. Then after you, we will go down to the end of the same row.

QUESTIONER: Shannon Meehan of the International Rescue Committee; thank you for being here. It is nice to have the panel.

My question is related to MONUC of which there has been a lot of discussion on MONUC and the leadership of the United States. I would agree with your comment. I would ask: What are the recommendations to keep the United States engaged?

Maybe they don't have to be in leadership, but they do need to play a greater role than they have played. Statistically, they are whacking MONUC in half. Their 2007 request was \$114 million less than 2005 request and \$150 million less than the 2006 request, but the 2006 request was elections, so I would like to stick with \$114 million. We cannot maintain MONUC from a U.S. contribution of \$154 million to \$160 million. To me, that was an indication of the U.S. commitment. So I just would like to hear more recommendations of how to keep the U.S. engaged.

My second question; I appreciate your comment about "Sexual violence in the Congo is a cancer." It is an issue that the International Rescue Committee works on every single day. From their own words, the women of the Congo often say that peace comes last to women. And so, what would be your recommendations that put women's needs in the forefront as we look at security sector reform but overall democratic reform?

QUESTIONER: Good morning, I am Sosha (?) with the Embassy of Congo.

I would like to first start with Mr. Gambino. I seriously think we are suffering a serious case of amnesia here. The Congolese state started

disintegrating since 1960, and then after that, slowly with the Mobutu regime, the Congolese state became nonexistent. If you agree with me that President Kabila inherited a country that was divided into multiple parts, the first objective was to try to get the country united and have elections so you could have a legitimate government.

The programs you mentioned, the DDR program, is exactly what has been going on in Congo and is just rewarding bad behavior. How do you expect us to arrest some of these leaders and at the same time you are trying to pay troops to give up their weapons so there won't be any war? It is kind of conflicting.

I wanted to ask also, Dr. Rice: In a country like Congo where the government has been nonexistent since 40 years, how do you rebuild the government capacity so where instead of having refugee interaction there, you actually have the government doing what the NGOs have been doing?

I heard all of you speak partly, but none of the people actually spoke about what the government can do to start helping the Congolese people. What I see here is we are trying to create a culture of dependency where Congo is just dependent on foreign aid to sustain.

If Dr. Kumbrum (?), if Mr. Kumbrum (?) will allow me, I think he is also suffering a case of amnesia because after Sun City, all the opposition groups went to Kinshasa to try to see how they could get involved in the transition. Dr. Tshekedi went AWOL and wasn't around to be seen. Every decision now is made afterwards. The UDPS plays the politics of the empty chair. They weren't

there. All of a sudden, poof, they appear, and they want to get involved or the process is unfair. They should have been there from the start.

When the opposition met to choose a Vice President, they would have chosen Dr. Tshekedi. He didn't show up. They chose somebody else. They chose Ngoma instead. Anyway, they wanted to go back to the national conference where Tshekedi was Prime Minister which is the past. Now we are trying to move forward. That is what we are going to talk about. I want to know your recommendation to build the Congo.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: I think we will take just those two. So we will go with the responses now, and then we will do one quick last round.

MR. GAMBINO: To Shannon's question first, the two really important questions, I would talk about a few areas in terms of assessing the U.S. role. First is I completely agree with you -- full support for MONUC. I agree with you that some of the levels we have seen in requests have been very troubling. There are some signs that some in the Administration understand the need to be more supportive of MONUC than these numbers might indicate, but those people need to be pushed and we really need to get full support, no backsliding from the U.S., no saying one thing in public and then whispering something when the discussions actually occur about budget levels.

QUESTIONER: There are different rumors that given the pressure of Somalia, Lebanon, and Darfur, the funds will be sucked away from Congo.

MR. GAMBINO: I think one has to be very worried about competing demands, and there are also lots of technical reasons that you know about. But in terms of watching it, MONUC has to be supported for all the reasons that Ambassador Swing and Susan Rice discussed.

Secondly, higher bilateral aid levels, those are knowable numbers. One can look at them. You can look at the Obama bill and see a kind of minimum level of \$52 million for development assistance, and you can see whether that is met or not.

The third is, particularly seeing Joyce Leader here in the audience and thinking about the tripartite plus one where diplomatic assistance is in terms of maintaining stability in the region. We didn't talk about that today. That could take a whole other session in terms of various threats and not only looking at circumstances relating to Rwanda but as things get hotter in Somalia and things could get very crazy in the Great Lakes region. That is something that the U.S. can do some work on.

Your other question is equally importance, that the international community has done next to nothing to respond to the victims of impunity and particularly sexual violence is, I think, a scandal. I think it is really time for everyone in the international community because I don't see any good actors. I am speaking about states. IRC and other NGOs have tried to do what they can with limited resources and there are small programs that have been funded by USAID and European donors, but they are such a tiny, tiny set when you look at the numbers

and the needs. This is something that really has to be part of an integrated justice, and that is something that I would want to talk about in more detail with more time. But I think you are absolutely right to not let people forget about these needs to be much more on that issue.

Briefly on the question on DDR, Congo presents such deep challenges that it is not possible. One wishes it could. One wishes you could say let us prosecute everyone. Let us develop a system where everyone who has committed any kind of crime goes in front of a court and is judged and if found guilty, serves time in a prison. But look at the state that you have. You have a state with a collapsed justice system, with an ineffective prison system.

So, one is always forced to make compromises. Yes, that means that some people get arrested and some people get paid for doing the same thing. Do I like that? No, I don't like it very much, but it seems to be about the best we can do right now to struggle our way forward. If we lose interest and we are not even able to do what we are able to do so far, as imperfect as it is, then we will slide back and you will see a situation even worse, unfortunately I think, than what is seen in the Congo already.

A final brief comment, I don't really see that at all in terms of the old think that the donors are trying to set up a culture of dependency. Frankly, I don't see any sense from any donor that I am aware of that would like to create some kind of longstanding dependency. To the contrary, the quicker that the new government and the people of the Congo can get on their feet and develop

institutions that will really be robust and can deliver justice, can deliver social services, can begin to do a much better job of meeting the needs of the Congolese, then you would see donors so happy to be able to disengage and pull back, but that is just not the situation that one faces in the country today.

MS. RICE: I will comment briefly on MONUC and then on the capacity-building question. I think Tony's points on MONUC are spot-on.

I just want to point out, Shannon, in answer to your question that it is really crucially important that the effort and attention be placed on the heads of the Appropriations Subcommittees. Our authorizers are doing well. Senator Obama, Congressman Payne, these are folks who understand the complexity and the importance of the situation on the ground. It is not at all clear if you look backwards in time that the appropriators are as understanding of the importance of sustaining a large operation like MONUC past the time of an electoral transition.

I have been, unfortunately, around long enough to remember in 1994 when the Democrats were in control of Congress the last time, there was not a stellar record in Congress of supporting U.N. peacekeeping operations financially. That was the period in which we began to run up massive deficits, debt to the U.N. for peacekeeping, and it was some years later when a deal was brokered to bring that debt down. To a significant extent, despite some of its anti-U.N. rhetoric, has actually more or less asked for most of the money it has needed to do these things. Now Congo represents a very worrying break from that broader trend.

I think you are absolutely right; we have to be very vigilant about what goes

up in the requests but equally vigilant about what comes out of the Appropriations Committees. Even if the Administration's request again falls short, there is an opportunity to put some spotlight on it at the Appropriations Subcommittee level, recognizing also the problem, the perennial complication that it is the CJS Subcommittee that has to appropriate dollars for peacekeeping and then the Foreign Operations Subcommittee that has to deal with the development assistance levels which I certainly hope won't begin at the floor of \$52 million which in the country of the Congo is woefully inadequate.

On this question of how to rebuild government capacity, it is actually crucially important, but we have heard some of the answers to the question already here today. First of all, paying civil servants a reasonable standard of living, so that you can attract and retain and have a hope of keeping people in government service that aren't completely corrupted is a critical step -- professionalizing that civil service, dealing aggressively with the challenges of corruption. If the President wants to come out with a very strong start, taking some very decisive measures against those around him and those in senior ministries that are deeply engaged in corruption is a critical step. Obviously, using the resources of the country in a fashion that benefits its institutions and strengthens its institutions is critical. As Tony commented earlier, investing in the education system which over the long term is crucial. Finally, making sure that those who come into leadership positions in government, both at the political level and at the bureaucratic level, are representative politically, regionally,

ethnically of Congo's enormous diversity and that cronyism isn't allowed to continue to be the norm of the day.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Bill?

MR. O'NEILL: Thanks. I will just focus on the gender question you raised. The U.N. has asked me to take a look actually at gender violence and gender issues in security sector reform, and I can tell you from my research so far, a couple of things are absolutely clear to make gender, first of all, a priority, a concern, and then also to deal with Gender-based violence. One is you must have strong leadership, and I mean strong, active, engaged leadership, President, Commander, whatever. It has got to be clear that this is a policy, that this is going to change, and people better get on board or they are out.

The second element is that women have to be in key positions. I don't have the breakdown about how many women are in the army or the police, but there needs to more, I am sure, than there -- whatever the number is --and they need to be in senior significant posts. In Liberia, the head of the National Police is a woman and her deputy is a woman. Let me tell you it is making a difference.

My third point, and this is one of the things Tony said. Your list of six was really very helpful, but actually quite scary and of the six that scared me the most was your comment about the Inspector General. I believe you said the Inspector General is brutal and corrupt. Boy, that has got to change because you will not get any reform if someone in a key position like that, who is responsible for

internal oversight and accountability is a major part of the problem. So I would recommend, however it is done, get rid of that guy.

(Laughter)

MR. O'NEILL: I mean with due process, human rights; don't take me literally. I encourage him to find something else to do.

Then public information campaigns are crucial. It is crucial that the word gets out to school children, everybody. Again, in Liberia -- I just got an interesting little email -- they have a campaign about rape and great posters they are creating to put up everywhere. That is not going to solve the thing by itself, but it is part of it.

Last, on Washington, I am not a Washington person. Susan, I learned a lot because I am mystified how my own Congress works, so thank you for clarifying it a little bit.

But I would just urge people to talk about this as this is really cost-effective. The Ambassador said; he had a slip of the tongue -- it was interesting -- a billion a day. It is a billion a year which these days for any kind of major operation is nothing. You have 17,000 troops, most of whom are in Eastern Congo which the area of responsibility is two and a half times the size of Darfur. I like to make that comparison. Not even 17,000 troops are doing a pretty good job in a place that is two and half times as big as Darfur with trees. So this is pretty cheap and effective. We have got the money. We should be able to come up with the money for our share.

MR. O'HANLON: We cannot finish on a better note than that. There are a lot of hands up, but I have already kept you late. So I am going to wrap things up right there and thank everyone for being here, especially the panelists.

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