THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

A LIFE IN WAR AND PEACE:

A STATESMAN'S FORUM WITH
FORMER U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL KOFI ANNAN

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Introduction and Moderator:

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Featured Speaker:

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Nobel Peace Prize Laureate

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. TALBOTT: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Strobe Talbott and it's my great pleasure to welcome you here this afternoon for what is going to be a particularly meaningful event. We're particularly honored that there would be so many members of the diplomatic corps based here in Washington as well as other distinguished visitors.

This event comes under the banner of a series run by our Foreign Policy Program here at Brookings called The Statesman's Forum. I don't think I have to persuade any of you that our special guest today, Kofi Annan, is one of the most eminent, respected, and accomplished statesman of our time. He was, of course, the seventh secretary-general of the United Nations, the first to come from Sub-Saharan Africa, and, very significantly, the first to rise up through the ranks of the United Nations organization. Along with the institution that he joined 50 years ago, he won and the U.N. won the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize.

The occasion for his visit here to Washington and to Brookings today is the publication of his book, which I'm happy to say is on sale for any of you interested in picking up a copy after the program. The title of the book is *Interventions: A Life in War and Peace*. I'm going to make just a couple of comments on the title and then let Kofi tell you about the contents of the book.

Intervention is a piece of diplomatic jargon for the right that officials and ambassadors have to speak up when they have a mind to do so in the course of formal meetings. But it's also something of a pun because it refers to Kofi's conviction that the United Nations is, and I'm here quoting from the

book, “an agent of intervention in every sphere of human activity, including, of course, when the international community intervenes to stop carnage and mayhem around the world and especially when exercising the international community’s responsibility to protect,” a concept that Kofi articulated and championed.

Now finally, there’s the subtitle of the book, which has a sort of Tolstoyan ring, *War and Peace*. Kofi has devoted the life that he is writing about in this book to preserving peace whenever and wherever possible. And when force has been necessary, as it was in the Balkans in the 1990s, he has been equally committed to restoring peace as quickly as possible.

Now, our program is going to proceed this way. Kofi is going to offer about 20 minutes of opening remarks, then he and I will get the conversation with those of you in the room going, and then turn the proceedings over to you so you’ll have a chance to put questions to him. This event is getting live coverage, so those of you on Twitter can Tweet using the hashtag #FPAnnan.

So Kofi, welcome to Washington, welcome to Brookings, and welcome to the digital age. (Applause)

MR. ANNAN: Thank you. Thank you, Strobe. When you started I was worried that you were going to use the usual phrase, “A man who doesn’t need an introduction,” because I’ve had a bitter experience. You know, when I stepped down as secretary-general, my wife and I decided after 10 years of this we were tired and we needed to take a bit of a break. So we borrowed a friend’s

house in Como, Italy, and the house was adjacent to the forest and so you could walk out of the house and go into the mountains and walk without going to the village. And we were determined that we would have no radio, no television, and no newspapers. After six weeks of this, I became very bored. (Laughter) So I told my wife let's go to the village and see if we can get a paper.

We had barely entered the shop when I saw five men in the corner staring at us, and one of them broke off and made straight for me. And I turned to Nan and said, oh, my gosh, we have six weeks to go and we've blown our cover. By then the fellow was on top of me and he put his hand out and said, "Morgan Freeman." (Laughter) "May I have an autograph?"

So I said sure. So I signed Freeman. He was very happy and we kept our anonymity and continued our rest.

But on a more serious note, I'm very happy to be here with you this afternoon. And often people ask me why did you decide to write a book? And I said I have been fortunate to be working for the United Nations at perhaps one of the most crucial times in our history and I lived through many difficult and exciting events. And I felt it would be good for me to write and share my experience and leave some lessons behind. I tried to do an honest book. I have tried to do an honest book. And I have also decided that if I was going to write this book I should do it in a way that the average person will also understand.

And the U.N., as most of you know, is an organization that has many stories, but we can't tell our stories, not even the successful ones. We've not been very good and it's not very easy to tell the story of the U.N. And it's

difficult because of the way we sometimes describe the U.N. The U.N. is all of us, your government and mine, but when we tend to describe the U.N. as "they" and "it," it really creates a certain barrier and also offers an alibi for inaction of governments.

Anyway, for me this whole international adventure started in the Gold Coast when I was a boy and the struggle for independence began. I came of age with the struggle of Ghana's independence, you know, at the time. And it was a fascinating period in the sense that as young men growing up and seeing rapid changes around you, where suddenly you have a Ghanaian prime minister, you have a Ghanaian police commissioner, a Ghanaian head of the military, and Ghanaians appointed to senior civil service positions, you grow up believing that change is possible, even very fundamental and radical change is possible. And I must say that experience marked me throughout my life that I always felt we shouldn't accept things because it's done this way or this is the way we do it. We should challenge, we should question. Why are we doing it this way? Why can't we change? And I think that lesson served me well.

From there I gained a Ford Foundation scholarship to go and study at Macalester College in Minnesota, one of the coldest places I had ever been then. (Laughter) And, of course, for a tropical child having to put on layers and layers of clothing to stay warm, that was fair enough, but I tell my young friends that there was one piece of -- one item that I said I will never use: the earmuffs. I thought they were inelegant. I said I will never wear the earmuffs. Until one morning, I went to get something to eat and almost felt like losing my

ears. So the next day I went and bought the biggest pair I could find. (Laughter) Elegant or not, but also walked away with a very important lesson: You don't walk into a situation and behave as if you know better than the natives. You have to listen to them. (Laughter) And that lesson has stayed with me, I can tell you that.

We became independent in 1957. And, of course, we all had such great expectations for Africa. All of us as young people felt we are going to get education and help develop our continent and make a real difference. Of course, it didn't go the way we had expected. Ghana and Malaysia became independent the same year: Ghana in March '57 and Malaysia August '57. But today, when you look at the two countries in terms of economic development, we are poles apart. At the time of independence we had almost the same amount of national reserves. Economically we were almost at par. But today, the per capita income of Malaysia is about 13, 14 times that of Ghana. And the reason, in my judgment, for the difference is a question of leadership. We went through all these series of *coup d'états*. In fact, the second *coup d'état* in Africa took place in Ghana.

So we went through a series of governments and each government comes in and begins afresh. They brush aside what the others had done and begin and really set us back very, very badly. Moved away from agriculture, which was essential for the continent. We had an advantage. Now we are returning to agriculture. Today we are very good at growing what we don't eat -- cocoa, coffee, flowers -- and import what we eat, and we are trying to

reverse that and ensure that at least we can feed ourselves.

But, of course, from Macalester I went to study in Geneva and joined the World Health Organization Budget Office 50 years ago, as Strobe indicated. And at that time I thought I was going to do two years and go home. Two years has become 50 years almost. But I had also decided in the meantime -- I did go home for two years and had a constant battle with the elitists or the military in charge, so I left again. And when I left, went back to the U.N. and I decided that the U.N. maybe is going to be my home. And later on, also, convinced myself that I could serve my nation equally well by serving the international community well. So the U.N. became my home. And, of course, I worked for the organization in various locations and I see many people here, ambassadors and colleagues, who worked with me in the Middle East, some in Egypt, Ethiopia, and other parts.

I went through various departments and in 1992, I took over -- I joined the Department of Peacekeeping. It was a crucial time. It was also at a time when the Cold War had ended. Gorbachev had gone through his space struggle and Glasnost in '89. There was a certain excitement in the U.N. and in the Security Council with a sense of optimism that finally we can take all the decisions that we have not been able to take because of the Cold War divisions. And when you look at the U.N.'s record from that period on, peacekeeping exploded. You could get decisions on peacekeeping.

But apart from the end of the Cold War, my predecessor, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was asked to do a report for the Council and that report opened

the door for the U.N. to become active in internal civil war situations. The Council approved it, but I don't think we had the time nor the will to look at the implication of that switch. It is one thing to be monitoring cease-fire agreements between two countries with well-organized armies and another thing to get caught in civil war situations, whether in Somalia, in Congo, or elsewhere. It required a different type of mindset, different type of resources, different type of trained soldiers, and the possibility that you will face conflict and you may have to fight and there will be greater risks, which also meant not only should we accept that there will be greater risks, but explain it to the population that peacekeeping is not risk-free.

And as we didn't do that, each time there was a number of casualties, governments pulled out their troops. The first encounter of this was in Somalia when the U.S. airplane was shot down and the soldiers dragged through the streets. The U.S. withdrew its troops and everyone else followed, particularly those from the Western countries.

And this, of course, was happening in 1993, '94, at the time when we were also confronted with Rwanda. And I covered that very completely in the book, the crisis of Somalia and the difficulties we faced in Rwanda, where we were not a position to help the Rwandese at their time of need. I'm not sure we could have stopped everything, but we may have been able to do a bit more where 800,000 people got killed.

And, of course, there was also Bosnia, where we lived through the nightmare of Srebrenica, where 8,000 people were marched out and killed. And

all this really, for me, was a personal journey, also, having going through Somalia, Rwanda, Bosnia. And I kept asking myself what can the international community do to ensure that we stop such tragedies; we don't accept it without reacting?

And then came Kosovo, and I think Strobe and I worked quite a bit on the Kosovo crisis, where the question of use of force to protect the people came up. The Council didn't have to approve it because the countries that were prepared to go in knew that if they went to the Council it may be vetoed. In a way, after the action, there was a vote, an indirect vote, which gave them 12 votes, if I recall, which indicated that there was broad support for it. And I was challenged as secretary-general how can you support use of force without the Security Council approval? And I made it clear that there are times for exceptions. There are times when you have to put force at the service of peace, and Kosovo was one of those. There was no way the international community could have sat back knowing what Mladić, Milošević, and Karadžić had done in Bosnia and sit back and allow them to repeat it in Kosovo. What justification would we have had?

I've also had the opportunity of becoming quite involved in the Middle East peace -- search for peace in the Middle East. And for a long time the secretary-general had not been engaged in peace in the Middle East between the Israelis and the Palestinians. But we managed when I was there to become engaged with creation of the Quartet and working with governments in the region and around and governments. When I see Bruce is here, he was

working on that with me.

We managed to get the U.N. involved and had hoped that with the creation of the Quartet and concentrated action and focused action, we would have been able to move the process forward. We came up with a roadmap and Martin was then the ambassador in Israel. We tried everything, but it didn't work out the way it was meant to work out and we are still struggling. And I was quite shocked a few weeks ago, when Amr Moussa was in Geneva, he told me that I think the two-state solution is dead and we should look for one-state solution, which, of course, has always been undercut. But coming from somebody like him, it was quite striking.

We also worked with Lebanon and Israel for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, which I think was quite a courageous move by Prime Minister Barak, even though he didn't get much kudos in some courts as in Israeli political sphere, but I think it was a bold decision. And they withdrew and I certify that Israel had withdrawn from Lebanon.

And the other issue in the Middle East where I became very involved was a fight between Hezbollah and the Israeli government. That was really an asymmetrical war which had the lessons for the region and for everybody. For Israel, it was a heavy price to pay because if the best organized and the most respected and feared army in the region—in the minds of the ordinary of the people—cannot defeat Hezbollah, where is that strength? At the time, of course, in the confrontation we also knew that Hezbollah -- for Hezbollah survival alone was victory. If they survived, they felt they had won.

But that confrontation had lots of side effects in the region. Suddenly Hezbollah had become very popular. I'm not saying it's popular today, but at the time it was very popular because of that confrontation. I don't want to go into it too much.

And in the book I also deal with the need for people who are working on peace to meet all leaders, including dictators and butchers. Because they often ask you how can you meet with so-and-so? How do you make a difference? How do you get people to change their minds? How do you push them if you don't talk to them? You know, we will all want to talk to genial, friendly people, but they are not the ones doing the killing. And if you want to stop the killing, you have to talk to those who are responsible for those kinds of behavior.

Let me say a word about some of the social issues where the U.N. has also been involved and intervened, whether on humanitarian crises, after a disaster like the tsunami, or the case of HIV/AIDS where the U.N. had to intervene to try and save lives, and not only set up a global fund to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis -- and by the way, the first check of $200 million came from President George Bush here in Washington. He later on came up with his own program, putting out $5 billion a year to fight the disease, but that was the first time the world had come together to focus on a disease of that kind.

And I recall not only pushing governments for money, but getting the pharmaceutical industry to play its part. And we convened a meeting in Amsterdam with the seven largest pharmaceutical companies urging them to

reduce their prices so that the poor can afford it; and that if they have medication that can save lives, but the poor cannot have it, it was going to be difficult for them to defend their intellectual property. And at the time, in fact, they had taken Mandela to court in South Africa because Mandela had threatened to use compulsory license and to produce generic versions of the medication for his people. And I advised, I said I'm not a public relations expert, but you have to be a real genius to go and sue Mandela in a South African court on HIV/AIDS. (Laughter) If you lose, you lose. If you win, you lose and lose and lose. (Laughter) So take it down from the -- pull it back and try to settle it privately, which was done. But in the end, they dropped the cost of medication quite drastically. At that time it was about 15,000 per person per year. They got it now it's 150 per person. And even the medication nevirapine to protect mother-to-child transmission, they gave that medication away for free.

I know Strobe and I are going to have a conversation, so let me conclude by saying that the book deals with an arc of intervention. We set up a high-level panel and Steve Stedman, who was the secretary, and Bruce, who worked on that, are here in the room. And they came up with six clusters of threats that should be of concern to all of us. This included economic and social threats, poverty, infectious diseases and the environment, interstate conflict and interested conflict. It also dealt with nuclear, biological, chemical weapons, terrorism, and internationally organized crime. These are all issues the U.N. intervenes in and they are issues that affected all of us. And so this arc of intervention is something that we should all be prepared to play our role. So that

is one point.

The other point I would want to make is that the international community has a crucial role to play in building healthy, balanced societies based on the rule of law. Healthy societies, in my judgment, rely on three pillars: peace and security, sustainable development, respect for rule of law and human rights. And I think the third pillar perhaps is even the most important. If you do not develop a rule of law and human rights, you are building on sand. In fact, this is what we've noticed in North Africa.

I'm sure if three years ago I had asked those of you in this room what do you think of Tunisia, I would have received the answer great place, great tourist destination, stable, secure, and economically they are doing well. We will not talk of the third pillar. And it is the lack of the third pillar that led to the Arab Spring that we are seeing. So it is extremely important that when we are assessing governments we don't focus just on security and economic development, we look at the essential third pillar.

The other lesson that we came away with is that sovereignty should not be used as a shield behind which governments brutalize their own people or refuse to protect them. And this is where the responsibility to protect came in, but the responsibility to protect places responsibility on both sides: responsibility on the government concerned and on those of us outside the country. Because we can no longer say it's an internal affair. Some issues are so shameful that we cannot sit back and we are compelled also to react, but I'm not talking only of military intervention. It could be economic, political, and other

measures. Use of force is a last resort.

And I think we have to -- as we look forward, I think we need to think of the individuals in the nation. We have tended to look at sovereignty as national, as something that belongs to the government, and we don't stress the responsibilities, the responsibilities of welfare of the people and their responsibility to the people. If you bring in the needs and the concerns of the individuals, you are looking at a completely different situation.

But let me leave you with an African proverb, a Swahili one, that you cannot bend the wind, so bend the sail. And we are all going to have to be part of this effort to improve our world and we all need to be part of the changes we want the world to be and we cannot sit back. I will pause here and then begin my conversation with my good friend, Strobe. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. TALBOTT: Kofi, thank you so much for getting us off to a terrific start and very shortly we'll give our friends a chance to interact with you. And I'm sure that during the course of the conversation we'll want to come back to your final comments about responsibility to protect the limits of sovereignty and the responsibility of both parties in the context of the very, very tough mission, one of many tough and thankless missions, that you took on even after you left the position of secretary-general in Syria.

But before we get to that, I noticed that early in your book and then reiterated throughout it was an emphasis on the significance that the U.N. Charter speaks in the voice of the peoples, not the nations, but the peoples of the world. And that resonates, I think, with your comments here and the stress that

you put on development.

Looking ahead to 2015, what would you advice be to your successors -- Ban Ki-moon and our colleague Homi Kharas here at Brookings, who's been made the executive secretary of the effort to -- the high-level panel that's going to look at development goals -- on how to be more effective in bringing the resources of the international community to bear on the poorest, the neediest, and those who need health care?

MR. ANNAN: Thanks for that question. I know that there is lots of discussion going on about sustainable development in this panel co-chaired by three heads of state. I believe that the Millennium Development Goals as structured identifies the basic needs of individuals of the poorest in our society and challenges governments to try and work with society to fulfill these needs.

The needs are so basic -- you know, primary education, reducing the number of people who are starving, clean water -- these are so basic that every government has to try and meet. Many governments around the world have made progress. India, China, Brazil in particular have lifted millions of people out of poverty. And, in fact, both Brazil and China made the Millennium Development Goals part of their development package and systematically moved towards it.

I believe that by 2015 some countries have not achieved it, and there will be many who will not have attained that goal. We should challenge them to persevere, to persevere to provide these basic needs for their people. Those who have achieved them should be challenged to aim higher.

Let's take education. If you have universal primary education, you may want to begin to look at secondary education. You may begin to want to look at trade schools and move the people forward.

There were discussions about perhaps focusing on two of the goals, let's say education and health, which was very difficult because if you focus on health or education, you'll be asked how about clean water? How about mortality? And so I think the base that we have should be maintained.

When we were putting together this there were lots of issues we couldn't include. One of the discussions I had with my colleagues was should we include migration? Because we saw it as an issue which was going to become quite crucial, but we couldn't include it. There may be a possibility of filling in some gaps. You can fill in gaps in issues which were perhaps not highlighted enough with the Millennium Development Goals, questions of the climate change and other things. But I think the basic requirements that we've identified, we should encourage governments to meet.

MR. TALBOTT: You mentioned in this connection climate change, which has been a theme of much that you said over the years, particularly in recent years. As you travel around is it your sense that there is a growing constituency for making climate change and the mitigation and adaptation to it more of a priority both of individual nations and of the U.N. itself?

MR. ANNAN: Unfortunately, I don't think we are making that much progress. I do not sense political leaders very much -- that they are very much exercised about this. The population and the people have to play a role.

They really have to organize and push environmental and climate change issues higher up the political agenda. And this is one of those situations where I believe the leaders are failing to lead. And where the leaders fail to lead, the people can make them follow if we really get the people organized and do it.

But I have seen some surprise in the reactions and encouragements, evidence of some people that you wouldn't expect would be worried about climate change doing it. I was in East Africa, in Tanzania, 2 weeks ago, and had been in Mali 18 months earlier. I was there with Melinda Gates because we work on this Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa. And we went to look at a project and there was this illiterate farmer telling us, "I've switched crops. I'm now using this crop because the rains do not come as my father or my grandfather told me. They are too short. If I get this other variety, I will lose all my crop. And I'm using this banana because it requires very little water. With the changes in the climate, I'm safer with this one."

And so on the ground the farmers are telling us and doing what is required. But we and the citizen, in all the political parliaments and others, I'm not sure are pushing as hard as we should to be able to give them the support and the adaptation techniques and the resilience they need to be able to move forward. But there it is happening on the ground.

MR. TALBOTT: I'm going to permit myself one more question, but then I'm going to hope that hands will go up around the room and we'll have a chance to bring all of you in on the conversation.

This is a question about what's happening in Europe, and

specifically to not just the euro zone, but the European Project. And the reason I've been thinking about it in the context of reading your book is that Europe has made, arguably, more progress than any other region in the world in advancing the cause of transnational governance while continuing to respect the sovereignty of states. But that experiment is in some trouble now.

MR. ANNAN: Yes.

MR. TALBOTT: How concerned are you about it not just for the people of Europe, but for the precedental effect that it'll have on the cause that you've devoted your life to?

MR. ANNAN: Yes. I pray and hope that Europe survives and my instinct is that it will survive, but it is worrying. It is worrying in the sense that even though the Commission is many decades old, the concept that sometimes a collective interest is also the national interest has not been thoroughly absorbed. Because when I looked at the way they started with Greece, you know, I say it was a problem of Greece, not a problem for euro. And they were not disciplined enough; others were trying very hard. Then it became Spain and Portugal, and it was treated as a peripheral issue. But in my experience the periphery has an incredible ability to dominate the center if you ignore the periphery. The periphery always dominates the center, and we are seeing it now in Europe.

If they had accepted from the beginning that we are in this together, we are in a common boat, and approached it that way, I think Europe would have been ahead of the curve. Because they didn't, they've taken lots of moves, they've made lots of moves, but it's always behind the curve.

And I recall, about seven years ago, at a press conference in Brussels, the journalists were complaining about all sorts of things about Europe and what had happened. And I recall reminding them that there are many regions in the world which would love to have your problems, you know, given the state they were in. (Laughter) And, in fact, Europe is a wonderful example.

African Union was talking of a union of African states along the European lines, which was not realistic. I mean, they started with 6 countries and objectively in a much better condition than the 53 African countries -- 54 now -- that would have begun to form, but the dream is there. We see it in Latin America, so if Europe and ASEAN talks in those terms. And so if the European Union were to fail, it will be a real disaster for the way we manage this world of ours.

And in that respect, I know some people have wondered why the Nobel Committee gave the prize to the European Union, but I support it fully. Basically they are saying that the European Union has made such a contribution, managed to bring Europe together after two devastating wars last century and have constructed a union, created a project which today makes war in Europe unthinkable, and so encouraging them to stay the course, encouraging them not to let it fall apart, and cheering them on. So I thought it was a good choice.

MR. TALBOTT: Ambassador Strommen of Norway is here. I'm sure he'll include that in his report back to Oslo. (Laughter)

MR. ANNAN: That's not why I said it. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: Questions? Martin Indyk, the director of our

Foreign Policy Program.

MR. INDYK: Thank you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your leadership of the United Nations and for your statesmanship, and thank you for honoring us with your presence here today to launch your book. I wonder if I could ask you about Syria.

MR. ANNAN: Sure.

MR. INDYK: Because here is a case of the international community seemingly unable to support the principal of the responsibility to protect. Some 30,000 Syrians have died already and the number is going up and it looks like no hope for it to end any time soon. And you made a valiant firsthand effort to try to lead the international community in this regard. What can you tell us about the lessons of that experience? And what hope is there that something can change?

MR. ANNAN: Yes. Thank you, Martin, for that question. I think the Syrian situation is a very complex one. I'm one of those who believes that military intervention as such may make the problem worse. I'm one of those who believes that further militarization, as bad as it is, could get the situation worse. We are almost into sectarian war, which can spread beyond the region, and we are seeing a conflict that is spreading beyond the region. And I have said in the past that Syria, unlike Libya, will not implode, but is likely to explode and explode beyond its borders.

We often focus on the Alawis, the Shia, and the Sunnis, and yet you have a whole group of other minorities in Syria, from the Christians to the

Druze to the Assyrians, the Kurds, Ismailis, who are also all caught in the middle. And apart from these groups this is a movement that started as a grassroots political movement, but those peaceful political voices demanding democracy today have been squeezed out. We are focused on the military.

My own view is that we should have pursued the line we agreed to in Geneva on the 30th of June, where foreign ministers came together, foreign ministers of the Permanent Five: Secretary of State Clinton was there, Lavrov was there, with the foreign ministers of Qatar, Kuwait, and Iraq, and secretaries-general of the U.N. and the Arab League. We agreed that the way forward was political settlement and political transition, and that transition meant a transitional government with full executive powers. That implies the government and the power, it has to go out.

And they went on to say that you need to maintain the security forces by giving it top leadership so that they can ensure security and, hopefully, also, contain and protect the weapons, the chemical and biological stockpile; that governmental institutions should work, you should assure each group that their interests will be looked after. In other words, you are telling them give up the fighting and this is the alternative. It's not going to be a winner takes all. And even if they don't go with the political route, I don't think it should be a winner-take-all situation. Neither side will give up unless you give them an alternative of this sort.

And I had hoped that when they returned to New York, they would focus on the substance, the substance of the political session. And for the first

time, all of them, including Russia and China, agreed. But when they got back to New York they focused on reference to Chapter 7 where the Russians and Chinese have told us in New York they wouldn't accept. So in the process we dropped the substance. And yet I'm convinced that sooner or later they will have to go back to this.

But let me also add that on this responsibility to protect, the international community will not be able to intervene in every situation and will be accused of double standards. But my answer to that is the fact that you cannot intervene in every situation does not mean you should not intervene where you can and do it to make a difference. There are situations where use of force would make the situation much worse, that we should look at other things and not even consider force. But I think some governments have made the calculation that the fastest way to end the conflict in Syria is to arm one side or the other to have total victory over the other side. It's not going to happen. They're only going to get more people killed. In the end they need to look for political settlement.

MR. TALBOTT: Staying perhaps with your answer to Martin's question for just a second, you know the Russian leadership.

MR. ANNAN: Yes.

MR. TALBOTT: You know that the Russians are concerned that once again their support for a Chapter 7 solution would come back to haunt them and the region. But at the same time, they are paying a considerable price in the Arab world where they have diplomatic equities and interests. Do you see their

position changing over time?

MR. ANNAN: I hope everybody's extremely concerned at the moment because it's getting worse and it will get worse. I did discuss this with the Russian leadership, including with Putin, including going to a *tête*-à-*tête* with him and Lavrov to discuss this issue, and he shared with me their concerns. I had tried in Geneva to push for an arms embargo and also at the meeting, and raised the question of Chapter 7 with them. On that they maintained that they were deceived in Libya, that they did not stop the Libyan operation. They abstained instead, hoping that we would go in and help the people, protect the people. But that resolution was transformed so quickly into regime change that what I'm referring to would be the slippery slope and they will find themselves with a Libya-type situation.

Secondly, he believes that what happens in Syria will have impact on Russia and its neighborhood. They have their own Islamic problem. U.S., he argues, is very lucky it's at a distant, with two oceans on either side, and it's not as exposed as Russia is. And nobody has been able to tell him what happens when Assad leaves. They also believe that the West goes around saying Assad must leave, which pushes Assad to dig his heels in, and then turn to the Russians to make it happen and that it is not going to happen. I'm sharing the conversation I had with him, and that was not going to happen.

And his key question is what happens when Assad leaves? And this is where the Communiqué and the approach were discussed and becomes important. Let me, for theoretical purposes, say that -- you don't mind my taking

a minute, Strobe.

MR. TALBOTT: Oh, absolutely, yes.

MR. ANNAN: For argument's sake, let's assume everybody agrees to the political settlement and transition, and we agree for a period of a year to go through the political transition. The key question here becomes at what point does Assad leave? The West argues that with Assad in place you will not be able to make any changes or go through transition, so for them Assad must go up front. The Russians talk as if they would want Assad to go, but maybe at the point when you establish the interim government with full executive authorities to be able to ensure that the scaffolding and everything stays in place even when you move him out. When you talk to the Iranians, the Iranians were telling me, including at the level from the -- I spoke to the foreign minister, the national security advisor, and the president. They all had the same message when I pushed them: that we are not -- we accept that Assad may have to go, but the Syrian people should be allowed to decide through elections, even if it's organized under U.N. authority.

And one choice phrase they gave me is, "Democracy is a solution." Democracy is the answer in Syria, you know, so I laugh. But then they tell you, which is also in there, what is good for Syria is good for Bahrain. And they let it hang. And I'm sure they would mention other countries which will have to go through the same thing, and so they are looking at it from their own angle.

So, within that one-year period, the difference I see between the groups is - at what point does Assad leave? So if for those who want Assad to

leave up front, that one year is too long. For those who want to have some mechanism in place so that things don't collapse, letting Assad go up front is not realistic. And when people are that close it would seem to me it's not beyond human imagination and creativity to find a way of working together and pushing the things forward.

Honestly, unless the Security Council comes together, finds some unity, agree on a common approach, they all have common interests in the region, but the way they are going, everybody's going to lose whatever interests they have there. It's going to blow up for everybody. And the Syrians, who paid the biggest price, they are the ones we should all be crying for, you know.

So we will see what happens. They will probably go back. And I would want to see a situation where U.S. and Russia come together to explore what could be the solution and work with the others, pull them in, and find a way forward. It won't happen without that. And in the meantime, countries in the region are pumping lots of weapons into Syria, just as it happened in Libya. And in Libya we know what -- we can't collect these weapons. And a country like Mali has become a collateral damage of Libya.

MR. TALBOTT: Also recalls to mind the experience that you and we had in Balkans during the height of that war.

MR. ANNAN: Yes.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes, this gentleman here and then we'll go to the lady back there, in that order.

MR. MARCUS: Hi. It's an honor for me to be here. I'm Geraldo

Marcus. I'm a student at Georgetown Law.

Right now I just received this flyer. It was about the humanitarian crisis in Syria, where it talks about the 30,000 killed and the 1.2 million refugees and the 2.5 million Syrians that need clothes and food and everything. Right now in Mexico, we've been in a war where we have been -- we have seen 60,000 people die in the last 5 years. We still live in a country where we have 10 million people in extreme poverty and we have, like, illegal refugees that live here in the United States, in quotations. So what would be your (inaudible) or your position on these, the moral obligation of the Mexican government towards their citizens?

What will be your (inaudible) to this war on drugs that has been going for the last five years? And, for example, I would like to kind of remember what Edgardo Buscaglia, who was a counselor of the U.N. on security, said about the paradox of repression, which means more violence generates more violence. So what would be, like, you stand on this war on drugs that Mexico is facing?

MR. ANNAN: I have a feeling you're going to be a good lawyer. (Laughter)

MR. MARCUS: Thank you.

MR. ANNAN: No. Let me say that I know the drug issue is a big one in Mexico, and is becoming big issue globally. Last year, there was a global commission on drugs headed by former President Henrique Cardoso of Brazil. I was on that commission. And the main point in their report was to recommend decriminalization, not legalization. It said decriminalization because of the way

laws are applied which have not worked. We've applied them for decades, it has got the prisons filled with lots of young people who sometimes come out destroyed for having half an ounce or whatever, and that we should approach it through education, health issues, rather than brutal reaction.

There's also a responsibility on the sides of the -- we often focus on the supply side, but there's also the demand side. The two sides have to work together. I know Mexico has been extremely concerned about the gun shops along the border of the U.S. and the free flow of arms, which goes into Mexico to fuel these wars. At the same time, when you look at the results of Calderon's efforts, most people will tell you it has not worked. He's got lots of people that are killed.

There is need for change in policy, but it has to start with the debate and discussion because there are very strong emotions on either side. I tell you the Global Commission report, which was chaired by Cardoso, but I was the one who was attacked by the Moscow drug tsar saying that we are trying to liberally lift -- distribute drugs freely and get everybody on drugs. So we have to start with the debate and I think the whole approach has to be reviewed.

I was worried that you were going to say we should go and intervene in Mexico, but you stayed away from that. That's why I said you're going to be a good lawyer. (Laughter)

MR. TALBOTT: Right there, the lady right there.

MS. ERREGUERENA: Hello. My name is Isabel Erreguerena. I'm a foreign legal specialist in the Public Law and Policy Group.

My question is regarding the responsibility to protect, something you talk in your book you have supported in a long time. And it's regarding what you were saying about the effect of Libya in Syria. And I was wondering if you have any comments in establishing the mandate when you have to intervene. I know your position in Syria's not to intervene, but when you have to intervene so that NATO has enough flexibility to combat, but also has strict standards to prevent abuses, like what happened with Qaddafi.

MR. ANNAN: Yes. First of all, let me stress that responsibility to protect has lots of tools in the box. It's not just military, you know. Let me give you an example that I lived through.

I think that the perhaps the best example is the Kenyan example, where after the elections and there was a conflict, 1,300 people were killed, 650,000 uprooted. And within a week to 10 days, the economies of 3 or 4 neighboring countries were at a standstill, you know: Uganda, Rwanda, Eastern Congo, Burundi and Southern Sudan. Because they all relied on Kenyan infrastructure, so things came to a standstill. Prices shot up and this is a country with 42 tribes, and so we were almost facing another Rwanda. And the African Union asked me and former President Mkapa and Graça Machel, the wife of President Nelson Mandela, to go in and see what we can do to stop the killing.

We managed to get them to agree to form a coalition government and agree on a long list of reforms, including a new constitution, which they managed to pass through a referendum in 2010. During that period, the cooperation with the international community was incredible. The U.S., the

European Union, the African Union, and the U.N., we all worked hand in glove.

Just to give you an example, even when the U.S. Government decided to put sanctions on individuals who were disrupting the process, who were playing the role of spoilers, without telling me the name of all this, they would check is the timing right? Is it the right time or would it be counterproductive? It was that sort of cooperation.

And they told these individuals, when we talk of withdrawing visa, it's not just for you. For all your children studying in the States and your wife who is there shopping, they all cannot go. I mean, and, in fact, not releasing the list was even more powerful. People went around asking are you on it? Who's on it? Who's next? (Laughter) It was quite something.

So I'm sharing this here to say that there are other means sometimes of putting real pressure on the people and it works. But on the question of Syria, when you talk of NATO flexibility that presupposes that the Council will ask for the coalition of the willing, led by NATO, to go in and do what you suggested they do. But I'm not sure that is a likely scenario to happen that often given the history that we just discussed.

But I think even in situations where you do not have the military option, where you cannot use force, one has to look at other things which are viable. Because really, today, some of the countries in the region would want to see intervention. Some are sending in weapons. They also know that the intervention will not take place without NATO. They want NATO to come in. And if NATO is not able or willing to go in, shouldn't we be looking at other options as

to how we help to get the situation under control? Because making public statements, creating the impression that the cavalry's on the way, help is coming, encourages people to be stubborn and many more people get killed.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes, sir, right here.

MR. SCHUMANN: Mr. Secretary-General, my name is Mohammad Schumann. I'm a GW law student and a student at SAIS. And I wanted to ask you about Libya again.

Recently, Human Rights Watch produced a report showing in detail, in a report called "Death of a Dictator," how there were dozens of Qaddafi loyalists who were mass executed. And I was wondering how the international community can encourage the current Libyan government to prosecute what Human Rights Watch described, likely correctly, as war crimes.

MR. ANNAN: I think the situation on the ground in Libya is very difficult. They are trying to establish institutions. Qaddafi did not run the most democratic institution-based regimes, and so these people are starting almost from scratch in many ways. So when we -- and we already have this debate going on about Qaddafi's son, whether he should be tried in Libya or the ICC, and where is he likely to get a fair trial. At the same time, you can't take everybody to the ICC. You have to have local capacity to deal with these kinds of impunities, and it's going to take time.

I don't have a clear answer for your question. I mean, the international community can encourage them and help them set the courts and the systems to be able to deal with this, but it does take time and I don't see it

happening tomorrow. But ICC is seized on the situation, particularly in the case of some of the prominent ones. I'm not sure what his view will be on this.

And we face a situation in Kenya where you have institutions, but four Kenyans are before the ICC. But there were thousands or hundreds involved in the massacre and the displacement of the 650,000 or the 1,300 who were killed. And we've been pressing for five years that they set up a local tribunal to deal with all this who are not at the Hague.

And maybe before we do -- if I may say one word on Libya again because I think it's important. Lots of people go around saying that the attempt to mediate in Syria, my attempt to mediate in Syria, gave Assad more time to kill people. I've never heard such a piece of unmitigated nonsense. Honestly, in effect, you're saying don't even try. Don't give the people hope. Let them go on and kill each other. And this is the propaganda propagated by those who were seeking intervention, who wanted to use force to settle the situation.

I'm sure they've started saying the same thing about Lakhdar Brahimi, who replaced me. But the problem is not the mediator. It's the fighters, the protagonist who refuse to stop. The problem is those who are fueling the war by sending in weapons on either side. I mean, they had over one year to resolve this before I got in. If it was that easy, why didn't they resolve it? I've never heard this nonsense before.

MR. TALBOTT: But you've heard a lot of nonsense over the years. (Laughter) Before we go to other questions I'd just like to stay with that region of the world. For entirely understandable reasons you've been getting

questions, including one teed up by me at the beginning, about the two most violent and disturbing situations. But there's a phenomenon that swept all across the Arab world. We keep giving it different names, the Arab Awakening. How do you assess that general phenomenon? And is there some good news there? Because we've been focusing very much on the bad news.

MR. ANNAN: I thought you are a friend. (Laughter) It's a tough question.

Let me say that one has to look at the Arab Awakening not so much country by country, but also its regional impact. And that regional impact can eventually even spread beyond the Arab region because there's a tendency for people to say if they can do it, why not us? We have similar problems.

But I think when it comes to the outcome and the results it will differ from country to country. I think Tunisia may stand a chance of getting it right. Egypt has challenges, it's a big country. On top of the political problems, there are going to be serious economic problems, you know. These are countries that have lived on tourism; the tourists have stopped coming. Investments are not going in. Reserves are dwindling. And so if you are not careful, you will get to a situation where you will have not just a political problem, but economic and social and financial ones, which makes it messy. And the leaders who take over immediately get challenged, what have you done for us? Why are we still in this situation?

And you're also dealing with newly acquired freedom and a new sense of independence and a new sense of democracy, and they will assert, you

know. I always go back to the comment of Amartya Sen, who as a young boy when through famine in India. And he says people in democracies do not starve. They will get rid of you. They know how to challenge the leaders. And this is something that we need to bear in mind as we see developments in the region.

What is also interesting is, so far, the most organized and cohesive force appears to be the Islamic Brotherhood. And when you have this sort of confused situation, the organized always wins the day. And they've done well in Egypt. They've done well in Tunisia. I will not be surprised if they do well in Syria.

And this sometimes gives the impression to people that you're having a hegemony; that is imagined. Although I believe that the West should be a bit more relaxed about the fact that Muslims or Islamists are becoming prominent in politics. It's an Islamic nation. It's a bit like going to Italy and saying you don't want to see Catholics in politics, you know. You're dreaming. But the main thing is how do you work with them and shape things and move it in the right direction? You can be Islamic and democratic, but there needs to be work.

The thing that we need to watch out for is, so far, all these movements have taken place against the military and autocratic leaders, but not against the monarchies. For how long will that hold? Will it turn in that direction? I think that's something we need to look and watch out for.

MR. TALBOTT: And the monarchies are certainly looking out for it themselves. (Laughter)

David Hamburg.

MR. HAMBURG: It's a very important book. It deals with crucial episodes in the history of the U.N. and is utterly candid, honest, immensely informative, and wise as your discussion of the Middle East has been wise. But I have to say, frankly, you don't do yourself justice in the slightest in this book. I'll just put it in a phrase. When we were working together during the 10 years we worked so closely together you started early to speak about a culture of prevention.

MR. ANNAN: Yes.

MR. HAMBURG: Bob Orr recently gave a marvelous overview of what's happened since you began the culture of prevention. There's a long way to go, but if you're thinking of the long-term potential contributions of the U.N., your culture of prevention is exceedingly important, and I wish you would say something to this audience. I dare say many of the people here have not heard of it. It's a very well kept secret that you devoted much of your time and energy and genius to try and create a culture of prevention, if not today or tomorrow, then 10 or 20 years.

MR. TALBOTT: The first half of David's comment will be an excellent blurb on the paperback version. (Laughter)

MR. ANNAN: No, David, thank you very much, and we did do lots of work together and you did quite a lot on this issue. Unfortunately, there was so much that had gone on and so much that had been done that I had to select and make some choices. I couldn't cover everything without putting out a thousand-page book. And I don't like to read long books and I don't want to

inflict it on anybody, and so we made some choices.

But David is right, that the culture of prevention is extremely important. And if we can prevent crises before they explode we are way ahead of the game. And to get the organizations, governments and institutions, around the world to focus on prevention rather than figuring out where are we going to get the troops, where are we going to get the money to intervene, it would be a much, much better approach.

And I know David is working on a book. When is it coming out, David?

MR. HAMBURG: A few weeks.

MR. ANNAN: A few weeks, which is good. Which is good. So the gap will be filled. (Laughter) But you are right that prevention is always very important to us.

Only yesterday, I was talking to somebody about diplomacy—and I said there are lots of ambassadors here—saying that we tend to focus on the military as the only group that defends us. And yet diplomacy should be seen as a first line of defense, as a first line of trying to nip the problem in the bud, as a first attempt to prevent and to diffuse. But we don't want to invest in it. We invest in the military, give them money they don't ask for, but often don't want to give it to the preventive actions by diplomats.

MR. TALBOTT: Excellent answer. Yes, this gentleman back there.

SPEAKER: Thank you. Hi. It's an honor for me. My name

(inaudible). I'm from SAIS. I'm an Indonesian, so it's a --

MR. ANNAN: Are you also a lawyer? Everybody seems to be a lawyer. (Laughter)

SPEAKER: I'm studying international relations and it's a great honor to be here among all these people. And among all of us, you are the better known that we are living in the world that is, you know, vastly changing and given the problem that you elaborated in the book and the problem you see will continue happening and has yet to be resolved in our world.

And I think -- I also suspect that it's a safe time for me to ask, since you're no longer secretary-general at the United Nations, what do you take on the needs for the U.N. to be reformed in terms of -- especially in the sense of the decision-making process in the U.N. Security Council? And, you know, today the new members of the Security Council are getting selected and how do you see it will affect any future conflicts in the world? Thank you very much.

MR. ANNAN: By the way, I would have answered the question even if I was secretary-general. (Laughter) No, I believe the Security Council and the U.N. should be reformed, and I've made that clear. The financial institutions here in Washington and the Security Council should be reformed.

As secretary-general I proposed a creation of five to six additional permanencies, not with vetoes. Because it's indefensible that today Latin America doesn't have a single permanency. India, with almost a fifth of the world's population, doesn't have a seat. Africa, with 54 countries, doesn't have a single seat, or Japan for that matter, the second largest contributor. On top of

that, today you have emerging nations, including your own country, which are becoming quite powerful and influential. And I think we need to reform the Council for the other regions and other powerful countries to feel that it's fair in terms of representation and in terms of democracy. If it is not done, the Council is going to come under stress and pressure. Instead of collaboration, you may get into destructive competition where some would begin to challenge or ignore Council decisions.

The structure today reflects the realities of 1945. The world has changed and the U.N. has to change. We have to adapt. I don't think we can -- people ask me why don't you take away the vetoes? It's not going to happen. Yes, to take away the vetoes you need the agreement of the countries holding the vetoes. (Laughter) They look after themselves very well.

MR. TALBOTT: Or to share them or to give the vetoes to others.

MR. ANNAN: Or to give -- yes, it's true. And that's not going to happen, but reform is essential and it will come. When? Maybe sooner than we think because there will be pressure.

MR. TALBOTT: Well, you do say in your book at one point that the institution is finally catching up --

MR. ANNAN: That's correct.

MR. TALBOTT: -- with the new configuration of power in the world and that it's maybe at a turning point comparable even to the one that occurred that brought about its founding.

MR. ANNAN: That's it. And I believe in that because of what we

are seeing around the world, not just so much what's happening in the Middle East, but also the emergence of new powers and the role of civil society and the private sector and people-to-people contact. It's really changed quite a lot of the way we used to do business. And I think we should be asking ourselves what should we be doing? What structures do we need? What adjustments do we need? I don't think we are asking that enough, but I see quite a few scholars here that may want to take up this challenge.

MR. TALBOTT: A lady in the back there. Can you get a mic to her?

MS. GARROS: Thank you. Irina Garros (inaudible) Macedonian TV. Finally a question from the media. Mr. Annan, I am pleased to meet you.

MR. TALBOTT: Which media?

MS. GARROS: Macedonian TV.

MR. TALBOTT: Macedonia.

MS. GARROS: Yeah. Back to Europe. For the first time in world history one country, Macedonia, was denied its constitutional name by its neighbor, Greece. You're probably aware of this name dispute which is going on for 20 years now. During your mandate as secretary-general, you didn't find a solution on the name dispute. What do you think now? Is a solution possible?

MR. ANNAN: Well, the two countries have been discussing this for a while, and I named a special envoy. He's been working with -- I think he's one of the longest-serving special envoys. (Laughter) We've been talking to you for almost 20 years, both sides. And at one point it looked as if you had an

agreement, but then it fell apart. You seem ready to -- Macedonia seems ready to accept any compromise that will have the word “Macedonia” in it, but I’m not sure Greece is ready for that. The discussions are going on. There are other priorities in the region, other challenges in the region. Whether it will help in solving the problem or complicate it, I cannot say because I’m not that close to it now. But I think it’s a shame that this issue has dragged on for so long and, hopefully, one will find the way out.

MR. TALBOTT: This gentleman right here.

MR. MUSONI: Thank you very much. My name is Fabrice Musoni. I’m a policy analyst for United to End Genocide, and I wanted to take you to Central Africa.

So you’ve mentioned in your opening remarks that the United Nations could have done a bit more to address maybe the genocide of Rwanda, maybe not stop it, but do a bit more. And then given the historical lessons that we’ve gotten from that, we’ve seen the conflict merge from Rwanda to Eastern Congo and now we’ve seen renewed violence. In your experience working intervention and as a former U.N. secretary-general, what are your thoughts on perhaps replicating the success we’ve seen in Kenya to, hopefully, bring some peace in the region? Thank you.

MR. ANNAN: I think the situation in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo is quite different from the Kenyan situation and it is not going to be that easy to replicate what happened in Kenya there. First of all, you have a situation which is not under, if I may put it this way, effective governmental control. And it

is extremely difficult to get the international community to send in the size of force required to tame that region, to pacify that region.

I hear people talk of the U.N. has 17,000 troops in Congo. What are they doing? You know and I know that given the size of the country, which is almost the size of Western Europe, 17,000 is nothing. In fact, in 1992, when Bush 41 sent in troops to Somalia -- and remember the size of Somalia -- to help with humanitarian assistance, there were thousands. In fact, when you add all the support staff, all the other troops from other countries, it was close to 900,000. And we saw even then the difficulties we run, and no one is going to give us troops anywhere near that number to go and pacify Congo.

We need to find a way of getting the Congolese and the neighbors to work together in a sustained effort. We need a mediator who will sit with them and really work very hard, with other pressures on some of the neighbors and perhaps on Kinshasa itself to do the right thing. But a replication of Kenya is not possible.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes, right there. You're next.

MR. OSMIC: Firstly, I would like to say that it's a great honor to be here. My name is Indir Osmic and I am a Fulbright visiting scholar from Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I have a question in regard to the immunity of the U.N. troops, particularly those lawsuits in front of the Dutch courts which are really actual now. And what's your perspective over that? And what is the future of the immunity of U.N. troops?

MR. ANNAN: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. I know that there are lots of people who believe that the Dutch soldiers should be held accountable. I don't know, for those of you who are not familiar with the Srebrenica case, it was a location, a town in Bosnia that the U.N. declared a safe haven. It declared it a safe haven without the resources to protect it as a safe haven. I was involved and I was head of peacekeeping operations at the time. When they started talking of safe havens I asked one of my generals to do a report for us and to indicate what it entails. The report was very enlightening. It said if you are going to create a safe haven, it has to be large enough, about 36 square diameters, to allow the people in the enclave to live a normal life and for it to be beyond the Serb guns, so that they cannot shoot into it. And he went further to say that -- to require 34,600 troops.

The Council changed the mandate and said go for the lighter substance, 7,600 troops instead of 34,600 that had been required, and said the U.N. use its presence to dissuade Serb attacks. I say the Serbs were so well behaved. Mladić and his men, when they see blue helmets, they wouldn't shoot. So we went in that lightly and faced a situation.

The original soldiers who were there were the Canadians. They managed to get rotated out. And for a while, it took some time to get other governments to agree to go in. The Dutch eventually decided to go in, and we know what happened. The operation was lightly armed and they really -- the commanders will tell that they didn't have the capacity to stop the Serbs coming in, which was probably right.

Do you blame the soldiers who were put in that situation, who couldn't help, or you want to blame those who sent them in unprepared, ill-equipped for the task? I don't know. I'm asking the question. And if indeed we manage to get the Dutch soldiers made accountable and responsible and taken to court or asked to pay compensations, what happens tomorrow if there's another Bosnia? Which government will send troops? Which government will dispose its men and women to be held accountable because they went to help and couldn't fulfill the mandate 100 percent? There are lots of questions about this.

I'm not dismissing your question, but I'm raising other questions for you and the lawyers who are going to consider this to ponder.

MR. TALBOTT: I'm going to give the last question to this very patient lady over here.

DR. McFARLAND: Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Dr. Sherri McFarland. I'm with National Intelligence University. I've really enjoyed the discussion today regarding your book.

I just wanted to get your perspective on the popular consultation process. There are many in the community that feel that it might contribute to the unraveling of the fragile peace that's already been put in place by the comprehensive peace process, the popular consultation might contribute to that. So I just wanted to get your perspective.

MR. ANNAN: The peace process where?

DR. McFARLAND: In Sudan.

MR. ANNAN: In Sudan, okay.

DR. McFARLAND: I'm sorry about that. I should have made it clear.

MR. ANNAN: No, no. I really don't know how to answer that because in some situations popular consultations can be very helpful. In others, it opens up a can of worms, particularly where you have situations where people are vying for power or vying for influence and believe that what one group gains, they lose. Sometimes they use a popular consultation to canvass for support for themselves and it becomes more divisive. But if the questions are said properly and you have a good moderator working with the whole group, with specific questions and issues that they want to deal with and everybody understands that, you may be able to steer them in the right direction. We had that with the Afghans. When we organized the loya jirga in Bonn, where we brought out all the Afghan parties, and it was Lakhdar Brahimi who led the discussions, which led to the formation of the government, then people got so specific it was well-focused. And so if you have that sort of approach it could work. Otherwise, it can be quite messy.

MR. TALBOTT: And I'm going to make a final comment that I hope reflects the views of all of you, but first just a housekeeping point. I would ask that after we have thanked Kofi for being with us you'd all stay in your seats and let me escort him out. Those of you who received invitations to the reception afterwards will be gathering in the Summers Room very nearby.

My final comment is this, and it came to me while listening to

Kofi's end of this terrific conversation he's had with all of us. Sixty-seven years ago, when the United Nations was created and the position of secretary-general was created, it was no accident -- and it happened for reasons that have come up in this conversation -- that not very much power was actually invested in the position of secretary-general of the United Nations. Kofi is many things, but he was not the CEO of the world. And that, of course, derives, among other things, from the jealous guarding of the power of the superpowers at the time and of the Permanent Five since then.

MR. ANNAN: That's correct.

MR. TALBOTT: And those secretaries-general who have been successful, and there have been a couple, have been successful by virtue of their qualities as human beings, their dedication to the values of the institution, and their ability to convey those values to persuade and to explain and to articulate and to personify the best things about the institution. So, in a way, to paraphrase what's often said about a successful President of the United States, a successful secretary-general of the United Nations speaks calmly, but carries a big vision. (Laughter) And I think all of us have had a reminder of what's the good news in this, and this is that when an individual like this gives up the position of secretary-general of the United Nations, he does not give up those gifts and those strengths.

And Kofi, we thank you for bringing those to this auditorium and to this audience this afternoon. So please join me. (Applause)

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