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A PREVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

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Tuesday, September 13, 2005

[TRANSCRIPT PRODUCED FROM A TAPE RECORDING]

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A G E N D A

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. STEINBERG: Well good afternoon, and welcome to Brookings. We're here on the eve of what at least was meant to be an historic U.N. Summit. We'll let you be the judges after we finish talking and answering your questions as to whether it deserves that label.

The 150 heads of state and government coming to gather in New York, months of work leading to this very large gathering, it's been a production that has--was intended at least I think by the Secretary General to really reflect a transformative summit for the U.N., getting it ready for the 21st century, preceded by a very distinguished group, the High Level Panel, which prepared a report for the Secretary General and it became the basis for his own recommendations for the Summit. But now the hard and traditional work of the U.N. has begun to take place, as the member countries grapple with a broad range of issues that have been put on the agenda.

And today, we're going to try to explore a number of the different parameters, not only of the key substantive issues that are facing the members at this Summit meeting, but also some of the internal dynamics and the politics that have led us to get where we've gotten and some assessment of what it might all mean for the future.

The agenda is a very broad one for the Summit; at least it was intended to be. And each of the different countries, of course, bring their own priorities to it, not least of which the United States, and we'll spend a little time focusing on the U.S.'s own goals and strategy here.

Just to tick off some of the topics. Management reform at the U.N. Reform of the Human Rights Commission. The creation of a new Peace Building Commission to deal with, of course, conflict situations, grappling with both the definition and how the international community should deal with the problem of terrorism. Implementation of the Millennium Development Goals, including trade-related issues. The responsibilities of governments and the international system to deal with the problem of genocide and the so-called responsibility to protect. Rules to govern the use of force, particularly the preventive use of force. Strategies to deal with problems with disarmament and arms proliferation, and U.N. Security Council reforms, just to name a few.

Obviously, a very daunting agenda. A lot of ambitious proposals put forward, and now we're about to see what the results of that are. So without further adieu, I'm going to begin with Ann Florini, who's going to give an overview of the Summit and particularly the core question about the management challenges. Ann's been very involved here with an effort in the United States to try to develop a bipartisan approach to U.N. reform. Ann, what's going to—what are we going to see?

MS. FLORINI: Well, let me start by just pointing out why it is that there's been so much focus from the U.S. and some other governments on how it is the U.N. actually runs.

Over the last couple of decades, there's been an enormous shift in what it is that the United Nations does. It used to be primarily a conference

convener and forum for diplomatic activities. And over the last couple of decades, that has very substantially changed.

The United Nations has become more and more an operational agency. Some of this is expansion of things that it's done for quite a while, like peacekeeping, development activities, humanitarian relief, which it now does at a much larger scale than it ever did before. It's got something upwards of 70,000 troops in the field right now in various peacekeeping missions. It's overseeing the tsunami relief effort. It's just operating at a very large scale.

It's also doing a whole number of activities that it didn't used to do. It supervised something like 20 elections around the world in the last year. It's involved in criminal courts, inspections, counterterrorism—a whole range of activities. And that requires a different kind of institution than the one the U.N. was originally set up to be.

It's been clear to people who follow the U.N. for quite a while that the institution had some real flaws in trying to carry out these operational activities. Those flaws became extremely evident in the oil-for-food scandal, when the management systems were simply overstressed. And if you read the Volker Commission Report that came out last week, they make a point of talking about the fact that this isn't a problem with individuals. There are a handful of individuals in the U.N. who are being charged with criminal corruption. But, by and large, this was a systems problem—systems that simply weren't capable of dealing with the scale of activities.

There's a basic management problem. There is literally no one person in charge of running operations. There is no Chief Operating Officer.

The oversight system is much, much too small. The budget system--there are no sunset provisions. So once things start, they just go on forever and they never get reviewed. The personnel system—the Secretary General has no authority to move people around from doing one kind of work to doing another, no matter how the activities in the United Nations are changing.

So, for all of those reasons, there are real fundamental problems with what it is--how it is that the United Nations can carry out the jobs that its member states keep giving it to do.

You would think, looking at that, that getting some management reform in the system wouldn't be all that difficult. It's—the problems are so obvious and so extreme and have been so clearly identified. But there are very big political problems with getting reform, and it is quite likely that the negotiations that are underway right now in New York are not going to lead to agreement in the document that the heads of state are going to sign this week on management reform.

And the reason for that is that it would require that the General Assembly, which is the body that has a representative from each member state, give up a lot of its authority over the budget, over personnel, over how the place runs.

Right now, the General Assembly micromanages the United Nations to an extraordinary degree. It approves each and every individual post. So if

they want to create a new job because, say, they're setting up a counter-terrorism unit, the level at which that post is going to be compensated is decided by the General Assembly, not by the Secretary General

The General Assembly doesn't want to give up the kind of authority that it has because of the major international institutions, the United Nations is the only place where developing countries have an equal voice with developed countries. If you look at the voting structures for organizations like the IMF and the World Bank, it's the large contributors who get the lion's share of the say on how the budget is going to be spent, who gets hired, all of those kinds of questions.

The United Nations is the one exception. And, by and large, the developing countries have made it clear for decades that they're going to cling on to that equality of voice come hell or high water.

So proposals that to the U.S. and Europe look like sensible management reforms that would improve efficiency to developing countries look like a power grab that will undermine their equal say in the only place that they have it.

There's also problems because of the legacy of some past U.S. practices. The U.S. has a habit, over the last couple of decades, of threatening to withhold payments of its legally assessed dues, things that under international law we're required to pay. We used to complain heartily when the Soviet Union tried to withhold its assessed dues in the '60s and '70s. But then in the '80s and '90s, we started doing it no a regular basis. This left an enormous legacy of

bitterness among not only countries that aren't sympathetic to the U.S. in the first place, but even among our closest allies. They felt they had been bullied, and when there was finally agreement several years ago on our paying the arrears from the dues that we hadn't been paying for a while, there were a number of member states who vowed never again. We are not going to let the U.S. push us around like this again.

So that legacy is there, too.

Then there's the usual problems of states simply have different interests. There are global political rivalries. You see this particularly in looking at the fights over Security Council expansion, where every country that thinks it has an argument for why it should have a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council has a regional rival who says absolutely not. We don't want you to have that seat.

Not terribly surprising, but it does mean that it's unfortunate that some much attention has been paid to Security Council expansion at the expense of all of the other issues that Jim outlined.

So let me wrap up with saying where is this going to leave us? What's going to happen over the next couple of days, and where do we go from here?

The most likely outcome is a fairly weak statement. The negotiations are still going on. They were supposed to wrap up yesterday, but they were reconvening as of noon today. So they're meeting as we speak. They are making progress primarily by eliminating everything that's controversial,

which means that the statement that comes out that the heads of state will sign on Thursday or Friday is not going to be very strong.

All of the tough decisions are being shunted off to the General Assembly meetings later in the year. And that leaves the question of can the U.S. still get what it wants. Above all, the highest priorities for the U.S. are probably management reform and reform of the Human Rights Commission, and also not to get stuck with the claim of developing countries that we ought to be contributing 0.7 percent of our GDP to them. We've pretty much already won on that last point.

But to get the others, what the U.S. has to do is engage in some really effective diplomacy and isolate what's truly a handful of recalcitrant states who are most of the problem, particularly on the management reforms. We have to find a way to persuade the vast majority of member states that our emphasis on management reform is not a power grab.

For example, one specific issue where the developing countries are very concerned is the proposal to create a position of a Chief Operating Officer, somebody in charge of making sure that the place actually runs on a day-to-day basis.

Most developing countries see that as a power grab by the U.S., because they assume that an American is going to get that position; and, therefore, the United Nations will be run by an American from now on.

We have to persuade that that's not what's behind the proposal; that it's really a question of making the place run efficiently and effectively. It's

going to take a lot of quiet and patient diplomacy. It's going to take a lot of letting other member states, particularly the British, who, right now, are leading the negotiations, letting them take the lead so it doesn't look like the U.S. against everybody else. And it's not going to be an easy thing at all.

But it is not yet a lost cause.

MR. STEINBERG: Thanks, Ann. Lael, the other great headline, of course, just particularly in the last couple of weeks since Ambassador Bolton arrived in New York, is the question of whether the United States was trying to sabotage the development agenda, and what commitments we should or ought to be making at this meeting. Are we seeing an ultimate watering down in wanting development goals or is there still an agenda left—or will be left—when the session is over?

MS. BRAINARD: Well, it's been a fun week or two to watch. As Ann and Jim have said, this year was supposed to be the first review of the U.N. Millennium Development Goals, which were agreed to much fanfare and after a lot of hard work in 2000. And it's been billed for a long time as the first moment to review progress on the part of both developing countries and developed countries and shine the light on areas where we're falling behind.

The goals themselves are significant primarily as political statements. They signify broad international consensus at the heads of state level, and they affirm basically in essence that the leaders, whether in rich or poor countries put development, put the fight against global poverty right at the top of the global security agenda. And they are extremely important politically.

The gyrations of the Administration on this topic have been I have to say just amusing to watch from afar, if it weren't so troubling. Although it wasn't all together clear what Ambassador Bolton sought to achieve to begin with, I think we can safely conclude that he hasn't done so. He's expended a lot of political capital on this point, but it seems like we are only marginally distant from where we first started. At the end of all of this, there's going to still be language surrounding the Millennium Development Goals in the document. There will still be some kind of language the 0.7 percent of income.

Now, everybody acknowledges that the Millennium Development Goals are ambitious. They are scientifically a little bit hard to ascertain in some cases. The 0.7 percent itself has a long and checkered history. But it does have a long history. It has been around since 1970, and we as a country, as a nation, at the presidential level, have affirmed it as recently as 2002.

So it's a little bit like, you know, with your spouse or your kids. You know, you've been sort of stewing all year, and, you know, the way that you deliver a message, as we all know, is just as important as the message, and just before they're going up on stage to get their soccer trophy, you suddenly just blurt out I just can't stand your haircut. It's really bugging me.

There's many fora in which to address the problems with the Millennium Development Goals, and we've got ample opportunities to work on them.

Why we would suddenly try to torpedo them at the last instant after we have repeatedly affirmed them is puzzling.

You could have imagined a very different approach, in which the Administration touted its very important increases in spending on HIV/AIDS, on emergency assistance to Africa; hold its nose once again while we reaffirmed our commitment to making "concrete" efforts to achieving the 0.7 percent, and then made common cause with the world's poor, even as we here in the United States respond to those in need, those who have been dislocated through forces outside their own control.

Instead, I think the assault on that draft document has helped to solidify support for the Millennium Development Goals among the many skeptics out there in the developing world as well as here in the U.S., while belying the generosity of spirit that the 0.7 percent target embodies. And also that Americans concretely demonstrate every day in their actions.

It also undercuts the President's own emphasis. He has proposed and has now said that he wants to fund $10 million towards a new Fund for Democracy. And he's got other leaders. It will be announced. It's his initiative. And yet, as leaders of newly democratic states know, in poor countries, fragile democracies need to demonstrate very quickly that democracy delivers.

And delivering on the MDGs is just precisely that agenda. It's showing that democratically elected governments can provide for the basic needs of their people for security—physical security, security of property rights, basic aspirations to hold a job, to educate your kids. And so the odd assault on

the whole Millennium Development Goal agenda really undercuts I think America's national security interests and the Administration's own agenda.

MR. STEINBERG: Well, maybe you can say a word about the trade side of this, too.

A lot of the discussion, a lot of criticism has been sort of the linkage of the failure to move forward on DOHA and some of the other issues. The Administration has said well, we're focusing too much on aid and not enough on the core elements of development; that a response of the developing countries is well, maybe you could do something about agricultural subsidies.

MS. BRAINARD: I think the truth is that the developing countries see a United States that is delivering neither on the trade agenda, nor at least rhetorically on the aid agenda. And for the developing countries, many developing countries, the litmus test right now is how bold, hold aggressive the U.S. is prepared to move on agricultural trade at DOHA. And if we had walked into the U.N. World Summit this week with a really bold proposal on dismantling agricultural subsidies here at home or with a piece of legislation more importantly, with a meeting between the Administration and congressional leaders, some concrete action to show that we were focused on this, I think we'd be seeing a very different tone.

But there's no concrete action out there that demonstrates that the United States really, truly wants to deliver on the trade agenda; however, much we believe in it at rhetorical level.

MR. STEINBERG: Mike. There's a lot of security-related issues on the agenda here, ranging from how to deal with the problems of genocide, how to deal with post-conflict situations. Are we going to see anything that's going to make a difference when this is all over in terms of dealing with some of the big security challenges out there?

MR. O'HANLON: That's a good way to put it, Jim, because I want to pick up on Lael's comment and talk about four specific issues, dealing with terrorism, peace operations, Security Council reform, and non-proliferation.

And I'll say relatively kind things about the Bush Administration's approach on the last three, but I think we are missing an opportunity to do something meaningful on counter-terrorism here. There's a lot of attention to the definition of terrorism and trying to establish a convention that would clarify that terrorism is any attack on civilians under any circumstances, in any place. And there's some discussion as to whether that should also include military forces that are in a location not to fight but simply to do training or peacekeeping, whether attacks on those forces should also be considered terrorism. That definition will probably not be given the light of day but we could still see some agreement on this definition. But I would say the greater opportunity to use the U.N. to counter terror is to wrestle with the whole challenge we've been talking about, even Donald Rumsfeld has been acknowledging in this country, how doe make sure that future terrorists are not being created faster and in larger numbers than we're able to neutralize, kill or arrest existing ones? And I think it's largely a proper use of Millennium

Development Goals and the whole broad question of educational and economic reform throughout much of the world in general, and the Islamic World in specific, where we could actually achieve our agenda without having to call it necessarily a counter-terror agenda. But still, these are I think undoubtedly some of the big problems that face the United States today as we try to deal with the Rumsfeld challenge, the Rumsfeld conundrum, which even a hawk like the Secretary of Defense in this Administration has acknowledged to be real problem, and President Bush I think after a very good second inaugural address, in which he tried to get at this question of a long-term strategy for dealing with terror, with his focus on freedom and democracy has not really maintained the momentum of figuring out how to do that; and how to complement the rhetorical emphasis on freedom and democracy with essentially more of a grass roots approach, building up more economic opportunity and greater educational quality.

Again, to go back to the cliché, and it's been challenged by some counter-terrorism experts, but I still think it's largely right, madrassas that preach fundamentalism and jihadism are a problem for the United States. But it's also hard for us to go at them directly and say we want to get rid of madrassas that preach fundamentalist Islam.

It's much healthier and probably more likely to—a list of broad international support to use this concept in the context of the Millennium Challenge Goals, Millennium Challenge Account here at home with the Millennium Goals of the U.N. more generally and talk about these things

internationally across continents, across, different religions and get our benefit in the Islamic world as part of a broader global effort.

So while I have my own qualms about the 0.7 percent goal and don't necessarily find it convincing, I think we should have been again underscoring all the good things we are doing and perhaps finding the wherewithal to do a few more. Even if we're not going to talk 0.7 percent, we could be increasing our aid budget another five to 10 billion, I think in a very appropriate way, and it would have been a good opportunity to think about doing that.

It's probably too late. The policy has been set for going into this Summit. But that's a way in which I think the Bush Administration is missing an opportunity to do something big and meaningful.

On these other three issues that I now want to discuss, I don't necessarily expect big improvement or big accomplishment, but I do think the Administration's approach is largely correct.

Let me start with U.N. Security Council reform. Actually, it's a little hard to figure out exactly where the Administration stands. It seems friendliest of all to the idea that Japan should have a permanent seat, not with a veto, but still a permanent seat. It seems a little more ambiguous on Germany, and not really to have a clear alternative to the High Level Panel—the discussion from the Advisory Group last winter that suggested two different models for expanding the Council by about 10 more members.

I think that we're not likely to see U.N. Security Council reform, and we're not really even engaging in the debate in a serious way.

My own view is it should be viewed as an opportunity to push the idea of democratization further. In other words, the two models for U.N. Security Council reform that were put forth last winter neither one of them in my judgment paid enough attention to the democracy question, because you had countries like Egypt and Nigeria potentially being accorded permanent seats, which I think we should fundamentally oppose as matters of democratic principle. These are not democratic countries. I do not believe, even though the U.N. Security Council has not been about democracy per se in the past, I do not believe that we as the United States should be going along with the notion that would give those kinds of autocracies, which is essentially I think what they are today, even if they're gentler and kinder and reformist sorts of autocracies, give them permanent seats, at least not now.

I'd rather see a situation in which if we're going to give Muslim countries a greater role in the Security Council, as we I think should, that the Bangladesh's and Turkeys and Indonesia's o the world perhaps share the permanent seat or rotate it amongst themselves.

Of course, we acknowledge that India and Japan and Germany and Brazil are big countries that probably need to be brought into this discussion in a serious way. But the Administration seems content to have the competing ideas essentially cancel each other out. I think there's almost no chance, from what I can see, of U.N. Security Council reform.

Whether we could change that fact, I don't know. But I would have liked to see us get into the debate and propose democracy as the guiding

criterion, to try to increase regional representation among big powers, but especially among big democratic powers, making sure we give the Islamic world more voice, again, as part of a counter-terror strategy to make this community feel like we are not at odds with it, not adversarial to it, but do it in a way that doesn't bring in the Egypts of the world just yet on permanent seat, permanent membership, but rather tries to welcome and give a higher priority in place to the Turkeys, the Bangladesh's, the Indonesias, equally large or larger Muslim societies, but with I think much more progressive and democratic forms of government. That would be my second point.

So the Bush Administration is not wrong on this point, but it may be missing an opportunity at least to have a more vigorous debate and get our idea of democratization more central to how that question is addressed.

The third issue: peace operations and humanitarian intervention more generally. I'm not going to talk a lot about Darfur specifically. That was an issue that the congressionally mandated panel on U.N. reform that Ann and I and others here worked with did address. I don't want to spend a lot of time on that in my presentation. But I would simply say this: in broad construct, the U.N. has a role. It can probably do more. It should have somewhat greater capacity for planning and perhaps for providing police for peace operations.

But the Bush Administration on this one I think has it right, which is to try to greatly expand our bilateral aid and training and equipping programs for nation states, specific individual nation states, not necessarily a U.N. kind of organization, but nation states that already have standing militaries and can be

trained and equipped to have better militaries, and primarily in Africa. There has been some of this going back to the Clinton years. There was the Africa Crisis Response Initiative. There were a couple of specific efforts to help the Nigerians get ready for peace operations in West Africa.

Yes, you have to accept a lot of baggage when you do this, because the countries that you help get better at peace operations; have a lot of issues with their own internal politics and have a lot of issues sometimes with the behavior of their peacekeepers, and this is a very important thing for the U.S. also to focus on.

However, I think we have to avoid going so far as to say we're not going to try to help other countries improve their militaries, because the politics are too complicated of being associated with them.

It's very important for the world today to build on the fledgling efforts of the African Union in Darfur and to try to help more African militaries get better trained and equipped to do this kind of peacekeeping on their own.

President Bush has proposed something in the broad range of $100 million in annual U.S. assistance for this purpose. I think that's a very admirable ballpark figure. It's roughly a quintupling of what happened in the also very admirable efforts of the Clinton Administration, but which were just starting this idea going for the first time.

And now, I think President Bush is putting some real muscle and meat and money behind it, if the Congress will go along.

So it remains to be determined just how strong of a message the U.S. sends on this. I hope the Congress as it wraps up appropriations bills and perhaps send a message to the U.N. and to the whole idea of reform this week that we're going to make progress on fully funding the President's request in this area. Again, it's not a direct U.N. operation per se, but it's creating the kind of capacity that the U.N. can then authorize regional organizations for other lead nation states to go out and be the primary player on peace operations, and the U.N. plays more of an oversight and authorizing role. I think that's the right model.

Very quickly on nuclear non-proliferation. This is a huge issue. Obviously, as we wrestle with the Iran question, it underscores the difficulty we're facing here. The non-proliferation treaty of 1968 essentially obliges us to share nuclear technology with countries that allow in inspectors, even if those countries want the technology for purposes that we are nervous about.

But we can't necessarily prove why they really want the nuclear technology. Civilian and weapons programs look a lot alike at a lot of different stages, and many countries over the years have used their codified rights in the non-proliferation treaty to civilian nuclear power to get expertise in nuclear technology, which they then turn to more nefarious purposes, North Korea and Iran being the two clear cases in point in the last few years.

We do need, therefore, a revise way of thinking about the non-proliferation treaty. One big piece of this is the notion the Clinton Administration helped develop in the '90s, which President Bush and others

have tried to promote this decade, which is a much fuller range of inspections, the additional protocol, as it's termed, to require countries if they want to have all this civilian nuclear technology to allow a broader range of inspections of their assets, including essentially challenge inspections in parts of their country that have not been declared as official nuclear sites. That has to be codified I think a little bit more formally or at least agreed to in some kind of a politically binding statement because otherwise we're not likely to see enough pressure brought to bear on the Irans of the world when they got out and say, we're just doing what we're explicitly allowed to do by international treaty. Every country is allowed to have nuclear energy. It's in the Non-Proliferation Treaty. If you deny us that, you're discriminating against us. All of us in this room probably have some realization for why the U.S. and European countries have special concerns about Iran. But Iran can still use this argument, because the Non-Proliferation Treaty is simply too permissive right now on this kind of point.

So what we need to do is something I believe like President Bush proposed a couple of years ago, which is basically to say let's have a moratorium on spreading enrichment technology for a while, and let's try to figure out a little better method of deciding which countries in the future should be allowed to have enrichment technology and other aspects of nuclear fuel cycle technology on their territory, 'cause otherwise, we're essentially helping countries develop nuclear weapons programs by a loophole in the NPT.

So we're not going to see a lot of progress I'm afraid, Jim, unless you tell me I'm wrong and I'd be curious for your views on all four of these topics as well.

But my guess is we're not going to see a lot of progress there, but we really need to keep pushing this issue and pushing is not going to be too hard for the Bush Administration. They can be pretty good at that when they put their mind to it. But I don't necessarily think that they're going to use this opportunity--and maybe the opportunity is just not there.

So the greatest potential for progress would have been on the Millennium Goals partly as a counter-terrorism strategy. Unfortunately, I think we're missing that opportunity.

On the other three issues, the policy looks conceptually more or less right. But either the opportunity isn't there or the diplomacy isn't very effective, and we're not likely to see a lot of progress.

MR. STEINBERG: Thanks, Mike. I want to in conclusion just reflect on the broader question about whether this was a missed opportunity or whether this was destined to produce what I think to avoid simply banalities is I think a very, very disappointing result across the board.

And I think that it's obviously a challenge in any kind of situation like a negotiation of this magnitude to have any expectation that there will be a substantive—a significant substantive outcome. But I think it is fair to say that there was a missed opportunity here, and I think that while we focused in the

presentation on a lot of the responsibility of the Administration's handling--and I'll say a word about that as well—there's a lot of blame to be gone around.

The only hope for a significant outcome was embodied in the core concept in the High Level Panel Report, which was the idea of a grand bargain; that the developed world, and particularly the United States would be able to make progress on important objectives of its own in return for recognition that the developing world in particular had a set of political, economic, and security interests which also needed to be addressed. I mean it's a classic political situation of log rolling, in which you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours. For the United States, the priority clearly was on terrorism and on management reform of the U.N. For the developing world, it was, as Lael suggested, on development issues and also their concepts of security, because for many developing countries what is our priority, our security priority, terrorism, is not theirs. They have other issues like internal conflict that the Peace Building Commission and others might be designed to address.

And whether you agree with the specifics in the High Level Panel report, the core concept there was that each side, if you will—though side is a little bit of an oversimplification—would be willing to move forward on the other's agenda in return for getting them progress on its own agenda—the terrorism one would be a classic example, which is a very categorical rejection of the idea that terrorism is ever justified even as a matter of wars of liberation and the like in return for the developed world to take into account some of the concerns of the developing world.

And what we've seen is rather than embrace an opportunity to try to move forward on multiple agendas, each country, for the most part, has chosen of protecting its interests and being willing to sacrifice gains on things that it might move forward. It's a classic problem of the asymmetries of utility; that countries value more what they've got now, whether it's the developing countries' voice in the General Assembly, whether it's some of the Muslim countries wanting to defend the Palestinians because they want to say that terrorism is part of wars of liberation, or whether it's the United States unwilling to move on the CTBT Article VI side of the NPT that is dealing with our own use of nuclear weapons and our nuclear arsenals in return for getting developing countries to do things that we want.

And so what we've seen here is I think an across the board failure of leadership with a possible exception of the British, who've labored mightily and heroically to try to salvage something here.

And we're getting a business as usual response. And I think it's fair to label it that way. I think that at best there is some minor achievements that hardly require 150 heads of state to come together to bless, and I think a lot of disappointment, a huge loss in public diplomacy for the United States. I have to ask where Karen Hughes was through all this episode, because for all the progress and all the good that the President has done in his immediate aftermath of the election, of the second term, the opening to Europe and the like, it seems to me an enormous amount of damage was done for almost no values, Lael has

suggested in terms of the document, and it's basically rhetorical in any event. But we've--we're seeing once again as pursuing a very narrow agenda.

But again, as I say, on the converse side, we see countries throughout the developing world acting much more like the good old days of the non-aligned movement and not of the kind of the new thinking that I think we need.

Now, the big question is it possible to really do what the High Level Panel suggested and move forward significantly without a major international crisis. That's obviously the big challenge. We have certainly not seen dramatic changes in the way the U.N. has done business since it was created.

But I think that the—we really risk a situation in which more and more we'll see countries opting for alternative solutions rather than using the U.N. if we can't improve the mechanism.

So I come away with this not surprised, but I think a fair sense of there was some opportunity that was lost.

So let's now turn to your questions. As always, we have microphones, so if you would—after I recognize you, if you would identify yourself and then ask your question, and we'll start right here.

MR. PAUL: Thanks. And I'm glad you finished up on a give and take note, because I have a give and take question.

It goes back to development and I'm sure there are plenty of opinions in this—

MR. STEINBERG: Could you just identify yourself, please.

MR. PAUL: Oh, sure. I'm Scott Paul [ph.], Citizens for Global Solutions. I'm sure there are many opinions in this room about the utility of the MDGs and the point seven percent target, but I think it's pretty clear that in the past the Bush Administration, in spite of its own policy, has reaffirmed it in Monterrey; has reaffirmed it in Johannesburg, and I have to ask the question why now do we put up such a big fight against the point seven percent target, especially given all that we have to gain.

So the question is one, why the timing, and two, what do we think we could have built momentum toward? Could we have made progress on the Human Rights Council or the Peace Building Commission or management reform if we were willing to compromise on development? Thank you.

MS. FLORINI: The second part of the question, let me take a stab at that. Yes, I think there was very much an opportunity to make progress on all of those fronts. There was quite a bit of support going in for the Peace Building Commission and there is still some possibility that something will emerge along those lines.

On the Human Rights Council, there was very much of an opportunity to isolate the relative handful of member states who are very much opposed to the kind of changes that we want. It looks like there will still be mention in the outcome document that gets signed this week of there being a new Human Rights Council. What there won't be is any mention of keeping off

member states who are currently under sanctions for human rights violations, which is sort of the minimal U.S. position.

On management reform, there was absolutely, overwhelmingly no question a real opportunity to make progress on some of those changes. The Secretary General, and especially this past year, has undertaken sweeping reforms that he's pretty much done what he can do under his own authority. Whether they will be effectively implemented is another question, 'cause that's always been a problem with the Secretary General.

Everything that remains to be done, however, needs the authorization of the General Assembly, and with the Oil-for-Food scandal a few months ago, there really was a change in the tenor of discussions at the United Nations.

In the spring, the General Assembly even adopted some resolutions starting to make some of the kinds of changes that were necessary. That's come to a dead halt. And that really is a missed opportunity.

MS. BRAINARD: I guess I would say I'm puzzled, too. I think, as my comments made clear, I—in terms of just the development agenda, I don't get it. Just to be clear, I think everybody knows this. The zero point seven percent is not something that we pay to the U.N. This has really no immediate ramifications. And we have affirmed it. I'm sure we will affirm it at some point in the future when there's something on the table that we want.

The other thing that I think is important—I think Jim is right that the conceptual frame here was the Grand Bargain. But I think what we need to

start understanding—and I believe that people actually have started understanding this since September 11th is addressing poverty, addressing fragile states is actually directly in our national interests. So this is not a "you give me this, I'll give you that." This is centrally in our national interest.

We know that the disproportionate amount of failure to achieve on the Millennium Development Goals, whether it be on education, on gender equality, on basic health is going to take place in fragile states. And fragile states are a direct threat to the global security system, undermining the building advocacy movement on this set of issues, undermining the consensus that has been growing among developing countries, that the principal responsibility lies with their leadership and their own civil societies. Through some kind of almost bureaucratic debate about what we should say in this document, it's strikingly puzzling to me.

MR. O'HANLON: I had one quick word. I think that was extremely eloquently put, but I'm going to try to answer your question about—from my point of view, why they did this. The only answer I could offer, even though I agree very much with what Lael has just said and Ann, is that if you do the math, zero point seven percent is sort of astronomical. I mean it's $85 billion a year or so in U.S. aid. We're a $12 trillion economy. Zero point seven percent of our economy is about four times our current development assistance budget; about seven times what it was in the 1990s, and it's just not realistic, therefore.

So the question becomes do you want to have that as a goal because it's always good to shoot for the stars and maybe you get to the moon or do you

want to at least not ruffle the diplomatic feathers because it's been on the table so long. But substantively, objectively speaking, to me it doesn't make a lot of sense.

Lael's convinced me that there is an argument for much more money than we're spending now. And I think that would be a useful idea to keep pushing. But zero point seven percent—a, it was arbitrary to begin with; b, to some extent it flies in the face of what we're trying to do with some foreign aid initiatives now, which is to be more selective and recognize that aid can do harm if given in the wrong circumstances; and, c, it really gets away from the concrete question of much would be the right amount. I'd be a lot more comfortable seeing the U.S. argue for $30 or $40 billion in annual foreign aid, which those are the kind of numbers I could support and make sense to me. Eighty-five or ninety-billion to me just doesn't make objective sense, and I have to believe that's where the Bush Administration is coming from.

They've done the math. They've seen that number. They realize it's four times what our current foreign aid budget is, and they've increased the foreign aid budget in their time in office. They realize we have a big deficit. It just ain't going to happen. And so they're sort of calling a spade a spade, perhaps too bluntly for the good of diplomacy.

But I think that's what it's all about.

MR. STEINBERG: But I think, you know, there were a lot of alternative strategies for how they might have addressed that. And I talked to you a little bit about they could have done something on the trade issue. I mean

they've made a big deal about saying, fine. Okay. Aid should be more selective. It shouldn't be wasted and the arbitrary number probably doesn't make sense.

On the other hand, what it didn't seem like was that there were any initiatives on any front that could allow them to say, here's a better way to deal with it. Here are some things.

You know, I think in answer to the question about why, there's been kind of a standard strategy, which I think to some extent reflects congressional pressures, which is to say you can't do anything until you've done reform. So let's see if the U.N. is serious about reform, and if they are, then we'll move forward on some of these other items. But I think it's just unrealistic to expect that you're going to get all those things you want, where we get a complete 100 percent payment on our agenda before we move forward on others.

Right here.

MR. STEFANI: Stefano Stefanini, Embassy of Italy. I'd like to go back one point which has been shortly mentioned on the Oil-for-Food scandal and the Volker Report to ask your view how much it has derailed the process or whether might have on the contrary pushed the U.N. to the [inaudible] members it was a more predisposition at least to talk about management reform.

And also this is a separate question on something that Mike just said about the reform of the U.N. Security Council. By, you know, the two criteria that you mentioned—democracy and regional representation, does it mean that you'd favor one of the stable view of the U.S. position, the U.N.

Security Council reform as being—to be against a large enlargement as was been said. To be manageable, the U.N. Security Council should grow no more than 20, maybe 21 members.

Now if you put both democracy and regional representation obviously you're moving toward a 25—basically, at least the numbers put forward by the panel or by the proposal which has been circulated at the U.N. Thanks.

MS. FLORINI: If I could start with the Oil-for-Food scandal and its effects. I think it had two contradictory effects. The first one was that it created a more positive agenda for talking about management reform. It certainly got the upper levels of the secretariat to be much more serious about significant management reform than they ever had been before. They became extremely receptive to the idea.

But the second, more indirect, effect was that it drove the U.S. Congress ballistic. They had something like half a dozen committees holding innumerable, innumerable hearings, where they were arguing over was this $85,000 misspent in the Oil-for-Food Program. It got to a ridiculous level of micromanagement.

The result of that was some legislation called the Hyde Legislation, which laid out a series of reforms that the U.N. must undertake, and if it did not undertake them promptly, the U.S. would withhold half of its dues, leaving no flexibility even to the Administration about whether it would withhold its dues.

There's bill--that has passed the House. There are bills pending in the Senate, one of which is pretty much the same; the other of which at least leaves it to the discretion of the Administration to decide whether the dues withholding should take place. That had a very unfortunate political impact in New York, because there is already so much hostility toward the U.S. throwing its weight around on withholding dues that it doesn't actually have a legal right to withhold under the U.N. Charter. And it's an approach that I think made it that much easier for the half dozen or so states who are truly recalcitrant, who truly do not want to see any kind of significant management reform, to argue that this was just the U.S. doing its usual bullying act and that, therefore, the developing countries should not go along with it.

And so I think in sum, it ended up having some positive effect, at least initially. But once this legislation started moving, I think it became rather negative.

MR. O'HANLON: If I was going to make democratization and regional representation two important criteria, it could reduce the number of eligible countries as well, depending on how you approached it. And, in fact, I would add a third criterion, which is non-proliferation strategy. And I'm a little nervous about rewarding India with a permanent seat at this moment until we've seen some progress on at least some of the things that our own scholars here at Brookings—Strobe Talbot and others—have called for in terms of India showing some further commitment to a non-proliferation agenda. And having their

nuclear weapons arsenal arise in one decade and then very shortly thereafter a permanent seat awarded to them makes me a little bit nervous.

So I'd actually be—I'm not that concerned about Security Council reform in one sense, because I think the moment is not right for India. I think the idea of Germany getting a seat over represents Europe, and also weakens the argument for the EU perhaps having a seat at some future date. I don't know how to sort out the question of which Islamic country should get this, if any, at the moment, and so actually I shouldn't have sounded critical of the Bush Administration before because I'm content with paralysis because I can't see a better way. But I think if we could get to a point where India committed to some non-proliferation reforms, where Germany said, well, we'll take the seat for now, but maybe we'll give it to the EU in five or 10 years, where Africa could figure out a collective strategy that wouldn't reward the Nigerias, but maybe give the AU the seat or maybe other countries that were democracies could rotate it for a while until they figured out a longer term solution. If you had that kind of consensus forming, from a number of different directions, you might wind up at 20 or 21 in a way that made sense.

But I don't see either of the two proposals from the High Level Panel being very workable at this time.

MR. STEINBERG: Just to also take an opportunity to say something favorable about the Administration's approach.

I mean I think the Administration is right in saying that the overwhelming criterion has to be effectiveness. It's in nobody's interest, and the

Security Council would become even less effective than it is now, because it will just become irrelevant. And you know people might be very gratified in their nations' capitals that they can say well, we have a seat on the Security Council. But if nobody ever goes there and countries act unilaterally or ad hoc coalitions all the time because they think it's futile to use the Security Council, then it will be a pyrrhic victory to have expanded the Council to get new members on it.

And so Secretary Rice made very clear that effectiveness is the overwhelming criterion. But it is also the case that within the elements of effectiveness is legitimacy, because the Council is only effective if it is perceived as acting legitimately. Now, there are lots of grounds for legitimacy. Regional representation is an element of it. Representation of large population is an element. Democratization is an element of it because those governments which actually reflect the wills of their people have a much greater claim to be able to speak in an international forum than those who, even though they have a large population, actually don't have any connection to the population that they purport to represent.

And so you can't fully divorce the idea of is the membership right in terms of legitimacy of the Security Council from the effectiveness. But it also the case that expansion simply to kind of mirror the world's demographics isn't in anybody's interest, and to replicate the problems of the General Assembly, which is essentially becoming ineffective—it was a very effective

institution, but generally sort of a paralyzed institution—is not in anybody's interest.

And so as somebody who spent seven years trying to answer the conundrum of how you do this, I do have some sympathy for the Administration's difficulty in finding an answer that increases the sense of legitimacy, which is no adequate in the Security Council, but doesn't lead it to just become a debating society which is unable to act in moments of importance and urgency.

MR. MIYAZA: My name is Mike Miyazawa. In Japan, there have been reports that the government of Japan plans to request the reduction of U.N. dues in case it cannot be guaranteed a permanent seat on the Security Council. My question is if Japan actually does follow-up on this plan, what would be the reaction from Washington, including the Administration, Capitol Hill, and opinion leaders of think tanks?

Before I hear the response from the panelists, I would like to remind everybody in this room that Japan's approach to request a reduction is very moderate, very polite, and non-unilateral, compared with the U.S. approach, like the Coleman-Lugar bill to call for mandatory withholding of U.N. dues in case U.S. requests are not met.

MS. FLORINI: Okay. I think there is a certain amount of terror at the prospect that Japan might put this request forward. The U.S., in the negotiations that eventually got us to pay back the arrears from the dues that we had withheld--let me back up and just explain what it is that these dues are.

Countries are assessed on the basis of a formula that reflects their economic weight. The U.S. right now pays a share that is substantially less than its actual economic weight in the world. That was the outcome of the negotiations that led us to pay back our arrearage. Japan picked up most of the slack. And Japan's argument since then has been that given that it is paying well above its economic weight, it ought to be rewarded with a permanent seat on the Security Council, which is one reason that the United States has been supporting Japan's claim and nobody else's essentially for that permanent seat.

If Japan were to put forward this request, it would again open up this whole question of who really owes what share of dues. It is very clear that this Congress is never going to agree to an increase in the U.S. share that would actually reflect our economic weight in the world, partly because we make voluntary contributions that are substantially larger than anybody else's, partly because there's a lot of people in Congress who don't really want to be paying the U.N. anything, especially for the assessed programs. They like the voluntary programs, but they do not like most of the assessed programs.

So there's no possibility of the U.S. picking up some of that slack from Japan. It's not clear whether the Europeans would be eager to step in and negotiate a solution that would be satisfactory for Japan. It's not clear that there is a satisfactory solution, should Japan make this request.

MR. STEINBERG: I would come at the question differently and say anybody who wants to take the bet as to whether Japan will actually make the request, I would be happy to take that bet, because I understand why the

leadership is making those noises right now. My own judgment is that there is zero chance that they will make that request, and I'm sure that if there were some sentiment to do it, the conversations between Washington and Tokyo would put that to rest.

MR. MATTHEWS: Mark Matthews, the Baltimore Sun. The General Assembly follows closely on the heels of the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and that raises a couple of questions. Do you think the Security Council will try to grapple with the issue of to what extent the occupation of Gaza has ended, and will the General Assembly revisit the issue of the separation barrier and the International Court of Justice decision on that?

MR. STEINBERG: I'm somewhat more confident to the answer to the first part than the second part, because I think it's always unpredictable how the General Assembly will deal with Middle Eastern issues, and there's no—I mean I would be surprised I guess in general given that the relatively positive momentum at the moment that it would be seen by anybody as particularly advantageous to try to push U.N. involvement at this point. There is a Quartet meeting scheduled in the margins. I forget what the exact date is. But I think in general there is a sense that, you know, there's a lot of anxiety in a number of quarters about is this Gaza first or Gaza last that it happened, and it happened—and there are obviously some real challenges now, but it happened in a way that probably was better than most people would have guessed that it happened. It happened on time. The settler resistance was there, but it was not ugly. Sharon stayed the course, notwithstanding the criticisms.

And so it's hard for me to imagine that this will become a flash point right now. I mean I'm sure there will be some speeches given, but I think even in the Arab world—I think that Egypt is right now focused on trying to get the next steps to be taken, including opening access to Gaza and the like. I think those are the issues that are going to be the focus, and if it looks like the Quartet is engaging on those, it seems to me that the incentive for debate—I mean I'm sure there will be a few kind of fundamentalist Arab or Muslim states that would like to have some discussion about this. The Palestinians will certainly—don't want to keep the issue alive. But my sense is that the timing right now is such—I mean if it happened so that the thing had gotten put off, and it was still pending while these meetings were taking place, it might be more controversial.

But I think it's more going to be speeches to the effect that, you know, don't let Sharon off the hook now that he's taken these first steps. But I'd be surprised if there was sort of major real grappling with the issues either on the Security Council or even in a significant way in the General Assembly.

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks. Gary Mitchell from the Mitchell Report. I want to ask a sort of two-part question that is admittedly cynical. But as I've sat and listened, I began to--my mind began to wander back to the early '80s and the sort of Reagan-Stockman budget strategy, and when I heard I think say that, you know, something about if the Security Council is enlarged and if things go in a certain direction, it becomes less effective and then, you know, the U.N. — maybe it was you said, you know, the U.N. really doesn't matter anymore—and I

thought to myself that doesn't sound like it would be an enormous disappointment to this Administration and a number of their congressional colleagues.

And I wonder, somewhat seriously, whether or not we're not—you know, we're not paying attention to a sort of diplomatic strategy that is maybe being executed more brilliantly from their perspective than an objective observer might conclude.

And the sort of second part of this, which is really not as related to the specifics of this meeting of the U.N., but I want to touch on it anyway. Richard Haas [ph.] wrote a piece last weekend talking about how Katrina has the capacity to be damaging to America's capacity to successfully practice its foreign policy. And I guess my question is what are the reactions of anybody on the panel to that notion? And secondly, depending upon your answer to that, as result of Katrina, do we come into this meeting slightly damaged goods?

MR. STEINBERG: Let me try a little bit on this. I mean I think it's always perilous to try to read internally what the Administration's deep strategy is. I mean I could have my own views about what the different members of the Administration think is the long-term value of a place like the U.N. But for me, that's really irrelevant.

The issue here is the one that I think most of us are focused on, which is the public diplomacy side, which is whether or not you think the U.N. should be a long-term part of the U.S. strategy, whether having an effective, functioning U.N. is a value added, and I would probably guess that most of us

there is some at least value there. But even if you didn't think there was any, the question is do you want to be seen as, you know, driving the stake through the heart of the U.N.?

And it seemed to me that beginning with this second term that one of the lessons the Administration had learned and taken quite seriously is that you can do things--you can kill with kindness or you can kill with harshness, and that they weren't going to repeat what they did with Kyoto in the first term and some of the other things, which is simply to say, you know, we don't have to be polite or—

[End of Tape 1, Side A; flip to Side B.]

MR. STEINBERG: [In progress.] —just kind of talk plain and straight, and we think it stinks, we're going to call it the way we see it. And, you know, we saw a lot more of the sense of recognizing that style mattered, and that engagement mattered, and consultation mattered, and that's a good thing. I mean I don't think that's cynical. I think that—because the very fact of doing it puts you in a conversation and recognizes that, you know, it's a decent respect for the opinions of mankind is relevant to our long-term success. So the question on all of this is not whether they have a deep strategy that sees the U.N. as irrelevant, they could have done the same without making the United States the center of attention at the summit.

I mean the U.N. is perfectly capable of failing in its own right without our helping it. It's not capable of succeeding without our helping it.

But I think that in that sense, it's just—that's why whatever their long-term strategy is, it just doesn't seem to make any sense in my judgment.

On the Katrina thing, once again, I mean, this is 9/11 redux, which is that there was an opportunity—the world's sympathy came out to the United States in response to this. People had seen, you know, that even a great power, you know, is helpless at the hands of the great forces of Nature and that the same forces that could create a tsunami in poor countries could do this. And there was a tremendous outpouring of not only sympathy but offers of help. And our initial reaction was we don't need any help. We know how to do this. You know, we do it all by ourselves, and so I don't think it paralyzed our ability to do foreign policy, but I mean a little bit of humility here, too, in saying, gee, you know, yeah. We do need help, and this did overwhelm us a little bit could have been another public relations benefit. Just as we got the benefit from helping with the tsunami, I think we would have gotten some benefit from a little humility in saying, gee, you know, even superpowers need in help in situations like this.

So that's the biggest blow I think to our foreign policy was somehow a sense that once again we couldn't capitalize on the global empathy that was the reaction to this great tragedy.

Let's go over there. Yeah.

MR. TARUSHIM: Thank you. I actually have two quick questions.

MR. STEINBERG: Could you just identify yourself, please?

MR. TARUSHIM: I'm Sap Tarushim [ph.]. I'm with the Public International Law and Policy Group. I initially—absolutely, I sympathize with the Bush Administration as well, but that's for far too many reasons.

I was curious about your comments on the expansion of the Security Council. Because I way I see it that diplomatically the way you sort of, you know, a compromise between sovereign equality and giving some states permanent seats and a veto was that—you know, it was sort of a Spiderman principle. You said, you know, those with the greatest power have the greatest responsibility. But the reason I think the Security Council expansion would probably work out to something is because it would serve as a simple check and balance on, you know, expansionism or unilateralism. And I think that sort of ties up to nuclear non-proliferation, because I think a lot of countries look at, you know, the ability of having nuclear power as a deterrent against interventionist or unilateral action against them.

So I think first of all the expansion very simply creates a check and balance system within the Security Council. I'm curious as to why you think it would make it less effective?

MR. STEINBERG: Because the Security Council has no recourse against unilateral actions by members; and, therefore, if the United States in particular believes that the Security Council is so ineffective that it cannot rely on the Security Council to deal with problems of great concern to the United States, then we'll simply ignore it. And we've demonstrated that quite evidently.

So the insight of the High Level Panel was to say if you want particularly the United States to take the Security Council more seriously and to have a stronger argument against unilateralism, you have to have a Security Council which is more willing to act in the face of modern threats, particularly terrorists.

But the converse is equally true, which is that if the Council is not wiling to step up to what the High Level Panel identified as a need for a more proactive and more interventionist strategy by the Council, then states will simply act on their own.

So I don't think there is—there is no Supreme Court that can say, well, you know, the United States is acting unilaterally and it's in contravention of what the Council wants, and, therefore, it must stop. I won't stop.

And, therefore, it is on the one hand, you know, it is—it doesn't work for the United States simply to say well, we'll go to the Council only when like it and not when we don't. But for it to be credible in the U.S., it has to be able to demonstrate that in important circumstances, it will be able to act.

And the reality of the track record is pretty mediocre over the last 15 years--going back to the Clinton Administration and the Balkans, when the Council was not able to act, and then obviously from the Bush Administration's point of view in dealing with terrorism.

So I don't think that you can use a check and balance model as the relevant framework to think about this. It's more—does it—does the Council establish an adequate track record that within the domestic political debate in

the United States, it's possible to say, gee, we should take the Council seriously because it really does step up to the plate in circumstances in which real security interests are implicated.

Let' go all the way to the back.

MR. ROSON: My name is Dick Roson [ph.]. I'm with the Council for a Community of Democracies.

I'd like to ask a question related to what Mike O'Hanlon said about democratization and the role it might play in bringing about some break out from this dilemma that you've all described. The Council—the Community rather is a representative of over 100 democracies, and they've set up a U.N. Democracy Caucus. And the question is whether that U.N. Democracy Caucus, made up of the democratic nations who are members of the U.N., would have a role. They are going to meet on September 19th after the Summit Meeting to address some of the problems that were either not addressed or addressed in a way that they consider inadequate. But can this group exert a force as a caucus that would break through on the democratization issues which you've raised.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm not sure I see—when I go through the issues that are likely to stymie the Council or the General Assembly and already have shown signs of doing so, I'm not sure I see one where this group, which I much admire and agree with you is an important group, would make a big difference right now. I hope I'm wrong, but as I think about whether it's the NPT issue, whether it's the broader way in which you pursue Millennium Development Goals, the development of counter-terrorism strategy, Security Council reform,

I'm just not clear on which one of these--I'm trying to think them through as you asked, and as I respond--I'm not sure where I see the potential for progress. I'd like to think I'm wrong, but I think the debates are so far from fruition on most of these points that getting the muscle of those hundred countries behind is not likely to make enough of a difference at this particular moment.

Again, I very much hope—for example, on the Development Goals, it's the United States, the world's richest democracy, which is the chief roadblock to not only this particular zero point seven percent goal, but even more modest propositions.

On Security Council reform, we obviously can't agree amongst ourselves whether it's, you know, U.S. views on Brazil and India, Italian views on Germany, what have you. Democracies don't agree on what the Security Council reforms should be.

So as you go through the list, I'm just not sure I see a big obvious case, although I'd love to be proven wrong.

MS. FLORINI: I think that's probably true on the security issues and particularly in the short term. But I think the Community of Democracies actually does hold out hope for longer term reform of the United Nations, and I think, even though our emphasis right now is on what's happening this week in New York, it is very important to return to something that's a cliché in U.N. circles: reform is a process, not an event.

And you—I think a big mistake that was made by the Secretary General and by several others was to focus so much attention on the U.N. is in a

moment of crisis. It must make these changes right now. I think that's simply not true. The U.N. is in need of an ongoing reform process that is going to take years to play out. What is happening this week is a step.

It should have been a big step. It's turning into at best a baby step. It might not be any progress whatsoever. But that's all it was ever going to be is one step in what has to be an ongoing process.

There are several areas where, over time, the Community of Democracies can make a huge difference, because part of what has stymied significant change at the United Nations is that it's all divided up into regional caucuses. And those regional caucuses may or may not represent the shared interests of the states that happen to be members of them. Geography is not always destiny. Democracy can be a much stronger tie for some of these issues like the creation of a new Human Rights Council, like a Peace Building Commission, like some of the management reforms that are really based on fundamental concepts of openness, transparency, and accountability that are fundamental to democracy.

So in all of those areas, if the Community of Democracies becomes an effective caucus, where this hundred odd countries actually stick together and push together for a set of reforms, they can't do it themselves. The—in order to bring about some of these reforms, you need 128 member states, which is two-thirds of the total membership, and they aren't there yet. But they could certainly have a huge, huge impact.

MR. FRIEZE: Hi. I'm Lauren Frieze [ph.] with the Department of State. I think Ann just gave a good lead way into my question and that is after these two weeks, there seems to be a consensus that there is a bit of a missed opportunity here when it comes to the outcome documents. But what can we do in the following months, particularly for the public diplomacy agenda, to make these into a baby step that moves into some larger steps down the line? What would be your recommended public diplomacy strategy?

MS. FLORINI: Let me answer it in a slightly different way rather than laying out public diplomacy strategies. Let's think about what the best case and worst case outcomes are over the next few weeks, few months of what could happen to the United Nations.

I think pretty clearly the worst--the single worst case outcome is that the equivalent of the Hyde legislation passes in the Senate and becomes law. The U.S. puts forward these 38 precise steps that the U.N. must undertake, and, if it doesn't undertake all of them, we withhold half of our dues.

That gives Japan cover to do—to withhold some of its dues, and the United Nations becomes a shadow of even what it is now, much less what it could have been.

This I think is a somewhat unlikely prospect, because the Bush Administration has so strongly opposed the withholding legislation, but it is not an impossibility, particularly if things completely fall apart this week and Congress says that there's no progress whatsoever.

The best case outcome I think is that we start engaging now in some effective quiet diplomacy. I'm not sure we have a public diplomacy strategy that we need to undertake for the next couple of weeks or months. It's a much more quiet one. The scuttlebutt coming out of New York is that Bolton and others in the United States team seem to be learning quite quickly how business is actually done at the United Nations, becoming more effective, perhaps not going in with quite so heavy handed an approach of making 750 changes or whatever it was in an agreed document.

And that effective quiet diplomacy approach is I think what we really badly need so that at the end of this General Assembly, it's possible to point to specific General Assembly resolutions on creating the Human Rights Council, establishing at least the beginnings of a Peace Building Commission, taking some of the steps that are needed on management reform so that something of a sense of momentum develops.

MR. BRAINARD: It's a good question. I think I am not convinced that--although I think the damage has been done in the public diplomacy side and the development agenda—I think the damage has to be undone on the actual policy initiative side, which is much tougher.

But both in terms of building goodwill among the developing world, but also in terms of a legacy initiative, probably the most important single thing the President can do in the next few months is to work hard at home to build political support for a really bold approach to DOHA on agriculture. And he

can do it. I mean that's where I think the Administration is as a matter of principle. They've just never delivered in practice on that because it's hard.

Now, does Katrina make that harder? I think so. I think the likelihood of that has just been diminished, but that would be the answer. That would be bold. It would really move the international agenda forward in a way that has material impact very directly on the poorest countries of the world, and it would build tremendous amount of goodwill.

One thing--the other thing I will say that's been interesting to watch over the last few years is while trade moved ahead and there was a trade, not aid kind of rap that the U.S. was it with a lot in the '90s, what's been interesting in the last few years is that trade has seemed more politically constrained interestingly than aid. And so we haven't seen any really bold moves in the last few years.

MS. MULLEN: Mary Mullen, and I work with the Bosnia Support Committee. I was wondering about the Secretary General of the U.N. How much power does he have? How much should he have? Can he make a quick decision? For instance, in genocide, in cases of genocide or I mean I just had heard that they did want some changes with the Secretary General and, you know, his position and what he can do in his position.

Also, I just wanted to ask about—I've heard panels on Europe and how they want the U.N. changed, and it seemed that they have some different ideas than you do, and I was wondering how the United States and the Europeans are cooperating in the changes that they want made.

MS. FLORINI: Yeah. On the Secretary General, it's almost impossible to make clear just how little power the Secretary General actually has. He certainly is not a CEO. He, in many ways, is primarily a figurehead and the Chief Diplomat. He is authorized under the Charter to bring matters to the attention of the Security Council. But he literally can't go and hire the staff that he needs. He cannot move budget allocations around from one department to another or even line items within a given department without the express approval of the General Assembly. He can do almost nothing because the micromanagement by the General Assembly is so extreme, it is so egregious, that the complaint of the secretariat is often we're being held accountable for things over which we have no control and that is very often true.

It is certainly not the case that he can take action on genocide. He can bring it to the attention of the Security Council. He can talk about it publicly. He can persuade them to go and meet in places near where genocide is happening, as he has done this last year. But he himself can undertake essentially no action whatsoever.

When he sends special representatives, they often are acting on a voluntary basis, because there's no budget for them.

MR. STEINBERG: Okay. Well, thank you all. And thank all the panelists.

[Applause.]

[END OF TAPED RECORDING.]

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