

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

“THE POST AMERICAN WORLD”

A DISCUSSION WITH FAREED ZAKARIA

Washington, D.C.

Thursday, May 15, 2008

Introduction and Moderator:

DANIEL BENJAMIN
Senior Fellow and Director
Center on the United States and Europe
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

FAREED ZAKARIA
Editor
Newsweek International

STROBE TALBOTT
The Brookings Institution

* * * * *

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. BENJAMIN: I'm Daniel Benjamin. I'm the director of the Center on the United States and Europe. And I'm delighted today to welcome Fareed Zakaria here.

Fareed is going to discuss his new book, *The Post American World*. And he will be engaged in conversation by our own Strobe Talbott.

If ever there was an event at Brookings in which the participants needed little introduction, this is probably it. But I wouldn't dare miss the opportunity.

Fareed is the editor of *Newsweek International*. He is known -- I think to everyone here -- as one of the foremost analysts of international affairs today. His column appears in *Newsweek*, in the *Washington Post*. He has a new show coming on CNN -- has it started already?

MR. ZAKARIA: June 1st.

MR. BENJAMIN: June 1st. And I'm delighted to say that he's given us a very erudite, elegantly written book, filled with wisdom and insight. I'm also impressed, and need t o say that it was, when I last checked on Amazon, the number one non-fiction bestseller and, I think, in the top five overall.

So if that isn't enough by way of praise, let me just say I'm planning to write my next book under your byline, Fareed.

(Laughter)

Over to my far right is Strobe Talbott. Strobe, as you all know, was Deputy Secretary of State during the Clinton administration. He was a long-time columnist for Time magazine, and a reporter for that publication. He is the author of numerous books including, most recently, *The Great Experiment: the Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States and the Quest for a Global Nation*. He is also, I should add, my boss, the President of the Brookings Institution.

(Laughter)

So, given those circumstances, you won't be surprised when I say it's very gratifying for me to be seated here next to the Ted Williams and Joe DiMaggio of contemporary foreign affairs writing. Or perhaps I should say -- to avoid sports metaphors -- the Braque and Picasso of the genre.

But let me start out by asking Fareed: *The Post-American World* -- it's kind of a, to an American, it's a kind of shocking title, and a scary one. And yet it seems to me you've written a very serene book, in some ways -- or one that is counseling serenity.

Are we losing ground? Or are others pulling even with us?
And are we all going to benefit for it in the long run?

Why don't you give us a précis of this very good book?

MR. ZAKARIA: Thank you so much, Dan. And it's a pleasure to be here with Strobe and with Dan -- both friends. The last time I saw Dan, I think, in any great -- at any great length, we were both huffing and puffing up a mountain in Colorado. So it's nice to see you with a suit on.

The idea for the book came to me when I was in a taxi in Singapore. I was being shown -- getting from someplace to the other, and the taxi driver points out to me a Ferris wheel. And I said, in a somewhat childish and probably patronizing way, I said, "Oh, it's so wonderful. You have a Ferris wheel here." And he looked back at me and he said, "Sir, this is the largest Ferris wheel in the world."

(Laughter)

And I, a couple of months later, was in a mall in China called the South China Mall in Beijing, for those of you who've been. And it's acres and acres, and it seemed to me to go on forever. And I said to the person who was showing me around, I said, this is a very big mall. And he said -- as you can imagine -- it is the largest mall in the world.

Now, at that point I didn't say anything. I had learned my lesson. But I thought that that couldn't be right, because I had been to the Mall of the Americas [sic] in Minneapolis, which says that it's the largest mall in the world. And so I went back and did the kind of exhaustive scholarship that journalists do -- I Googled. And very quickly, in my hotel room, came to the realization that, indeed, the Mall of the Americas [sic] had been the largest mall in the world, but it didn't make the top 10 anymore. They were all in India and China.

And I began kind of putting together a little list to myself, and realized, of course, you know, the largest publicly traded corporation in the world is now in Beijing, PetroChina. Most weeks, depending on the stock market, the richest man in the world is in Mexico City. The largest refinery in the world is being built in Jamnagar in India -- and so on.

And, you know, 20 years ago most of these lists that you had constructed would have been dominated by America. And for me, perhaps, it was particularly striking because I remember growing up in India, you always looked for the biggest, the best, the most advanced thing, and you always assumed it was going to be in America -- probably specifically in California. I mean, part of California is the place that was inventing the future.

And what I tried to write in this book is the way in which that world is ending, the world in which the United States really was the political, military, economic, technological, cultural, artistic center of the world. And it is moving to a world with many different centers.

It is not that the United States is not important. It remains immensely important. And at a political/military level, we are still basically in a kind of unipolar world -- though probably a fraying unipolar world.

But in every other dimension of power -- you know, industrial, financial, cultural -- you see the future being shaped in many different places. And I was trying to capture that sense, and to try to discuss what it meant economically, politically, culturally, to live in a world that for the first time had so many different centers of power.

I mean, to me, the most striking statistic that I found when researching the book was -- just in the World Bank tables -- I calculated the number of countries that were growing at over 4 percent a year. And last year it was 124. And the year before it was 124 -- 90, by the way, are growing at over 5 percent a year, 30 in Africa.

So all of a sudden you're seeing this kind of bottoms-up process of growth taking place around the world, and I was trying to ask myself, well, what does this do to the world order that we have become

comfortable with, we know, and that we happen, you know, to be particularly attached to because we're at the center of it?

And to answer your question directly, Dan, I came to the view that the biggest strategic challenge the United States faces is that looking at his world for the next 10, 15, 20 years, you can have one of two reactions. You can be frightened by it, and resist it in some way or the other. Or you can look at it as a win-win, embrace it, and try to make the best of it, and try to strengthen America's central role in it.

And I very much believe that that latter option is possible. But I do also believe that we will face a choice, and we do face a choice in this country, of how to react to this shift in global power. Do we embrace it, or do we fight it?

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, you devote an awful lot of the book to the two major rising powers, to China and India. And it's your conviction, essentially, that their long-term aims are to take a seat at the table, at a table which is governed by the same -- shall we say? -- rules that we play by.

Wouldn't you say that that's a fair assessment? I mean, you seem very calm about these rising powers in a period of screaming headlines. And I give you a lot of credit for looking beyond the paranoia of many moments -- because it's not just one moment that we've had this

kind of thing. Indeed, China-bashing seems to be a quadrennial illness in America.

But you're pretty well convinced that this is the same game that they want to be part of.

MR. ZAKARIA: Well, I think that, you know, it's easy, it's a kind of cheap, two-cent pessimism, or dime store pessimism that one can adopt and, you know, be sort of pseudo real-politique about it, and talk about the struggle for power, and the way in which nations are motivated by the same things they have, and quote Thucydides, and suggest that, you know, the rise of these kinds of nations will return us to that world.

But look at the world we are living in. Look at the world that we've been living in for the last 50 or 60 years. Something has changed.

You know, it was typical that every time a country became rich it would build an enormous army. It would then, somehow or the other, bully, invade, attack its neighbors. It would try to gain space in various senses. And for the last 50 years, that really hasn't happened -- about 60 years.

Germany -- or Japan became the second richest country in the world. It hasn't done that. Germany has become the third richest country in the world. It hasn't done that. And China and India are both growing into the system with very little sense of that kind of attempt.

I mean, if you contrast it to the rise of Germany in the first half of the 20th century, it is striking -- to the rise of Japan, to the rise of France, to the rise of the Habsburgs. And, you know, we need some historical perspective in that sense, to ask ourselves, "What would a China look like that was fulfilling that historical mission?"

Well, it certainly wouldn't have 20 nuclear missiles that could hit the United States. I mean, they could afford many, many, many more - - right? They hold \$1.4 trillion of U.S. debt. Instead of buying our IOUs, they could buy missiles. We have about a thousand that could reach them, if you -- and those are (inaudible). So you assume whatever -- Strobe would know this better than I do.

But, just something has changed, and the big change, I think, is in a world of great bounties and global capitalism and trade, countries have realized that there are many ways to become rich and strong and powerful, and that the pulls of their citizens, you know, in a democratic age, have increased enough that there's enormous domestic benefit in doing it.

So John Ikenberry, I think, puts it very well when he says that the Western order, the Western-created post-World War II order, is very easy to join, and very hard to overturn. Overturning this order,

overturning it with a hegemony that has 9,000 nuclear weapons, is tough. Growing rich within it is easy.

Given you an anecdotal sense, I think, of how the Chinese think about this.

The week of the surge, I had lunch with a friend of mine who's a Chinese businessman. He used to be a diplomat, has become a businessman -- a trend that is not uncommon in China these days.

And I asked him -- you know, talking about the surge -- and I said, "So what do you think about this?" He said, "I think it's a great idea. I think the whole American army should go into Iraq and spend the next 10 years there. We'll just build our economy."

And, in a sense, you know, there is a feeling that "We are focusing on the fundamentals, you go out and, you know, stabilize the Middle East."

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, I want to throw you a slightly harder pitch on China: what about the argument that the Chinese understand that nuclear weapons are practically useless today, and they've been spending -- they've been increasing their spending on defense in double-digits for a decade? I mean, that does suggest that perhaps they have more military ambitions than might otherwise be seen when we talk about how much of debt they're holding, and how they're building the biggest of everything.

MR. ZAKARIA: No, it's a fair question.

Look, and China is a -- it's a hard case. First of all, we cannot expect that China will have no ambitions of, you know -- this is a peculiar American tendency to assume that any expression of national pride, any interest in political influence is somehow deeply suspect and totally illegitimate -- unless, of course, it's ours. Which is, you know, as we, a force for stability and peace in the world.

So, of course the Chinese -- I mean, basically, the third richest economy in the world. And, of course, they're building their military. I will point out they have decommissioned maybe 2 million people. The People's Liberation Army has sacked, basically, about 2 million people over the last 10 years or so. So, this is not just a kind of bigger and bigger army.

They want to dominate Taiwan in the event of any kind of conflict. They want to dominate the South China Seas. They probably have -- and will have -- greater ambitions. But they do not seem to have the kind of systemic ambition to overturn the system or dominate it. It still appears to be a fairly limited, though powerful, set of ideas.

Probably the harder question you could have asked me, but you're polite is: will that not change? You know, as -- they seem a very traditional country. This is not Germany or Japan in the post-war era.

These are not post-modern nations that have -- they lost a great war and now therefore shamed and live under an American nuclear umbrella.

And I think that that's, you know, this is clearly the central worry that we should have in a long-term strategic sense.

My question is: what is more likely to tame China? If we draw them into the international system, give them a stake at the table, give them enormous economic incentives, political incentives, to stay involved in the system and a stakeholder in the system. Or if we start drawing a new line which casts them outside, you know, the realm of civilized nations. If we do what McCain is suggesting, which is expand the G-8, consciously exclude China, set up a "League of Democracies", consciously exclude China, boycott the Olympics -- if we do all these things, designed in way to almost restart the Cold War, you know, which scenario are you likely to see a China that reverts to a more traditional great power rise?

So it doesn't feel to me like the time has come to assume China is going to be Wilhelmine Germany. Let's play this out. It may, and if it does, we do have 9,000 nuclear weapons which are useful in deterrence terms. We have -- what is it? -- however many aircraft carriers we have, and the Chinese are still working on building their first one.

You know, we are not without our advantages, in that traditional contest. We'll do fine.

The more difficult one is for us to deal with the untraditional contest, where they play out game and beat us at it.

MR. BENJAMIN: Strobe, you're writing a memo to the next President on managing China and India. Are you going to Xerox some of Fareed's recommendations? Or would you -- what would you add to that?

MR. TALBOTT: I'd send him or her the book itself. It's -- and I've assured Fareed when I told him this earlier that I mean this as a compliment. It's a quick and easy read. Which doesn't mean that it's superficial in the least. It means that Fareed has been able to combine what he and I, from the news weekly business know as the "fun facts," with a very brisk paced sense of narrative and some very important theses which are extremely relevant to the task that will face the next President.

I wanted, Fareed, if I could, to draw you out on one theme in particular -- not least because it goes directly to the challenge facing the next President.

Yes, Fareed does counsel the opposite of panic. I'm not sure "serenity" -- I'm not sure you'd go for the --

MR. ZAKARIA: Confidence.

MR. TALBOTT: Confidence. But he also has a caution. And the caution is that our political system isn't working very well.

There is a historical contrast that he draws between the actual decline of the British empire, and the potential decline of American power. And you'll correct me, obviously, Fareed, if I do this in any way an injustice, but you point out an irony that I find convincing and I had never thought of before. And that is that the sun did stop setting on the -- or stop shining, maybe I should say -- on the British empire, largely because of economic failure.

And the risk to the United States is the failure of our ability to make sensible, sound policy -- and that that is rooted, in turn, in some fundamental defects in our politics.

Would you expand a little bit on that? Both on the diagnostic side, and on the prescriptive side?

MR. ZAKARIA: You know, if you think about it -- I don't have this particular point in the book, but I was thinking about it because it is something that I feel very passionate about, because really there's something very broken about Washington today, and the politics in Washington today. And it's not just a kind of nostalgia.

You know, if you look back to just the 1980s, and you say to yourself -- this was a period when the United States was also facing a

series of crises. We were able to come together politically to do a massive overhaul of the tax system, to save the social security system, to engage in large-scale economic -- immigration reform, and to do a huge series of trade deals that culminated eventually in the World Trade Organization, but that began with the Uruguay round and such.

In all these cases, the two parties came together. You had Congressional giants on either side who reached out across party lines and created a kind of broad omnibus bill of some kind or the other -- of course, had lots of compromises. Of course there were lots of parts both parties didn't like, each party didn't like. But it solved the problem and moved forward.

That is essentially inconceivable today. You know, the closest we got was the immigration bill. And you saw what happened. Two senators -- and, not coincidentally senators who are in the 70s, and really represent the past mode of leadership rather than the future -- reached across party lines, created a workable compromise and, in my opinion, actually solved most of the problems that we faced with regard to it, and dealt with it and moved it forward. And it got chewed up on both ends of the political spectrum.

Bush proposes social security reform but, of course, wraps into it a very partisan position of his. He's unwilling to compromise, to take

it out. The Democrats aren't willing to compromise to deal with it. It goes nowhere.

Health care, nobody has even touched.

Our energy bills are a joke. They are really not energy bills, they are pork-barrel bills designed to provide more subsidies.

We have a huge food crisis, and this week we will pass an agriculture bill that will provide whatever it is -- \$150 or \$170 billion to agribusinesses that are going through, you know -- are at a point when prices are the highest they've ever been in 200 years.

So you have to say to yourself, you know, there's something deeply wrong with our ability as a polity to deal with these problems. And I think a lot of it has to do with the way in which a series of reforms have taken place in politics over the last 30 years that have made Washington essentially an ungovernable place.

You know, the redistricting means that the parties have gotten ideologically pure. And all you worry about is a challenge from your -- in your primaries, which means from the left in the Democrats and on the right in the Republicans. Campaign financing, which means that you have to go through this endless cycle of constantly raising money. An attack media that is now designed to kill any possible compromise.

You know, imagine what a Jack Kemp would have had to face when he joined hands with Bill Bradley to do the tax reform. It would have been impossible. You know, the Rush Limbaughs and Sean Hannitys of the world would have torn him down.

So I just wonder, in that context -- you know, I hope this isn't some kind of envy of planned societies. But I do -- you know, you do go to China and you meet with mayors, and they'll tell you, "This is what our city looks like today. This is what it's going to look like five years from now. This is where the population growth will be. This is where, you know, our energy needs will come from. This is where the water will have to come from. These are the compromises we'll have to make so that this is sustainable." And, you know, you throw up your hands and you think to yourself you've never heard an American politician talk about anything other than the next six months.

So I do think there's something very deeply broken. And, to your point -- you know, I'm very bullish on the American economy, as you know, in the book. I think that it's an amazing economy, incredibly adaptable for an advanced industrial society -- truly remarkable.

I think American society is extraordinarily dynamic. You know, we're creating the first universal nation in the world. If you look at this Presidential campaign, you know, you had a Mormon, an Italian-

American, a woman, a Black. I only wish Joe Lieberman had gotten back in so you could have really had this sort of gorgeous mosaic.

But if you look at American government, if you look at American politics, it's deeply distressing. And it's deeply distressing because the rest of the world is getting its act together. Just at the time when they're getting -- you know, the U.S., we're used to the idea that they run things so -- they're so screwed up that we don't have to worry. But just at the moment when that is changing, we just cannot bring ourselves to move forward.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes, that's pretty bleak. If that were either the lead or the kicker on the story, it would be a downbeat story.

So how do we get beyond that? What's the fix?

MR. ZAKARIA: I don't know. I mean, part of what gives me hope is, you know, the American society seems to somehow persevere despite American government. Maybe because it's because I grew up in India which has a very similar basic, you know, approach -- which is China succeeds because of its government, India succeeds despite its government -- that I'm used to this idea.

But I don't know, Strobe. I mean, I think that the simple challenge is to talk about leadership. Because we could change this. You know, you could.

But I think structurally there needs to be something done to make it possible to incentivize bipartisanship -- you know, to not make it so politically dangerous to reach across party lines.

And I'm not quite sure how you do that with the current parties as they are, and with the campaign financing as it is, and redistricting as it is.

I think you would have to touch on all those things. And I think that, you know, it's insane how much time politicians have to spend raising money, and be able to raise it from all -- you know, from the base.

And I don't understand why -- I understand because the Supreme Court judgment, but I don't think there would be anything wrong with much more drastic campaign finance reform.

I mean, the entire British election costs what a mid-western Senate seat costs to run. And somehow they seem to persevere as a democracy. You know, it doesn't seem to have affected it.

MR. TALBOTT: Well, let me ask you if I could, Dan, just take this one step further -- which is all too typical of the conversation in Washington, D.C. in May of an election year, to talk about two personalities.

Let's assume Barack Obama is, in fact, going to be the Democratic nominee. And we can certainly assume that John McCain is going to be the Republican nominee.

It's hard to imagine, in the current constellation of personalities in American politics, two candidates who are better suited to do what you're saying. You've got a maverick -- you know, a maverick moderate, if I can put it that way. I don't know, you've already suggested some criticism of Senator McCain, but he certainly is going to reach for the center. And Obama is all about change and bringing us together.

MR. ZAKARIA: Yes -- you know, and I -- I think -- look, the heartening news --

MR. TALBOTT: It's a happy problem.

MR. ZAKARIA: -- yes, the heartening news about this Presidential campaign is the crazies are all out. I mean, we actually have three very serious candidates that were left. If you think about, you know, the original cast of characters -- with Giuliani going around, you know, to audiences in the mid-west and saying "They all want to kill you," and these startled old women would look back and say, "What? Me?"

(Laughter)

But, in fact, they're all three serious people. If you think about, you know, many issues -- for example, a controversial issue like

immigration, all three of them are, in my view, on the sensible side of that issue.

The trick, however, is I think that the system is now quite deeply entrenched. McCain is disliked by most of his Republican colleagues because he hasn't been very effective at doing -- you know, at playing this game, at being able to effect much change.

I respect McCain enormously for his courage. I mean, personally, of course, but politically. He has been exactly, he has been very brave on issues of campaign finance, on torture, on global warming.

Obama, to be honest, has a better rhetoric about all this than a record, in terms of actually reaching out, embracing positions that Democratic -- you know, that the left wing of the Democratic party would find anathema. But he certainly talks about it. So, you know -- let's hope.

But I do think that this is a deeper seated problem than just two people. So it's a hell of a start, to have two candidates who would be willing to do this stuff.

MR. BENJAMIN: Fareed, you were mentioning before your appreciation for the strengths of the American system. And one of the things that I really like about this book is that it does remind us -- and it took a child of Mumbai to remind us -- of the extraordinary flexibility and the value of a system that really embraces immigrants, and that adapts to

people who are living inside its shores. And I think that's clearly one of its great strengths. And for that reason I do recommend it to everyone here.

But I want to come back, if I may, to the issue of rising powers. Because that's really what this book is about.

And I want to ask you about two rising powers that are not really the focus of the book, but which I think are very important for testing your hypothesis about how the future could turn out -- specifically, Iran and Russia. Because I'm prepared to accept your hypothesis about China and India.

How should we be handling a rising power, specifically let's take Iran which, I think most of us would agree right now, is a revisionist power, and wants a different order in global politics, is prepared to destabilize countries with which it has no borders -- thinking of Lebanon, is prepared not to play by the rules of the global game when it comes to proliferation.

What's your prescription for dealing with this problem which, I think, is a nearer-term problem than the rise of China or India.

MR. ZAKARIA: Yes. I mean, I think it's a very fair point.

Iran represents the single most important strategic challenge to the United States in the short term, and it is mounting the must

sustained challenge to the American position in the Middle East in a generation. No question.

So how do we deal with it?

First, I think, to understand it. You know, to put it in context. Iran is not Nazi Germany -- largely because it's not Germany. It is not the second richest country in the world, with the second largest army -- quickly became the largest army by '36, '37. You know -- I say, well this is 1938, Iran is Romania, not Germany.

But I think secondly, it's not Nazi either. It is a complicated system, with many power centers, one of which is occupied by somebody who is both offensive and abhorrent, but also slightly nuts.

(Laughter)

And who is also playing a very clever game that we should understand. Here is a Persian Shiite who is trying to gain control of the Middle East. How does he do it in a sea of Sunni Arabs? By appropriating their core issue, which is the Palestinian issue. And what he says is, "I'm willing to say stuff against Israel that no Arab regime is able to say because they're scared of Washington, and I'm not."

Remember, what Ahmadinejad said once Nasser used to say every Friday, and Qaddafi used to say every Friday. I mean, this was routine rhetoric in the Middle East 35 years ago.

What is really striking in terms of, again, having some historical context, is the strategic shift where nobody else says it anymore. You have this one lone nutcase who says it. All the Arabs are quiescent. They are, you know, tacitly accept Israel. They even have made noises about recognizing it. King Abdullah's proposal on that front is the most serious of them.

I mean, that's the real story.

Now, Iran is mounting a very clever and sophisticated threat. And what we need to do is not -- this casual talk of bombing Iran and things like that is silly.

What we have to think about is how do we really contest it? How do we really rise to the challenge?

Look at what's happening in Lebanon right now -- right? The Iranians have been funding Hezbollah. Hezbollah has been making troubling, tearing apart the nation.

What has been our solution? Our solution has been to be incredibly bellicose on the Lebanese army, denounce Iran, and applaud while Israel, you know, bombs the hell out of southern Lebanon, inflicting about \$5 billion of damage.

What has the result been? Hezbollah -- watch this week -- Hezbollah has strengthened its position. It has become far more

important and influential in Lebanon. The Siniora government is weaker and more fragile. Look at what happened. The Lebanese army refused to support the Siniora government. Hezbollah was able to stand tall. And the cabinet had to reverse itself on the two things that it tried to get.

And this is complicate internecine stuff, but the reason basically is this. Hezbollah is a political force in Lebanon. There are 1 million Shiites in Lebanon. They basically 95 percent support Hezbollah. If you look at Hamas, you have the same situation. These are real political entities.

Using a big club and beating them on the head doesn't change the fact: they're there. You know -- and they're going to be there.

And so you have to ask yourself, how do you politically contest them?

And I would argue, by enmeshing them more in structures of government, by talking to them, by talking to their patrons, by figuring out whether Iran and Syria have different visions of their role in Lebanon and trying to play one against the other.

You know, the President today came out, and that extraordinary statement at what should have been an occasion simply to mark Israel's 60th anniversary, and compared any discussion of talking to

Iran with the appeasement that preceded the rise of World War II, with the appeasement during the 1930s.

What is stunning about that is not only that his administration has talked to Iran in Afghanistan, in Iraq and in Bonn when we were trying to form the Karzai government, and when the Iranians, by the way, were very helpful. But that his most important foreign policy success, arguably, of his administration came when David Petraeus decided to start talking to the Sunni terrorists whom we had so called only six months earlier.

So, you know, if you look at the reality, the places where we have engaged in some way with the enemy, and tried to find ways to split them off, to deal with the main -- one section or another -- have worked. The places where we have used a purely military solution have not worked.

And I would say can look at Hezbollah, you can look at Hamas, you can look at even the Taliban and say, you know, we may wish that this were not true, but in all cases, they have a domestic base of support.

All of which is to say, contesting Iranian influence in the Middle East is going to be a complicated story. We have to fight the war they're fighting. We want to fight the war we know how to fight. We're dying to let them -- you know, "Please let us bomb you. 'Cause, God

knows, we know how to do that.” But, you know, the problem is after the rubble there is life that goes on, and it is, on the basis of what you can see in Lebanon, it sometimes strengthens the people you’ve bombed, rather than weaken them.

MR. BENJAMIN: Strobe, I think Fareed has given us the counter-insurgency part of the strategy for dealing with Iran in different places around the world -- for example, fighting the fight that they’re trying to fight in Lebanon.

Can you give us the top-down piece of it? You have written a great deal about the need for building up and -- well, repairing, building up and elaborating the international system of institutions. Surely that’s going to play an important part in this, as well.

MR. TALBOTT: Let me just say that I thought what Fareed just said about Iran would constitute a pretty good memo for the current President of the United States --

(Laughter)

-- as well as the --

MR. BENJAMIN: But the animals are out of the barn on that one.

MR. TALBOTT: Yes. And I think what you're asking me, Dan, is to step back, as Fareed does at a couple of points in his book, and look at the larger transnational institutional context.

And what I took away from several passages of your book, Fareed, was your belief that if the United States can restore its legitimacy - a word that you use on a number of occasions. And perhaps, in commenting, you might just share with the group what you mean by that, and how one both gets it and loses it and gets it back.

If the United States can do that, if it also can meet this challenge that you described earlier with regard to the efficacy of our political system, it is still in a position to perform the role of the master builder, and the master repairer, of the international system.

You've got a sentence somewhere towards the end of -- I think it's posed as a rhetorical question -- can the United States still thrive in a world that it doesn't dominate?

MR. ZAKARIA: Yes.

MR. TALBOTT: And it's in the "non-dominating" sense that it's the "post-American world," and the post (inaudible) century -- if I understand.

MR. ZAKARIA: Absolutely.

MR. TALBOTT: But that we still can leverage our power through international institutions if we get these other things right. And all I can say is, I agree.

But it's your book we're talking about. And, given the importance of the word "legitimacy," would you expand a little bit on that?

MR. ZAKARIA: Well, one of the things that I was struck by thinking about -- you know, a genuine problem we face -- forget Bush-bashing and all that -- which is how do you get problems solved in a world in which everyone is rising? Because as everyone rises, economic success tends to make people politically confident. You know, just look at America. And it makes you politically confident, and it makes you assertive, and it makes you prickly, even. And you see this all over the world.

And if you look at trade negotiations, what's happening is that everyone is getting very assertive, because they're all doing well, and they all know that everybody needs everybody else. You know, they're not coming to us as supplicants anymore.

So in such a world, it seemed to me, cooperation becomes actually more difficult, because you have more actors. They're all feeling more independent and empowered. The only way you're actually going to be able to get anything done is if you have the ability to set an agenda,

convene a group, and somehow that that process and those issues are seen as legitimate.

If you think about how Bono was able to bring debt relief to the top of the global agenda -- I mean, debt relief for African countries, for God's sake! Who would have thought that this would be something that you could get as much agreement as he was able to get from as many players? And it was because he was able to really persuade countries, NGOs, the media that this was a crucial issue, it was doable, there was a path to doing it.

I think we need to learn something from that. You know, there is enormous power -- people call it "hard," "soft." I don't know what it is, but it's real power to be able to embody a certain kind of legitimacy.

How do we get it back?

The first thing I think we have to do is we have to start living up to our own ideals. You know, people around the world really do have a sense that the United States has a special role in that regard -- but not when it violates its own ideals, not when it has Guantanamos, not when it has Abu Ghraibs, and no serious investigation.

Abu Ghraib is inevitable when you have a military operation of the size and the kind Iraq is. The cover-up and the papering over it was not.

And if we can get back on track in that sense -- I quoted Hubert Humphrey saying, but I couldn't find the quote. You know, it as one of those moments in journalism, it was too good to check. And so I put it in, anyway.

(Laughter)

So I said -- I say -- possibly apocryphal -- he says that the greatest foreign policy success of the United States in the 1960s was the Civil Rights Act.

And I think that there's some truth to that, you know, that people look around and say, well, if the United States can do this, it really -- you know, there's something different about this country. There's something that makes one admire it.

And we have to get that back. You know?

And the second part of it is, I think we have to commit ourselves to broad rules rather than narrow interests; to really thinking about how do we stabilize and sustain this global order? And what does it mean to do that?

And, you know, we can get into a debate about what institutions, and what mechanisms. And I think that that is going to be a little more ad hoc and messy than perhaps some people would like. But

we have to really seem to be committed to that idea, and to be willing to play by those rules ourselves.

You know, we have really adopted the view that the rules are all great, but we can't possibly be asked to be living by them because we're the United States. I mean, it's different. You know, we're in a special situation. So the criminal court might make a lot of sense for other people, but it's not really for us. I mean, you know, these international conventions on child labor. They might make sense for other people, but not for us.

And that really -- you know, that's a broader shift, actually, in mentality. It's not just the Administration. There is this sense that, you know, we're a city on a hill. And, you know, how do you change that?

I was struck by the fact that, you know, I didn't realize this, again, until I wrote the book. And this is one of those fun facts. There are only three countries in the world that have not adopted the metric system. Liberia, Myanmar and the United States.

(Laughter)

MR. BENJAMIN: Well, you had a more telling example on the countries that hadn't the international convention on the rights of children.

MR. ZAKARIA: Yes, it was Samara, Sudan and the United States.

MR. BENJAMIN: Yes -- I think one non-state, and us and Sudan.

MR. TALBOTT: While we're on that subject, though, there are not very many countries that haven't signed up for the Kyoto Protocol. And you have, I think, a quite piquant paragraph about the Kyoto Protocol. I think it contains a very fair criticism of it -- namely, it's old-think, for obvious reasons. And certainly the reasons that the Chinese and the Indians have made very clear in refusing to be bound by it, as well.

But that does raise the question of what next?

If you could play forward, or extrapolate from what you've said how you feel the next administration should deal with climate change, as what is truly an existential issue. And going back, by the way, to your opening comments about whose got the biggest Ferris wheel and the biggest mall, there's one dubious distinction that China has now achieved over the United States, that is the number one emitter of greenhouse gases.

And it seems to me that's one that we -- and I mean that as the big "we" but led by the American "we" -- can't get right, it doesn't matter if we get any of the other stuff right.

MR. ZAKARIA: I think that's very fair.

The only solution to the issue of climate change, it seems to me, is actually a very simple one. The West is going to have to subsidize clean coal in China and India. There really is no other solution.

Because at this point, 80 percent of the new stuff going up there is coming out of the developing world, largely China and India. Most of it is coal. There is nothing else that can achieve the kind of scale that would satisfy India's and China's energy needs.

India and China put up one coal-fired power plant a week. And collectively, the CO2 emissions that come out, that will come out of those, I think it's 850 coal-fired power plants between now and 2012 will be five times the total savings of the Kyoto Accords.

So this is the only game in town, really. If you can't get this right, putting in all those light bulbs in your houses doesn't make any difference. And all the Priuses in the world doesn't make any difference.

So how do you do that?

I think, you know, the most efficient way to do it, without any question, is a carbon tax. And then you take the proceeds of the carbon tax and divert some of them to subsidize clean coal technology in China and India.

Now, if you can find me an American politician who will run and say --

MR. BENJAMIN: The next question.

MR. ZAKARIA: -- "Folks, I have two pieces of news for you. One, I'm going to raise your taxes. And, two, I'm going to send the money to China and India." Then we will have found an extraordinary politician.

(Laughter)

So it seems to me that is not going to happen.

So the second best solution is a cap-and-trade system, which is a kind of disguised tax. Because, you know, it all sounds so complicated I think most people do not realize that it is, effectively, a tax. And it is effectively a transfer.

So what I would do is work very hard for an actual global cap-and-trade system that includes everybody, which is very, very important. That's how we dealt with the acid rain issue.

I would actually use something like the World Bank to administer it, and to achieve these transfers, to make sure that they're real, and that this isn't a question of bogus accounting and things like that. Because there are many, many problems with a cap-and-trade system.

But, you know what? We have to get it right. Because it is the only viable solution. And if we don't get it right, then your point is entirely valid. Nothing else, you know, will probably matter.

Because if China and India continue on the coal-fired path to development, there will be a lot more greenhouse gases in the atmosphere than there are today.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay.

Well, Fareed, I could ask you another two or three hours' worth of questions. And I'm sure our audience would be delighted if I did that. But maybe at this point we'll solicit a few questions from the people who have come out today.

Yes -- please put up your hand, tell us who you are. And please have a question mark at the end of your question.

(Laughter)

MS. STERN: Thank you. I'm Paula Stern.

There's been a lot of discussion about what the U.S. can do, and ought to do. But when you're looking out strategically at what's going on in China -- let's stop with China and not go to India -- I wonder, really, how much we really can do.

Because -- and this is my question, based on the hypothesis, my own, which is that the customer is king. That's what my parents taught

me when we had our furniture store in Memphis. And what they meant then is a little different, but somewhat the same, as far as foreign policy is concerned.

And that is that nation or empire which is the major consumer of other goods from other countries, as well as their own goods, can -- if you will, to mix metaphors—be the piper that calls the tune.

That was the case with England. I think it's the case with the United States. And I think that there is an inevitability when it comes to the consuming capabilities -- both at home, of their own production, as well as other countries' goods and services -- the case with China.

And so I'm really wondering, really, whether we ought to be spending more time adjusting to that reality? Or whether you think there's nothing to that hypothesis?

MR. ZAKARIA: I think there's no question we should be spending a lot more time thinking about China. I mean, let's be honest, the foreign policy at this point really consists of Iraq. I don't think -- I would guess the President spends 80 percent of his time dealing with it. It takes up most of the bandwidth of the American government --

MR. TALBOTT: And Afghanistan.

MR. ZAKARIA: And Afghanistan. Sorry -- exactly -- the places where you have substantial American troops.

And I think that we need a much more sustained strategic, first of all, thought process, and also a kind of dialogue and relationship with China.

I'm not as scared or worried as you are.

First of all, the Chinese economy cannot keep growing at 10 percent a year. That -- you know, it will not violate the laws of developmental economics. Remember, Japan grew at 9 percent a year for 24 years, and then stopped growing at 9 percent a year. These things don't go on forever. And if you look at any reasonable growth projections, the United States stays the largest economy in the world by a long shot, for a long, long time.

Secondly, the Chinese are -- you know, they have their own weaknesses. Whenever you start thinking that others -- you know, the other guy is 10 feet tall, just remember the Soviets in the '60s, the Japanese in the '70s, Saddam Hussein, most recently.

We always think these guys have no problems. They all have problems.

I think that China will be a very, very substantial economic player in the world, more substantial than it is now. But I think it probably actually will look more like, in that sense, the 19th century. Britain was never the kind of supreme power that the United States was -- except

perhaps briefly for 15 or 20 years. You know, there was always a Germany that was important. There was always a France that was important. There was an America that became important.

And so that's what the point of the book is: we'll have to live in a world in which, you know, there are other countries that are very important. And on certain dimensions, they'll be very, very important.

But I don't know if you mean, you know, the issue of our debt to China. I'm actually also not as worried about that. Because they need to sell goods to us. So --

MS. STERN: My focus was just on them as consumers.

MR. ZAKARIA: Consumers. We'll be -- you know what --

MS. STERN: I'm not afraid.

MR. ZAKARIA: -- yes. Trust the American consumer.

(Laughter)

We will be the biggest consuming nation for a long time to come, especially as long as we continue to -- what is our solution to our current economic crisis, which is caused by excessive consumption and excessive leverage? We -- the government says, "Please. Here's some more money. Go out and consume some more. And, by the way, we're going to do some more for you. We're going to borrow, ourselves."

MR. TALBOTT: And they do a lot of that consuming at Wal-Mart, buying Chinese-made products.

MR. ZAKARIA: This is true. So, we're still the world's biggest consumers. That we haven't lost.

MR. BENJAMIN: Sir -- over there.

MR. EKO: Just to follow along the same lines -- my name is Bill Eko.

If we had a cap-and-trade agreement, and the cap-and-trade agreement were coupled with an import fee for countries that do not participate in such a worldwide cap-and-trade agreement, wouldn't that -- just to use that term, rather than a tariff -- wouldn't that suffice? And you wouldn't have to subsidize clean coal in China, because they'd be jumping on board themselves, in order to export their products to the United States?

MR. ZAKARIA: Well, I think that's an interesting idea. It would have to -- I think the import fee would have to be broadly accepted by the industrial world for it to probably work. It couldn't just be the United States.

But, look -- cap-and-trade -- what I mean is cap-and-trade is effectively -- transfers money, anyway. Because how do you buy credits?

You buy them by, you know, getting some factory in China to put in scrubbers in its stacks, in its smokestacks.

So the cap-and-trade process in effect transfers money from the wealthy world to the developing world anyway.

MR. BENJAMIN: We have someone here who you quote in your book.

MR. ZAKARIA: In the first page of my book.

MR. BENJAMIN: In the third row -- yes, Antoine.

MR. VAN AGTMAEL: Antoine van Agtmael. I have two questions.

The first is, you point out -- and you start with it, in fact -- saying that the world is not a zero-sum game and rise of the rest is not a zero-sum game. That it has embedded in it both a threat and an opportunity.

My first question is: what is the risk of the United States missing that opportunity?

Second question is: you drew this fine line between, on the other hand, legitimate pride and the risk of destabilizing nationalism. Of all of the wonderful things that you and I and many people who have visited China have seen, which are really very impressive, there is one thing also that stands out to me on the negative side. And that is when you talk

there to -- and it's not the older people, but it's the younger, and the smarter people -- they tend to be more nationalistic.

MR. ZAKARIA: Yes.

MR. VAN AGTMAEL: Is this an issue?

MR. ZAKARIA: Yeah. On your first question -- I don't know, Antoine. I mean, I feel as though there are so many incentives for cooperation, there are so many reasons for us to recognize that this is a win-win situation, that we prosper enormously from having the pie expand and being at the center of it still. But then, you know, I turn on Lou Dobbs -- and I've been doing this book tour -- and I'll tell you, the number of people who you hear from who have this very narrow, nationalistic, populist view of the world worries me. And what worries me even more is how many of them are elected members of Congress.

I mean, the level of economic ignorance in Congress is breathtaking. I mean, you know, you can have an argument with somebody about these issues. They're real issues. But when you talk to a Congressman about them, you often feel as though he really believes that two plus two is seven. And I don't know how you begin to unravel that problem. You know, I mean, Brookings can probably do something very important there.

You talk to people, very serious economists who've done this, and talk to -- and I'll give you an example without naming the person. You probably heard the story -- a senior Democratic economist talks to a group of newly elected Congressional Democrats, and gives them, you know, an upbeat talk about the world and how we need to -- what we need to change. And the first question he gets is somebody says to him, "If somebody were to steal your car, you would do something about it, wouldn't you? Well, why do you not want to do anything, given that the Chinese are stealing our jobs?" And he said it went downhill from there.

(Laughter)

So, you know -- so I worry a lot. And I think, you know, every golden age has come to an end in history. So we shouldn't be so sure that, you know, the economic incentives will be powerful enough.

On the nationalism part, it's the single most important thing going on in China and Russia both that worry me a lot. In both countries you see exactly the phenomenon you describe, which is that the younger people are more nationalistic. The educated people tend to be more nationalistic.

And it has that feeling of Germany in 1910, that they feel that they haven't been given a place in the system, that they're being pushed

down by the rest of the world; you know, that they are not being accorded their rightful place.

Which is why I think boycotting the Olympics over Tibet would be so counterproductive. Because they really see this as their moment in the sun, and their coming out party. And for us to, you know, on an issue where, by the way, they are, as you know, 95 percent with the government, to boycott would be crazy.

Now, how do you tame the fires of nationalism? I don't know. I mean, one argument would be that part of the problem is that the Chinese government is unrepresentative, and therefore can't play this role very well. And I think there's probably some truth to it. Except, you know, Serbia held elections, and it only inflamed the nationalism there.

I think -- I know for sure we have to make them feel that they have a stake in the system. It's good for us. It's good for them. It also has the potential to tame those fires. But it may not be enough -- which is why, you know, we will have to adopt a strategy towards China that contains an element of hedging.

MR. BENJAMIN: I don't know if I'm looking forward more to your staff meetings with Lou Dobbs or your confirmation hearings?

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks, Fareed. Gary Mitchell, from the Mitchell Report.

I want to ask you if you'd comment on an idea that's been getting a lot of play these days, and some support in institutions even like this one. And that's the notion of the league or the concert of democracies. At least one other commentator, I don't know if you're aware of, is sort of drawing a new line in the sand between we have autocracies on the one side and democracies on the other, and what we need to do to sort of get around the ineffectiveness of the U.N. and the Security Council in particular is to go to the league.

A, I'm interested in your view of that. And, B, to the extent that you can do it, if you could give us sort of a quick sense of what are the arguments in favor of and against.

MR. TALBOTT: Not least because one Presidential candidate is leaning in that direction.

MR. ZAKARIA: Look, this is not a new idea. Madeleine Albright proposed it, and actually tried to -- you know, they held I think maybe a couple of years of conferences. And I attended one of them, actually.

You know, the world does not need more conferences. But if one wanted to hold a kind of, just a kind of feel-good, gather together, I have no objection to it.

But if the argument is that this is going to be the kind of effective forum for decision-making in the world -- in other words, that this would be the place where you would replace the U.N., and you use it as a place to have the war on terror, to do things, it strikes me as loony.

Because, first of all, you know, the idea that we have this great struggle going on between autocracies and democracies is a very strange one. I mean, yes, you have China, which is not democratizing. Yes, you have Russia, which -- Strobe will correct me -- is going through a very bad space, but is still a very different society than it was under the -- you know, during the Soviet Union. I mean, I think Mark Medish puts it very well when he says that Russia on a 25-year timeframe has improved a lot, and in a five-year timeframe has regressed a lot. And one has to keep that in mind when thinking about it.

And then you have these dove states, which have all been lumped in as rising autocracies -- you know, Qatar, Oman do not really strike me as threatening the stability of global order and, by the way, all happen to be our allies, and crucial to combating Iranian influence.

So, you know, the lines cross in different ways. We need the autocracies of the Gulf and Saudi Arabia to contain the autocracy of Iran. If we were to adopt a hedge strategy with China -- I mean, if China, things seriously got awry, I would hope we would try to have some kind of modus

vivendi with Russia, because that would be a very sensible way to check Chinese ambitions. After all, you know, one-third of the border is -- one-third of the Soviet army used to be tied down by China, and vice versa.

And then I think to myself, well, how would you effectively fight terror without Jordan in it? Without Singapore in it? Without Saudi Arabia in it? Without Egypt in it? How -- and would you be able to actually effectively use it?

Would it have the kind of legitimacy? Let's say you wanted to do something about Darfur, and the U.N. isn't -- doesn't allow you to do it. Would you really be able to go to -- you'd use the "League of Democracies" rubber stamp to go and invade Darfur? Or Myanmar?

It just doesn't seem to me a practical solution.

Look, the U.N. has many problems. I live in New York. The closer you get to the U.N., the more you see the problems. But it has the virtue of the universality. Every country in the world is a member. And, you know, that does provide it with a certain kind of legitimacy.

And go around the world. You will be struck by how legitimate the U.N. is seen as, and how illegitimate America's attempts to trash it are.

And, look, I have problems with the U.N. But I think all these ideas that are effectively attempts to undermine it are not going to work.

They make us look bad. They make us look like we are sort of trying to play a kind of ideological war. And, as I say, effectively what problem can you envisage the "League of Democracies" solving.

It's also, by the way, a bad idea to call things "leagues," having this League of Nations --

MR. TALBOTT: Whatever name you give it -- I can't resist, though, adding one other point about a country you know pretty darn well, there are several of us here who are clustered in the front of the room who recently spent two weeks in the world's largest democracy -- which is a real democracy. And one thing we heard repeatedly on this subject is the Indians don't want to belong. So you have kind of the obverse of the Groucho Marx line about clubs.

And if you can't get the world's largest democracy to join the whatever-of-democracies, you've already got a big problem.

And one reason that they don't want to join it is, first of all, because it's U.S. organized, and that sort of gets all their non-aligned nerves twitching. But the other thing is for all the practical reasons that you said. They don't want to have new dividing lines between them and a lot of their neighbors who are not democratic but they have to deal with.

MR. ZAKARIA: No -- it's a very good point.

I mean, look, we would have to contain China, if we had to adopt a hedge strategy, without Vietnam in this scenario. And Vietnam is probably the most robust anti-Chinese ally in Asia we have.

MR. BENJAMIN: It's also true, by the way, that in Europe no one wants to sign on to this. So, you know, the strongest and most established, as well as the largest, democracies are not rushing to join this.

Let's take one last question from the oft-discriminated back of the room.

(Laughter)

Okay -- all the way back there.

MR. BROUGHTON: Thank you very much for what has been an enlightening discussion. And it's a real pleasure and honor to be able to listen to you in this forum.

My name is Christopher Broughton.

My question -- we've talked about interstate, international affairs, the relationships of the great powers, relationship the United States will have to them, and the status of it in this and perhaps the next century.

What I'd like to ask you about is the role of sub-national, or sub-nation-state actors. Some have called this the "Epoch of the

Individual,” with the globalization of information, of commerce, of small arms and light weapons, human trafficking, labor, etcetera.

And we see many of the conflicts in the world today -- Central Africa, the border along Afghanistan and Pakistan, elsewhere -- being driven by sub-national actors, and these being, indeed -- as Secretary Rice has stated it so many times -- a threat to our national security as much as other nation-states.

And so, in this age of a decline of American power, as it were, in many sense, how do you see these globalizing forces and, indeed, the sub-national actors, playing a role in international affairs more broadly, and its relationship to American power.

Thank you.

MR. ZAKARIA: It's a very good question because, you know, the important thing to realize is that it's really a global phenomenon. We tend to focus in on Pakistan and, you know, Afghanistan, and say, “Oh, you know, the government has no control over what's going on in Harat,” or, you know, it has no control over what's going on in Waziristan.

But, look, this is something happening everywhere. If you look at -- you know, Scotland has elected a party that basically wants to annul the Act of Accession that brought the United Kingdom together.

Belgium can't form a government because it has the division between the French-speaking and the Flemish-speaking people has become so deep.

In a strange sense, this process of globalization has empowered individuals -- as you say -- and groups, and people have ended up kind of coalescing around more ancient groupings than the nation-state. You know, if you think about it, the Scottish people are a lot older than the United Kingdom. The nation-state is a relatively recent phenomenon. And you see this in India, by the way, where the old states -- you know, the groups of people, Tamils, for example -- have become much more cohesive and much more disjointed from the center. So these creations that were essentially a hundred, 200 years old are weaker.

And then you add to that the NGOs, the world of the NGOs and all that.

So what should we do?

Look, I think, in a strange sense, this plays to our strengths - if we do it right. Because we are a big messy open society. And if we understand how to play this game, we would understand that this is not a game to be played purely at the government-to-government level.

What we have to do is to play this game at a society-to-society level -- engage the multiple actors within these countries, try to have contacts with them, try to figure out what points of leverage we have.

I mean, look at the Arab world. One of the big problems we have in the Arab world is that we have -- our relations are entirely government-to-government. And there is no sense in which the Arab people think that we care about their fate. In fact, they're convinced we don't. And so, you know, rather than partnering with the governments, which we have to do -- but, in addition to that, isn't there a way for us to figure out better how to partner with the people?

I mean, you know, if you look again at the Arab world, going to be the hotbed of anti-Americanism in the world, there's enormous amount of material to play with. This is still the only part of the world where they will proudly go to the college that is called the American University. And they're proud of that. And if you ever try to set up a university in China and call it the "American University," nobody will go to it. Or India, for that matter. But in the Arab world, it's still good. They just founded a new one in Northern Iraq.

And I think that that speaks to, you know, the strengths of the American influence, American power, you know, is that ability to shape societies from the bottom up, not just from the top down.

How does that affect even issues like the Taliban? Look, we have to in some way not make people in those parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan feel that we are their sworn enemy. You know, sure you've

got to kill the bad guys. But there are million or two million Pashtuns who have come to believe -- rightly or wrongly -- that the United States does not wish for them to have any -- you know, any seat at the table. And is there a way for us to signal, in various ways that are not about compromise or surrender, but that are about, you know, programs that are aid-related, education-related, culturally-based, that we actually want them to succeed? We want them to have a seat at the table.

And if we were able to do that, we would be, first of all, adopting a kind of much more sophisticated model of power and influence than we are right now. We would also be running with the tide rather than trying to battle it by saying, you know, "No, no, no -- what we want is we want to sell arms to Musharraf and to Siniora, to have them bomb these people, and that that's going to work.

That strikes me as part of a model that would have worked, probably, 30 or 40 years ago. But it's unlikely to be a sustained model of success in the future.

And I think this is so important: it speaks, and resonates, much more with the American system, with, you know, America's strength, its ability to engage societies as a society, and our values and ideals, which makes it a much more enduring kind of American power and influence in the world.

MR. BENJAMIN: Okay, well I think that's a very stirring and appropriate one to end on -- one that's very characteristic of the book as a whole.

Let me just in closing, you were very charitable in recall that Bataan death march that we shared together in the Rockies a few years ago.

Let me just say that even if there was cardiac distress then, you are intellectually as fit and sharp as ever, and you've --

MR. ZAKARIA: You're very kind.

MR. BENJAMIN: -- we've really been delighted to have you here. And on behalf of Strobe and myself, thank you for coming to Brookings today. And all the best with the book.

(Applause)

MR. ZAKARIA: Thank you. Thank you so much.

* * * * *