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PARTICIPANTS:

Closing Remarks:

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The Brookings Institution

THE HONORABLE HARRIS WOFFORD
Former United States Senator (D-PA)

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PROCEEDINGS

MR. BRIDGELAND: Now my great pleasure to welcome to the stage, first, a person who saw in Gandhi's independence movement in India, helped inform a movement in the United States, marched with Martin Luther King, helped Sargent Shriver co-found the Peace Corps, special assistant to President Kennedy for civil rights, the president of two colleges, U.S. senator from Pennsylvania, CEO of the Corporation for National Community Service, co-chair of Service World. He comes to my home for dinner and my three little children literally stay up till 1 o'clock in the morning listening to his stories and learning about the great books. Please welcome Harris Wofford. (Applause)

MR. WOFFORD: Well, when you have fourscore and four years ears, you miss some of the remarks that are not loud enough. And it reminds me of an awful story of the couple that had been together for 50 years sitting on the porch, looking at the hills. One says to the other, "Henry, I'm proud of you." And the other says, "What did you say?" "I'm proud of you." He thinks for a minute and says, "I'm tired of you, too." (Laughter)

Now, I want to say quickly I'm not tired of you, but you may be tired of me when I talk till 1 o'clock in the morning here. I'm not tired of the score or two score or more colleagues here that have been for a year or years. I'm looking at David and Henry Lozano. I second heartily Scott Beale's multinational, multilateral issues. Dwight Wilson is working on the same and I think maybe a dozen people here are working on models of new forms of multi-national exchange. It's been a great day.

Now, John Bridgeland said I was going to tell you about Kennedy's goal of 100,000 a year. I think that you've heard it said that it is this goal. I do want to put it and a little repeat to some of you the context about that dramatic announcement of the Peace Corps at 2 a.m. in a little different context. Before I went off to Africa in the fall of 1962 to Ethiopia, I would walk out and it was the only time you get when you're an assistant to the President, see the President when he's doing something connected with you and then you have a chance to brief him and you walk out. In this case, though, I think there were 600 volunteers to go from the White House lawn, 300 to Ethiopia and several -- and another couple of hundred to Africa. I believe it was those two continents. And

he said his remarks and walking back in he who had gotten a little cold feet, a little worried about whether it was a wise idea or not, had begun to believe it really is a good idea. And he said, "You know, this will be really serious when it's 100,000 a year."

Now, that's the goal we say. But I think you should think of it in terms of celebrating the 200,000 volunteers in 50 years. It's a tremendous achievement. And those of you who are in it are proud of it. But it's also, if Kennedy or Sargent Shriver even more, heard us celebrating 200,000 in 50 years when they were imagining it would be two or three million Peace Corps volunteers by now, the tension of those two things needs to be part of the commemoration of the Peace Corps. Just think what our foreign policy, how it might be different. What wars we might or might not have been in. How the country would have been different if there were two or three million former Peace Corps volunteers.

Now, the reason I want to put in context the 2 a.m. is that there's a sense that John Kennedy, with this great idea, launched the Peace Corps at 2 a.m. on the steps of the student union. I like to say really the students at Michigan launched the Peace Corps because if you listen to the questions he asked, his staff had gone to bed. He had had a debate with Nixon. He was tired. Press went away. And they said you don't have to talk tonight. He said, "They've been waiting here till 2:00. I'll wing it." And they went to bed and he asked these, in passing and several other things, he said, "And will you serve overseas? Will you spend 5, 10, 15 years of your lives if you're a doctor?" I think he said serving in Ghana. About four rhetorical questions. Nothing about a corps, nothing about starting a program, just are you going to be ready to serve? And on that the future of this country may depend.

The Michigan students the next morning, a group took around a scroll, a little committee that said Michigan Students for World Responsibility that said if you form a program for volunteers to go overseas we want to go. Go do it. We're trying to get the words of that scroll, but it was Kennedy heard that they wanted to give the petition to him someplace, one of our civil rights section people called me to say how do we arrange to give him this scroll? We didn't know. Nobody knew they had done this. And when they told Kennedy in the car campaigning in the Mid-west that that had happened after his questions that night, Kennedy said, "Let's make a major proposal on that

before the campaign is over." At the Cow Palace in San Francisco he did within the next 10 days.

So, you in this room, I hope, are going to in your own way carry the torch, light the fire that those Michigan students did. And Shriver says if they hadn't done it -- and then if young people in huge numbers hadn't written in saying I want to go, where do I apply, after he did propose it and he got elected, and somebody figured out that more letters had come in asking to go into the Peace Corps than all the other applications to the new frontier for jobs put together. And Shriver says if that hadn't happened, there's no reason to think it would have come as a high priority after he was elected.

So now I have to remind you that the Peace Corps has the same model today, a very strong one, a very successful one, that it had 50 years ago. And we've just heard from Steve Rosenthal and Stan Litow, in a sense the peanut model from Michelle, the Hands On model of Michelle, there's another model. Interestingly enough it was a model that was in the original plan sent to the president and to Congress by Sargent Shriver, the task force that put together the plan in about less than four weeks. It said the Peace Corps will be administered, first of all, by its most appropriate carriers, our colleges and universities overseas, Chancellor Wrighton. And second, it would be administered by non-government organizations that have a track record of working overseas. And then third, if the United Nations wants it, their agencies wanted it, it would be through the United Nations. And then there's some projects of such urgency and complexity that it will have to be administered directly by the Peace Corps itself.

Now, only Notre Dame was given Chile to run and to administer thanks to Father Hesburgh's persistence. And he was -- Shriver never gave another country away to anybody. (Laughter) But all right. We went another model because he said there's only one parachute jump here and I'm responsible. And I don't think we can spread the responsibility out to a lot of colleges, universities, and private organizations. If it works, we can go in that direction.

All right. This is 50 years later. I think the new model of the Peace Corps or a new dimension could be well moving on the direction of non-government organizations, including colleges and universities, directly running it. Not a government to government relation. And that's the Global Service fellowships. It's a good part of Volunteers for Prosperity now. And others of you may have

other models.

So I will close by one other memory from the past for me, meeting the great philosopher, Martin Buber. My wife and I, right after Kennedy's death, it happened we were there, I quoted from a book, *Paths in Utopia*, where he said, "The dream I've had of Arab-Jewish brotherhood and a commonwealth of cooperatives has been plowed under by the Palestine-Israel vicious circle, but good ideas rise again and come back when idea and fate once more meet in a creative hour."

And my wish for you, for us, and for this cause is that we'll have a creative hour. Now, when I asked Buber do you see it coming he didn't get the chance to answer. My wife, the healthy skeptic -- not a cynic, but a skeptic -- guffawed and said, "From what I've seen here on this trip it'll be a long time coming." And as we parted he said to me, "I can see that you're a romantic and I hope you realize how important it is, good for you, that you're married to a realist." And he turned to Claire, who hates this story. (Laughter) She did when she was alive and would be here disliking me saying this now. She thinks I come out better in the story. (Laughter) He said -- he says to her, "Dear friend, you're right. There are long time waiting for a creative hour to come, but they do come. And my hope for you is that your realism will not make you miss it."

And so that's my hope for you, too. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. BRIDGELAND: Thanks to Harris. We have our creative hour. And to answer your question more concretely, imagine millions of college students around the United States sending in scrolls of support for the Sargent Shriver International Service Act to help advance that creative hour. So perhaps you can organize that. (Laughter)

Now my pleasure to introduce someone who served in two administrations, in the last administration led the faith-based efforts in the Corporation for National Community Service. We're skeptical. We think he lives in Kenya. He's been working in this wonderful alliance to clean up the Nairobi River and mobilize people of many faiths, races, ethnicities, and ages to take on these challenges. Please warmly welcome a co-convenor of Service World, David Caprara. (Applause)

MR. CAPRARA: And four years ago Colin Powell, in June, stood at this platform and inaugurated this project at Brookings. And also, Steven Rosenthal and colleagues -- how many

of you are on the board of the Building Bridges Coalition by the way? Raise your hands.

This morning they met and they formally institutionalized this sector on the global level as a force in its own right. I'd like to give BBC a hand, Steve, and your colleagues for that accomplishment. Two years ago we had Global Service Fellowship legislation that swept through the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, followed by Service Nation becoming Service World today. And this platform has so many possibilities. I know Kathy, we discussed AID already is brimming with ideas. On the executive level, the Obama Administration can take action before a bill is formed. Stan Litow gave us the charge today and corporations can take action now.

Michelle talked about social media. I know Charles Phillips, you're launching a social medial coalition also in November and we're taking action on each of these levels. So let's make this a very dynamic document and movement. I think it's scoring in many ways a global tipping point and we see -- you mentioned Kenya. I'll go back home tomorrow and where the violence you mentioned, I see Irene came. You can raise your hand. Her husband is a senior scholar with Africa Growth Initiative here at Brookings, but they're measuring identity-based conflict and we're now seeing the launch of youth service with Kikuyu and Kalenjin tribes, and even the governor of Kenya inviting a regional Africa convening on a multilateral basis. And so you can go to globalpeaceconvention.org. We'll have a big convening there in November.

I met on the airplane -- is Kathy Dennis still here? Kathy, on the way to Costa Rica, you were heading to Colombia where Steve Vetter and Matt Clausen and colleagues are convening the Avé. Is it October? The Global Youth convening there also on a multilateral basis. So in many ways we're talking this back home around the world in different laboratories, in different centers of innovation, whether they're corporate, NGO, faith-based, or government working together where they're our anchor partner or the Peace Corps. Thank you, Harris, for being the man. You've got not only the attendance record, but I know when I was head of Vista also you'd always give the speech that you gave in studying Gandhi that fired a movement and fired our imaginations for many, many years. So again, thank you for being our team mentor.

From here we go next week to the Points of Light Convention. By the way, Georgia, beyond the peanut, we have Martin Luther King came out of Georgia. Many great movements of

reform. And we have Michelle Nunn. And the Nunn brand, both her father with the Nuclear Threat Initiative and Michelle herself. I remember talking to you two-plus years ago, right before you came in to Points of Light. You were thinking about how to connect the domestic and international civic space. And next week the Points of Life, CNCS. Actually when I worked for David Eisner it was the Corporation Convention and you could say the Points of Light, but the Joint Points of Light Institute Obama Administration Convention of 5,000 people in New York next week, if you're not there in person, please tune in. I think you can go to pointsoflight.org and find some ways to network with that. But this platform and Global Service will also take center stage with Harris and others. The Peace Corps. John will be bringing from this Brookings forum to a really national audience next week in New York. So I'd like to give Michelle a round of applause for putting that together.

(Applause)

MR. CAPRARA: Also announce that on October 14th we'll have the 2 a.m. service on the Ann Arbor steps at the University of Michigan. Is Dean Susan Collins still here? If you could raise your hand. And John Greisberger. We'll invite them to give -- we would like to invite you all to a reception next door just for a few minutes to enjoy each other's company. I wanted her just to say a word, but they will host a bookend symposium this year on the national and international policy dimensions of this movement and of Service World at the University of Michigan on that 50th anniversary that Kevin Quigley is helping to put together with them along with Brookings. So we view that as maybe the kickoff officially of the 50th anniversary.

So thank you all again for coming today. I want to thank Deanna Parrish and Eileen Gallagher, Mao Lin, anybody I missed. Of course, Jack Sibley and Molly, who worked so hard on this platform document. Let's give -- all of you all are really owners. Everyone in this room I think has a piece on the Service World platform. (Applause)

Ladies and gentlemen, I cannot follow Harris' words. So on the note that he left us on, let us conclude and thank each of you for owning and being part of moving Service World forward. Please join us for a reception and we might have a couple of other (inaudible) announcements there. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Thank you, David. (Applause)

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