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THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO'S  
PIVOTAL 2011 NATIONAL ELECTIONS

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## P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning and thank you for your patience as we've waited through rain and sleet and snow and everything else, and fires on the Red Line or at least like it's been the whole world coming together in challenging us logistically, but we are thrilled today to have a very important discussion on another topic where logistics could be an issue, the upcoming elections in Congo and broader policy toward this troubled country. I'm Mike O'Hanlon from Brookings and I wanted to welcome you all here on a number of us at Brookings in the Foreign Policy Program and also in the Global Economy and Development Program where we have representatives later on in the panel discussion that will follow the Under Secretary of State's remarks.

Let me introduce her. We are thrilled today to have the Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs Maria Otero who has recently returned from Congo where she spent a full week in preparation or in learning and understanding and trying to convey America's messages and important role in the upcoming Congo elections which as you know are scheduled for November 28. That is a very short time away and this is a very important election for Congo. It is the second big election in the post-Mobutu era, a period during which we were trying to see if democracy can begin to consolidate and that this can be an important step forward. As we all know, elections are fraught in any kind of a young democracy. They do not always produce positive progress. They have often been associated with steps backward in a number of countries whether it's the Gaza Strip, whether it's Iraq in 2005, perhaps Afghanistan to an extent, so elections are a complex event in any kind of a young democracy and we want to discuss the full range of issues today.

Without further ado, and our keynote speaker will of course focus quite a bit on these questions, let me introduce briefly the Under Secretary of State who has an amazing portfolio of issues. I could begin to read them for you, but they center on issues

of democracy promotion worldwide, migration and population issues worldwide, environmental issues worldwide, and of course in a lot of parts of the world where other people don't always direct their telescopes frequently, she winds up having a disproportionate burden, and this is no less the case than in Congo where as you know this country has had a very difficult history for 50 years. It was perhaps the least well prepared or among the least well prepared of any country in the colonial era for independence. It then became as caught up in Cold War dynamics as any country in Africa, suffered through one of the most corrupt dictatorships of any country in Africa, then became what's commonly described as the site of Africa's world war or continent-wide war and thankfully perhaps its only one so far, where in the course of the post-Mobutu era a number of neighboring states were involved in promoting one proxy or another and the country suffered through more of a decade of chaos, violence and by various estimates 3 million or more dead from war-related famine and other kinds of problems having to do with a lack of infrastructure, lack of health care, lack of proper nutrition and of course violence itself.

This remains a very difficult country. Under Secretary Otero has devoted a good deal of time to it, and without further ado let me introduce and ask you to welcome a person who has worked in not only this particular field but in microfinance and in Latin America issues. She is the country's highest-ranking and first-ever Latina under Secretary of State with a remarkable breadth of experience therefore and background on issues about democracy throughout the world. So please give a big hand for Under Secretary of State Maria Otero.

SECRETARY OTERO: Thank you so much, Mike. And my thanks also to Tony Gambino who has been involved in putting this together and my acknowledgement of Ambassador Mitifu who is here, the Ambassador from DRC, to our country. It's a pleasure for me to be here and to be able to engage with you in this really

important discussion especially those of you that are so interested and engaged in issues that have to do with Congo, but with Africa in general.

I just returned from a trip to Africa as Mike mentioned. This was my third trip this year and my seventh trip since I've been under secretary where I've been for 2 years. On this trip I visited Burundi and Congo and so I really appreciated the perfect timing of this event sort of calibrated to the trip that I took. I don't think that that was done exactly on purpose, but we can pretend that it was. But if I think back a week ago exactly, I was in the office of the DRC's Election Commission headquarters in Kinshasa. I went to the first floor, not really a basement, to the first floor, a huge, huge, huge room with probably about 100 people there where there were stacks of papers as they were compiling and copying the ballots and putting the things together for the election. It was sort of the Dell nerve center because you had all the computers going. They took me to see their server; they called it their baby where all of the information of the 35 million voters that they have registered or 32 million that they've registered were. So this scene was really emblematic of the challenges that Congo faces as well as some of the opportunities that we're seeing as they're engaging in this very demanding undertaking of an election, an election that's only about 7 weeks away.

Let me speak to you a little bit about what I saw there, but let me begin by giving a little context. Fragile states around the world can only grow strong and emerge from their fragility through their own political will to do so. No matter how much support they receive from outside partners, no matter how much we urge them and pressure them, they must secure the mandate from their own people to govern. I want to make that point at the outset because I think it really underscores the intrinsic significance of elections in countries. This is really the primary vehicle through which people can determine the future of their country and it plays a crucial role on the path to stability and to growth. This is the case now just in the DRC but it's a case everywhere and we've seen many elections that have taken place in Africa. In fact, the trend of

elections that we've seen in Africa is promising. In the last year we welcomed peaceful transfers of power in several countries, in Zambia, in Guinea, in Niger, in Benin and Nigeria. These are elections that we don't hear very much about. They don't make the news when they go well. They only make the news when they are like the Ivory Coast. However, these are elections that also demonstrate that these countries know that their own standing as a country before the international community and obviously before their own people is enhanced by holding credible elections. This is something that we know is a factor that plays into what we are seeing.

We also know that the foundation of democracy holds strong in each of these countries as the societies move through effective elections because then they can move easily toward a more prosperous and more stable society and world and economy of course. It's for these reasons that the United States is deeply committed to supporting the continued progress of democratic development in Congo. This includes not only the elections of course although this was really the focus of my trip, but also all the other issues that we know weigh heavy on this country especially issues that have to do with the respect of human rights, in particular ending the sexual gender-based violence that we know and that we see and that I also addressed -- addressing issues related to civic participation, to provision of government service, to strengthening the rule of law and of accountability in the country. These are all aspects of a stable democracy, they reinforce on another and yet they all hinge on an ongoing and on an intentional dialogue between a government and its people and an election is really part of that.

What we have emphasized certainly in the case of DRC is first that the outcome of the election must represent the will of the Congolese people. It's an opportunity for the Congolese people to select leaders that are accountable to their needs and that includes a process where the Congolese both men and women are able to participate fully in these elections without intimidation, without reprisal, without lack of freedom. We also emphasize that it is the role of Congolese institutions with the support

of the parties and the actors that are working here to conduct credible elections. That is the responsibility of the designated institutions. We urge them to focus all of their effort, all of their attention in seeing that the elections are fair and are credible.

Let me go briefly into what we are doing concretely to work in the Congolese elections. We're offering support in two principal ways in these elections. The first one is through programs that build capacity and lay the path for a credible election. Those of you that have worked on elections know that they're very complex especially in settings where infrastructure and other factors make them even more complicated, so that helping lay the path by increasing local capacity is one way in which we're working on it. The second one is by providing repeated and ongoing engagement at the highest levels with the Congolese government as well as being very visibly supportive of civil-society organizations that are working in these issues in the country. And also interacting and dialoguing with youth in the country who of course we believe if they are actively involved can drive an election in a country where they are the majority. The United States is providing about \$13 million in election assistance, we're going this through AID, and that supports primarily the Carter Center for the work that it is doing in assisting in the way that I've talked about, and to IFIS, with IFIS really being very involved in helping address all the issues that have to do with the election. Through these organizations we're supporting voter education and we're supporting civic education. This is a big issue. How do you help the Congolese really become aware and understand the way in which the elections are being carried out? We're training local observers for the election and also bringing in and clearly urging for international observers which will be present in Congo. And we're helping build also the capacity of the human-rights organizations, the Congolese human-rights organizations that are going to be observing the elections themselves.

Separate from that we're providing \$500,000 for nonlethal defense equipment which is body armor and gas masks for the national police units that have

trained by MONUSCO and that are going to be charged with election security. This is another enormously important part of an effective election, is if you have proper security that protects the citizens and allows them to vote. One other project that we've taken on is we're working with what we're calling citizen journalists which is to train some of the opinion makers, not the journalists, but others that are working in local communities and whose opinions are held, to be able to report on key domestic issues including elections. The training that takes place trains coordinators that will then train other Congolese to be able to do this and we are making every effort to make sure that men and women are included in this effort. The idea is to have about 100 of these citizen journalists around DRC of which 50 percent will be women. This is again one example the use of inexpensive mobile phones, they can post text, they can do videos, they can do photographs, they can do Facebook, they can do especially through cell phones a variety of different things.

One of the ways in which of course we're engaged and that doesn't surprise any of you is we are engaging at the highest levels with the Congolese government urging them over and over again to hold transparent, free and peaceful presidential and legislative elections and we are working over and over at the highest levels. Deputy Bill Burns and I met with President Kabila on the margins during the U.N. General Assembly and we have discussions on elections, fairly extensive discussions. Assistant Secretary Johnny Carson will be traveling to Congo on Sunday to again follow and continue the work that I was doing there last week. Our ambassador, Ambassador Entwistle, is very actively involved in working on the issue of elections and making sure that all of the pieces that are important and that create this path that I'm talking about are addressed. As I mentioned, also part of our efforts are also to meet in a very visible way with civil-society organizations. I met with quite a number of them and engaged with them in hearing their sense about what is emerging from the elections, what their concerns are and how to address them and this was in East Congo and West Congo.

The biggest challenge we believe to the election is the massive logistical exercise that I think you referred to. It's really their Electoral Commission, CENI, that is facing this big challenge along with its partners of the international community that are working hand in hand with it. As many of you know, there are 500 legislative seats that are up for grabs, that are up for election in the country and as we understand right now, there are approximately 19,000 candidates for those positions. If you do your math, sometimes none of us can do math if we're doing all this kind of stuff, you can see that that is going to present just an enormous challenge and in even printing the ballots. There is one legislative position that has 1,500 candidates that have applied. This is one of the areas that is very, very difficult to address. As I walked into the bowels if you will of the CENI, I could see the amount of work that was being put into just printing these ballots and making sure that they were complete. I think one can discuss the validity of having such a huge number of people present themselves as candidates and why that basically was accepted that everybody that presented themselves was allowed to be a candidate. Where do you draw the line if this is a democratic system? That's one issue.

The second issue is getting the ballots to the right place at the right time. We all know that Congo is a very large country, very large territory. I came to understand that Congo is as wide as the United States east of the Mississippi and it takes you about 2 months or longer to cross that country by land which then points out the difficulty in the existing infrastructure in the country. There really are very few roads, almost very few that are paved at all. So these issues become from the logistic perspective very difficult ones to overcome.

We have publicly condemned and we will continue to condemn any election-related violence and we encourage constructive dialogue among the candidates particularly in the resolution of electoral disputes. That is, the contesting of the elections always becomes one of the concerns that take place. We've called on all candidates to publicly denounce any violence and to denounce electoral fraud. The messages that



they themselves send out will be important ones that can help determine to some degree the outcome of these factors in the election. Of course there is no place for violence if you're carrying out a democratic process in the DRC or anywhere else.

These are some of the factors that we saw and some of the conditions. Let me just address one additional issue which is certainly an opportunity but again a challenging one. That is the youth of Congo. The young people really can play a critical role in the electoral process in any system, but especially in the DRC where they comprise more than half of the population. I held a group of meetings with young people from Congo over the last several months, some through DVC and some in person as I did during this trip. It is clear that the economic conditions, the social conditions, the human-rights issue, gender equality, peace and stability, these are all issues that they care about and that matter to them. They talk and they engage in issues that have to do with sexual violence, with child soldiers, with high unemployment, and they also realize that they are bearing the brunt or the disproportionate brunt of the suffering that DRC has been engaging in especially in the east.

We have encouraged policymakers to actively engage with youth so that their voice can be heard, and we've asked the youth, my conversations with them are mostly focused on what are you doing in relation to these elections? Are you voting? Are you becoming more informed about the elections? Are you organizing other youth? What are the tools that you are using that are available to you that can allow you to engage more and more young people in civic engagement particularly in this area? We need to remind ourselves that the youth can be very important political agents in their country. We have seen that just recently through the Arab Spring. Certainly in the Congo, their vote can be enormously important so we should continue working to engage them more, to find ways to communicate with them and to help them understand how some of those tools that they use in their everyday lives such as social media can become important tools here.

These are the issues that I covered and that we can talk about here. I haven't talked about some of the other topics that we covered, but I think if we focus on the elections it would be very good. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: What we'll do here is take a couple of questions. The under secretary has agreed to stay for two or three questions. Please get my attention and then please wait for a microphone, identify yourself and ask a brief question.

MR. BARBER: Thank you. I'm Ed Barber from Good Works International, and before that, 43 years in the State and Treasury Departments. Thank you, Madam Secretary.

My question is about the size of the country and the terrible internal communications you alluded to. Obviously we want an election to be a dialogue between the government and the population, but I was wondering since most people in the Congo can only get around on the rivers, to what extent is this going to be a dialogue with the majority or is it mainly a dialogue with politically active elements in the major cities?

SECRETARY OTERO: It's certainly a question that is of concern to the CENI and to the government in general I think. Everybody sees that for example getting ballots up to the farthest-away places becomes very difficult. MONUSCO is playing a role in trying to assist in providing some air transport so that that can be addressed to the extent possible. There is no question that it's probably close to impossible to be able to get everything to every place that it has to be and we've seen that in other countries as well that aren't even as big or as deficient in infrastructure. The fact that there is a very marked and crucial effort to be able to do this is I think the direction in which one wants to go to and at some point one needs to say is the absolutely best that one can do and I think that that is really the reality of the thing. We are certainly supporting that the efforts be made to as large an extent as possible to be able to make this be the case. So I recognize it and I think they recognize it as well.

ALEX: My name is Alex and I followed very well your remark and I have to disagree with you. But it's not to disagree, but it's a point of view that just came out as you were explaining to us. The biggest challenge that Congo is facing is security. It has been an issue, it is an issue and that's where the United States should focus. Recently on October 4 exactly 10 days from today a jeep or car was going from South Kivu to Mwenga and it was attacked by Mai-Mai Yakutumba and Fnel agator wasa and they selectively killed the Tutsi people who were there, the Banyamulenge, the Tutsi who were in the car, and the rest of the people were released and they were allowed to go home. Until now as you know, the people who committed that genocide, the agator wasa people in Bujunbura, nobody was arrested nor also tried. So I guess that's the reason why they are keeping doing it. To be short, and please don't take me wrong, my point of view would be there are ideas that I've been looking on the internet and there these two ideas. Journalists are called Wanga Mointa and Sama Kiki.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, I'm going to ask you to ask the question now because actually your point of view was very well stated.

ALEX: They said that the ultimate solution for Congo would be to break it into pieces for peace. Why the United States wouldn't just do it as they did in Sudan and I think it's pretty working well? So I think that would be the solution, the ultimate solution for Congo given its history of violence.

SECRETARY OTERO: Let me address the question of security because there is absolutely no doubt that the issue of security is a concern and a factor that contributes to the violence that prevails. The impunity that one notes in Congo is not due exclusively to the lack of security forces or to the not well-trained security forces. It also has to do with very weak judicial institutions, with very weak courts, with a very difficult process for the rule of law to take place and that contributes to the kind of criminality and the kind of violence that we're seeing that just takes place with very little follow-up or prosecution or punishment of any sort. Certainly in the case of gender-based violence

this prevails. These are complicated issues and they're the ones that one needs to address.

From the perspective of the DRC, the United States supports the integrity of the country as a country and certainly it's really the people within a country that can make the decisions one way or another either in the areas as happened in the Sudan or elsewhere. But from our perspective, we support the sovereignty of course and the integrity of the territory of Congo.

SPEAKER: I had a question about the civil-society groups that you say you've been engaging with. I know you talked about election monitoring, but what other types of work are they doing and also especially in terms of monitoring and responding to violence?

SECRETARY OTERO: The groups that I met with both in East Congo and in Kinshasa generally focused in different areas of work. One of the groups of course was on gender-based violence and those groups are local civil-society organizations as well as partners who gave me a much clearer view of the work, of the conditions, of the outcomes, the issue of impunity. I was photographs of prisons with no doors in which some prisoners are being put in so that they come and go, but they basically provided some of the analysis of the work that. Most of the organizations that I met with are interestingly organizations that are doing with the victims and are primarily working with the victims after the case. The effort is to find ways to protect the victims before it happens and to prevent the violence from happening and this is far more difficult to do. That's where the security forces come in, that's where a lot of other elements come in. But the bulk of the work that's being done in this area of violence is really after the violence has happened. I visited Panzi Hospital and spoke with the women who had suffered violence. I spoke with a woman who had fistula operations. So that work is for me very interesting because what you also need very actively in the country are civil societies that simply advocating on the issue, not working directly with the victims, but

just raising this issue and the public awareness around this issue. That I think is something that still needs to be increased. I also met of course with people that are working on human rights. In particular they're supporting human-rights defenders, in this case people that are focusing on elections. One of the topics that I cover that you didn't mention and which is very important on my portfolio is trafficking in persons. The trafficking-of-persons issue is an important and big one in Congo particularly because of child labor. So there is a whole range of civil-society organizations that are working specifically on that issue. Their interaction with an under secretary or with high-level officials from the Department of State is enormously important because they're on the ground, they have a good analysis, they understand some of the factors that play into the problems and they can inform our policy as well as the messages that we provide. Secretary Clinton has said this from the very beginning so I make sure that I carry that out.

MR. O'HANLON: Don't go away because we will continue this discussion in just a moment with our panel, but join me in a big round of applause. I'll invite the panel to come on up, please.

Hello again and thank you for staying on. Let me on behalf of Brookings welcome a tremendous panel to continue our discussion of Congo, where it is in its history and the upcoming elections and the effort to stabilize the country. I was glad for the discussion of security earlier. That was obviously a huge element of where Congo's challenges lie today so that we'll look forward to discussing the full range of issues here in just a minute.

I would like to introduce starting on my left, Mvemba Dizolele who is a Congolese and a co-author with Tony Gambino who is just to my right of a recent report sponsored by the Eastern Congo Initiative, a very important new research and activism organization sponsored by Ben Affleck and based in Seattle and also with a Washington office. They have convened various works on the topic of Congo. Mvemba is their first

Fellow and they have sponsored this excellent report which I think many of you have now found and can find on the web if you haven't in hard copy by Tony and Mvemba on the upcoming elections, so that both Mvemba and Tony Gambino will speak about that.

Tony Gambino is a very dear friend of mine who was a Peace Corps volunteer with me in Congo 30 years ago and unlike me stayed with the issue thereafter and spent most of the 1990s working in Congo at AID including as Mission Director and has remained quite involved in the issue and with the country ever since including on a couple of trips to Congo this year that have provided much of the basis for the report.

Then finally we're delighted at Brookings to welcome from the great State of Utah but also from our own institution John Mbaku who is to my far right and who is from Cameroon originally, but if I were to go through all of his list of past accomplishments and associations you would hear describe him as a chemist, as a lawyer, as an economist, as an MBA and a professor from the great Rocky Mountain State again of Utah for much of the last 20 years. He is part of our Africa Growth Initiative here at Brookings and will bring in a broader regional perspective on issues of governance, development and economic integration after we've heard more specifically about the issues of the day.

We're going to begin again with a discussion of the report as the centerpiece of the opening remarks from the panel, but before I do that, even though I'm aware that many of you follow Congo and have worked in Congo and are very up on the issues, I thought I would turn to Tony and ask a broad framing question about where Congo is today in its history in terms of what these elections mean, what are the issues that are on people's minds, what's really being debated, before we get into the specifics of what can happen between now and November 28. I'd like to ask Tony to put things in a little broader perspective. We know the number of ups and downs and cycles that Congo has been through in its half-century history and I would like Tony to help us

understand how to understand this moment in its history and what the elections mean in a broader context if I could.

MR. GAMBINO: Thank you, Mike. These elections as Under Secretary Otero emphasized are extraordinarily important and it's useful to talk about why. This is a country as Mike said before that came to independence in 1960, had a very troubled history immediately after independence and then moved into a dictatorship that lasted for 32 years. A lot of us hoped that the end of that dictatorship would signal a new bright era in the Congo. We were wrong. It signaled another round of warfare and state collapse that was only ended by a peace agreement in 2002 and a transition that began in 2003.

The transition that began in 2003 kind of jammed together the major warring parties into a very awkward coalition government. It was the right thing to do by the way, but it was messy. And you had a 3-year transition that ended with elections in 2006. Those elections included violence, they were certainly not perfect, but those of us who were monitors, I was an election monitor in 2006 as was Mvemba, felt that all things considered, the 2006 elections were ultimately free and fair and that the declared winner, Joseph Kabila, was the actual winner of those elections which is of course among the most fundamental questions.

However, after those elections, there was a long list of actions that needed to be undertaken relating to state building and moving forward on a broad agenda to make the Congo more democratic and more prosperous. Under Secretary Otero said and evidence from around the world shows that this is clear. Country leadership is essential to this, but international support can help a lot, and I'm sorry to say that the international community including the United States really dropped the ball after the 2006 elections and wanted to pretend that elections were kind of an exit strategy and that meant that now everything was now going to be fine. If you know anything about the Congo's history, even if you listened to Mike O'Hanlon's précipe of Congo's recent history

you would know that everything was not fine even after reasonably good elections in 2006. So we have had a very shaky 5 years leading us now to the 2011 elections.

These elections then become important, both the presidential and the parliamentary, because then they will establish is the country going to try to keep moving forward to become more democratic, more prosperous or as we've seen too often in other countries in the region and around the world that are trying to emerge from violence and fragility, have we had a little up and then we go back again? Unfortunately again if you've read World Bank studies or other reports, they actually show that the most difficult, the most dangerous period for countries like the Congo is the period after the first round of elections and that's where we are right now and that's why these elections matter so much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. That was an excellent summary. Now we can proceed to get into the details and mechanics of these elections and the preparations for them. Mvemba, I'll turn to you if you don't mind. You are co-author with Tony of this excellent paper and I'd like to hear your opening thoughts framing your recommendations based on the many challenges that you see with of course the central question being, and I'd like to hear as well in your broader discussion a direct answer to this question, are these elections likely to be a real positive step forward? The reason I ask, I've been studying a fair amount, Iraq, Afghanistan and the Middle East, where there have been a lot of elections in recent years that have not been positive steps forward, that have brought to power either sectarian tension, patronage networks or extremist ideologies. And we all know that elections as Tony has just been saying can be very fraught and perilous, potentially even negative experiences in a country's political life. I'm hopeful that I'll hear you explain whether you think these are promising and what needs to be done to improve the odds that in fact on November 28 we'll see a positive step forward and not regression for Congo.



MR. DIZOLELE: Thank you, Mike, and thank you to Brookings for hosting this discussion.

This election could be a positive step, but to talk about what it could be in November, we need to talk about what happened in 2006. In 2006 there was a lot of hope that as Tony said this will be the pivot that will take us to the new dispensation, a democratic dispensation. But what happened is we saw that for 5 years or 4 years roughly the Congolese leadership did not take the election seriously. It's as if they'd forgotten about it. Nothing happened in terms of setting the process in motion. That process would have been, for instance they could have registered the people of voting age during the 4 years and that didn't happen. So we kept the CENI in place for almost 4 years before installing the new office now which is the CENI which is the permanent thing. So the CENI doesn't get put in place not before February where they get appointed and then they don't get their swearing in ceremony and start work before March, so they started in March.

If you will then organize the election in the same year while you're setting your own office if you just think about organizational issues, how does this office work, the operations of the office, that's a problem. If you're going to talk about who will staff the CENI in terms of the commission and leadership of the CENI, which parties will be represented, how many people from the majority, how many people from the minority, the opposition that is, that's another issue and that's already started with the tension within the political system. Then you come to the issue of scheduling. If you start your work in March and you have to do all the issues I just mentioned and then you have to set in motion a process that needs to be credible -- because it's not just about the election, but it's about the process itself -- is the process credible, is the process fair, is the process transparent? Those issues to all of these the answers are close to no. Maybe will be the best we can answer. So if you have that system and you have then political parties that have been feeling marginalized for years one of them being UDPS which is the main kind

of the locomotive, the head of the train when it comes to opposition in the DRC and they are willing to march for whatever they think is wrong, UDPS has called this actually the point of I think all these issues of primarily technical issues, so the scheduling itself. If the DRC cannot produce its own voting materials, ballots, isolar, the list and so on and you have to outsource everything to foreign countries in this case it was a disparate number of countries. So we have Lebanon. I didn't actually know that Lebanon was a good place to go for voting material -- Germany and then you have China. The people of the CENI believe the process is great and everything is going to be fine come November 28. Everybody will be happy and the process will be transparent. The opposition doesn't believe that.

The other issue is that of enrollment. The opposition feels that a lot of people were enrolled are fake, do not exist, they're dead, people underage and also people in the military who are not supposed to vote. If you consider those, then there is another issue that then just comes and that's the issue of the I.D., the voter card, is the same as the national I.D. because there -- national I.D. We've not had any census in the DRC since 1984. Then you ask are the allegations of fraud real? Do the minors who registered, were they trying to vote on half of one specific party or were they just registering because that's the only way they can have an I.D.? If you're 16 or 17 and registration is now and the next round of registration will be in 2016 or 2015, do you wait for the next 5 years without an I.D.? You won't be able to do any bar hopping; you will not be able to do anything else because you're not registered. And in a country like the DRC where the issue of nationality has become a serious problem as of late, what do you do? Those are some of the issues. So we believe the opposition has been calling for the CENI to open its voter registry, the official electoral, so people can audit it and see if it is possible and the CENI has been resisting that.

The other point that we looked at is the timing itself. Now material starts coming from overseas. But when you look at the logistics, the challenges of delivering

ballots from one side of the country to another, you have an issue that makes you actually worry. You become very nervous and believe that it's possible as a member of the CENI insists or even as the U.S. Ambassador in Kinshasa insists that everything is in place, that we might have elections, but those elections will definitely not be credible if you don't deliver the material on time to the 60,000 polling stations, you'll have some kind of elections, but those elections will fuel the tension that already exists. So this election I think actually might be much more potentially fraught with risk of violence than last time. I also think the government could have behaved in a little more inclusive way so that the president for instance could step up and start behaving like the president. I understand that he is a candidate himself, but he is also the father of the nation so to speak in setting the tone and bringing transparency into this. So our recommendations then. Our recommendations are again based on the technicalities, the issues that are challenging this. We would like to have more transparency in the process that the CENI will communicate better with the members of the opposition, that they will open the server, the official electoral, so those who have issues with that will be reassured that there is not the allegation of fraud. So these should be technical things. So what we recommend is to set up a commission of election experts. This can be a purely Congolese commission, it can be a mixed commission, but it has to be based on a consensus between the opposition and the majority with the buy-in from the CENI. It has to consist of people who know what they're talking about, and then they will decide, one, under the current circumstances is it possible to have the election in time? If so, fine. We should have an audit of the server, of the official electoral, and then we also have to determine if it's not feasible on technicality. How soon can we have a credible, transparent election? Will that be 3 months from now? Will it be 6 months? We understand this will bring new issues of constitutionality, of legality and legitimacy of the current leadership because the senate will have expired its mandate, the president will have expired his mandate, the parliament will expand its mandate.

So this is kind of the general issue that we tackle in this paper and Tony will take it from there and then more Q and A will probably give us more meat for the discussion.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Before I turn it over to Tony, let me follow-up with one specific thing. You've raised obviously the big potential issue of potential postponement which is obviously a very complex and challenging matter, but I'm glad you put it on the table. Before we get to that though, and I think Tony may want to talk about that question as well, can you tell us a little bit about the degree to which there are real meaningful differences among the candidates based on their visions for the country, because most of the discussion so far today has been about the mechanics of elections and obviously that's hugely important. But since you are Congolese, I'd love to get your take on whether you think that the various visions or policy agendas that you could imagine people debating in this kind of an election are being discussed or is the election really almost a popularity contest whether at the local level for parliamentarians or at the national level for Kabila versus his challengers? To what extent is it just about personalities and popularity? To what extent are there visions for policy that are informing the choices and the debates?

MR. DIZOLELE: Visions that inform the policy are nearly nonexistent in the sense that opposition leaders have not been able to articulate any clear project that you can ask the communities and say, by the way, what do you think of candidate A, what's his vision? Most communities will not be able to tell you what that is and this goes pretty much across the board for the entire opposition.

The one thing that is true is it's more of a popularity contest on one level. So we have a president who for various reasons is not very popular in the country now so that there is discontent. I think it has more to do with the expectations -- we had 3 years' transition. People put up with that. And then after that with election people expected a little more to happen and nothing has happened along those lines that is substantial for

people. Teachers are still struggling to make ends meet. The soldiers are not being paid regularly. The very basic issues, fundamental issues of day-to-day that the -- are grappling with including security, not only in the east but across the country.

Within that context, the Congolese just want change if we cause the U.S. reference and the need for change is driving the election which goes back to popularity contests. In many ways I can honestly that most Congolese hope whosoever comes next will be better than the system that we have now.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Tony, over to you.

MR. GAMBINO: Thank you, Mike. Let me start with some of the great points that were laid out by Under Secretary Otero because I think I want to say some good things about what the U.S. government has been doing. I think it's fantastic that a senior official as she was in the Congo last week with as we said elections as the focus of her trip. It's a good thing. It's a good thing that Assistant Secretary of State for Africa Johnny Carson is going next week and elections will certainly be high on his agenda for issues to discuss. It's also a great thing that she just said to us and the U.S. has been saying this regularly that the outcome must represent the will of the Congolese people and the elections must be fair and credible. These are all fantastic things.

However, at the same time public statements by the United States and by the head of the Electoral Commission who was in Washington last week, Pastor Mulunda, state with great confidence even that free, fair, credible, transparent elections can't occur on time in 6 weeks, because let's be clear, November 28 is just 6 weeks from now. As Mvemba said in our paper and what I'm going to say now, we are in no way insisting that elections be postponed. That's not our point. But we insist that elections be free, fair, credible and transparent. So let's just think about a few technical facts that are mentioned in our report. The present Electoral Commission put out a plan months ago for how to do this, and as a number of speakers have already said and as Under Secretary Otero underscored, there is a massive logistical challenge in a country the size

of the Congo with its various constraints. What do you have to do? You have to distribute ballot boxes, various other things that relate such as little isolation voting booths. There are 62,000 polling places in the Congo, you need hundreds of thousands of these and you cannot get to all the 62,000 places by road. You have to get to some of them on bicycle or on foot. In the initial calendar to distribute these kinds of what are called nonsensitive electoral components, 2-1/2 months which would take us to the end of this calendar year.

So where are we today? Last week Pastor Mulunda distributed this. It's called "The Critical Road to Elections in the Congo." We got this one week ago. It relates to the electoral kits including the ballot boxes. The ballot boxes have not been made yet. They haven't been made. And this piece of paper from a week ago is already out of date because a week ago it said that they would be made in both China and Germany, but the problem is they're pushing so, so hard to do things on time that they want people to work around the clock. The Germans have wage laws and they have worker hour laws so they said, no, we don't need that. We need to go to China where they'll work 24-7. We laugh, but it's serious. They cancelled the German contract. They gave the contract to make 180,000 ballot boxes out of cardboard in China. I repeat, they have not been made yet. They have to somehow get from China to the Congo. Then they have to be somehow distributed to 62,000 places. This was supposed to take 2-1/2 months and we have 6 weeks.

The second point and to me an extraordinarily important one and one that has not got nearly the attention it merits. I saw with my own eyes in 2006 what occurs in a country that has suffered what the Congo has suffered through its history. When an educational system collapses and it is still collapsed, think about what happens. What happens is that people don't learn how to read and write and they are illiterate. In visiting rural voting places throughout North Kivu in Congo we saw that every single woman, I don't exaggerate, every single woman, was illiterate. Every single one. And

many of the men were illiterate. That means this, and is an extreme case but it's not an unusual case in developing countries, that you develop ballots that permit illiterate voters to make a choice. I will never forget a woman coming in to vote, an older woman in 2006, being handed the ballot materials and looking at them and then just turning around to look at people, I don't know what this means. What am I supposed to do? In 2006 the Congolese very creatively said we're going to throw secret ballot issues out the window and we're going to let these people be assisted by an elections official right there on the spot. There were observers both international and domestic and people said, yes, not perfect but at least it lets these people vote. Again I saw and people saw around the country these women would go and you would see some little discussion and sometimes the electoral official him or herself would mark the ballots. This is, do I need to tell you, highly irregular, but under first elections and trying to make it work, it seemed like people were doing it right, that it was not fraud, they were trying to accommodate. I'm sad to say that in the last 5 years nothing has been done to respond to this problem. There has been no serious voter education. There has been no change in illiteracy.

Now think about what Under Secretary Otero just said, 19,000 candidates for 500 parliamentary seats. Ballots that can be used by illiterate people have to have, must have, name, picture and logo, not the name of the party but a logo, so if you're illiterate you can get it. This is complex, and when you have dozens, hundreds, thousands of candidates, it's not an easy technical thing. Do you want a ballot as big as this room with all the pictures? So you have to work it out and it takes time. Again we're 6 weeks before the elections. According to the information that I have from the last few days, discussions are still underway between the Electoral Commission and the South African firm that will print these ballots about how to do it. Does anyone in this room really think that in 6 weeks they can print -- there are 32 million registered voters and, remember, there are 500 parliamentary seats, so that's 500 different ballots that are done. They have to be perfect. You can't have a ballot with errors on it. All this is going

to be done. They can be transported securely. And the final point on this one, the list of who the fully accepted 19,000 candidates are is not yet done. There are still some disputes about the validity of some of the candidacies so we don't have a final and you can't do the ballot until you have the final or who are the actual candidates.

As Mvemba said, all we're saying is let's push aside the politics -- it's difficult, but let's push aside the politics for a second and let the Congolese with assistance from the international community come together calmly and think about these technical problems. It's regrettable that they're here now, but it's a fact. They can't be wished away. One can't just assert that everything is fine. I've given you two examples. There are many more. And then as Mvemba said, let's let technical people look at this and say to get the right kind of ballots printed that will work for people who are illiterate and get them out is going to take however long it's going to take. I will tell you here publicly I would be quite shocked if someone could say it could be done by November 28, but if it can be, fantastic. But if it can't be, let's have that discussion. It will be difficult, it creates constitutional issues, but resolvable issues so that we don't as the International Crisis Group said months and months ago move headlong to what will be botched elections which will create a nightmare for the Congo. Let's take the time that we need to take, do things right and get as close as we can to free, fair, credible, transparent elections in the Congo.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Very informative and very sobering. John, over to you. Please say whatever you like about the election issue if you wish, but I know your interest and expertise may go beyond that. Obviously we have an immediate question before us. Brookings doesn't have the luxury of having an event on Congo every day and so let's talk about other issues as well and we'll come back to the election question I'm sure in the discussion. But please put anything on the table that you think we need in terms of regional economic cooperation, in terms of Congolese economic and governance development, whatever is on your mind.



MR. MBAKU: Thank you very much. I'm glad to be here. Before I start I'd like to thank the Brookings Institution, specifically the African Growth Initiative for making possible this program. But perhaps more importantly for providing a forum where Africans can actually get together and talk about issues that affect them, issues of importance to them, and for providing an opportunity for Africans to communicate with citizens in the United States and allow the citizens to understand the difficulties and the problems that Africans are encountering and to seek assistance in resolving those problems. Again thank you to the Brookings Institution. I hope you take our thanks to them.

What I'm going to do in my brief talk is to assume that we resolve all the problems that Tony mentioned and the election goes through well, and now we have a new government postelection in Congo. So I'm going to start from there. One of the things we have to understand here is that Congo is not that different from most African countries in that Congo gained independence and after independence Congo like virtually all the African countries never had an opportunity to sit down and actually give the people of Congo an opportunity to discuss among themselves what kind of a state they wanted, first. Second, how they wanted to relate to each other. In other words, how were they going to live together? Remember that during the colonial period the Belgians and all the other European groups basically came to Africa and forced a lot of people to live together. They didn't ask the population groups that existed in those areas that they colonized whether they wanted to live together and how they wanted to live together and relate to each other. They simply forced them to live together. In order to make sure that the Europeans had the peace that was necessary so they could begin their exploitation program, they used force to get people to live together. Here we are independent and what we should have done then was to bring all these people together and give them an opportunity to discuss the process of establishing what has been referred to as a consensual state. That is one that would allow the people to build a new shared and

inclusive political culture and that culture would borrow from the best experiences of each group so that all those groups would come together, they would take the best in them and use that to build a culture so that they can govern themselves and provide an opportunity for them to live together peacefully. That was never done. So what I'm saying to the new Congolese government is that this is what you need to do. Your job once you're elected through this election is to bring all the Congolese people together, sit them together, take maybe 2 or 3 years and go through this process in which you decide how you want to live together as a group of people. Once you've made that determination you will be able to then decide what kind of state, what kind of institutions you want to develop in order to maintain that relationship. I think that if the Congolese people are able to do this, they will be able to establish a state that will allow them to live together peacefully and then proceed with all the other things that they want to do, economic growth, economic development and so on and so on. Of course more important is that once they achieve this consensual state they will be able to have a better relationship with their neighbors and as a result will be able to engage in the kind of regional trade that can actually allow the Congolese people to exploit the normal resources that they have for their own benefit instead of allowing those resources to be exploited for the benefit of other people.

During this discussion that I'm talking about, we have to be very careful. I'm not talking about intellectuals meeting in Kinshasa and talking amongst themselves even if every group in Congo is represented within that intellectual community. This is not what I'm talking about. This discussion that I'm talking about is a discussion that will include representatives from all the Congolese people and those representatives need not be PhD holders or even high school graduates because it doesn't require a Western education for somebody to understand how they want to relate to their neighbors. What I'm talking about is bringing together people from all walks of society, farmers, homeless people, orphans, individuals who cannot read French, individuals who can read and speak English, people representing all societies in Congo to come together and go

through a process in which they actually discuss how they want to relate to each other as a nation.

Some of the issues that should be discussed, some issues are really imperative. Some issues will come as a result of the contributions of the people who come to this reconstruction conference, but some are imperative. The first one of them is peaceful coexistence of all the groups regardless of how you define the group. You can talk of ethnic groups, you can define groups any way you want, but you need to bring all the groups together so that they can sit and discuss how they are going to live together peacefully.

The second issue is entrepreneurship and the creation of wealth. Right now in Congo one of the things that is very interesting to see in Congo is that everybody looks up to the state to provide sustenance for them. This is not the way it used to be. Congolese people like most Africans are very hard working. They can actually take care of themselves if you provide them with the opportunities to do so. Part of the problem you have now is that in the country there is so much violence that people spend most of their time trying to prevent other people from taking away from them what they have either accumulated or what they are just about to accumulate so that if we can have peace in Congo, people would be able to have the opportunity to provide for themselves. We need to create an environment within which actually can engage in entrepreneurial activities. This is the second thing that the Congolese people need to talk about.

The third thing, and I think this is very important, if we are going to avoid what happened in Côte d'Ivoire and what continues to happen in Nigeria, we have to talk about citizenship, and that is what does it mean to be a Congolese citizen? This might appear to be very elementary, but the problem is I don't think anybody in Congo ever talked about who a Congolese is because the Belgians who colonized Congo never talked about it either because it wasn't that important to them. Unfortunately it is important for us to know who a Congolese is? Who is a Congolese citizen? What about

for example people migrated from neighboring countries like Burundi or Rwanda and lived in Congo for generations? Are those people Congolese citizens? These are issues that the Congolese people themselves have to sit together and begin to talk about and try to resolve this issue of a Congolese citizen, what it means to be a Congolese, whether or not if you live in Shaba Province can you migrate to the north of Congo and be allowed to participate in the politics and the economy of that part of the country. This is really critical because in my experience in a lot of African countries, in Cameroon for example, is that if you belong to some ethnic group over here, you cannot move and then go to this ethnic group there and do business or run for public office there. If you have that kind of a problem in a country, you cannot develop the country and part of the reason has to do with the fact that one part of the country may lack human capital, another part of the country may have excess human capital and you cannot have people being able to move from one part of the country to fill the need in another part of the country if you don't have this right of internal migration, the right to move to from one part of the country to another and be able to function effectively in that part of the country and have your rights and be able to function there as a citizen. So in order to avoid these problems, the Congolese people need to sit together and discuss this issue of citizenship.

The next issue is corruption. This is an issue that the Congolese need to sit down and talk about how are they going to make sure that anyone who is given a government position does not try to use that government position to benefit himself or herself and members of his extended family and so on and so on. This is very critical primarily because of the fact that in a developing country, public positions are very critical to development and in order for those public positions to be used to advance development, they have to be free of corruption.

The next issue is education. Education is very important primarily because throughout Africa many educational systems are dysfunctional. The educational systems were imposed by the Europeans primarily to educate people to serve the

Europeans and as a result throughout the continent education tends to emphasize subjects and issues that are irrelevant to African societies. When you go to some universities in Africa, I think I'll use my experience in Cameroon to give you an example. I went through primary school in Cameroon, graduated from secondary school and I had virtually no knowledge of Cameroon's geography or Cameroon's history and the reason is we were never taught Cameroon's geography or history while I was a student. But I knew virtually everything about French history or European history and the history of other countries and I don't think this is a way to educate people because if you want development, you have to know what the problems are that you are facing in terms of development. So I think that we need to deconstruct education and provide people with educational systems that prepare them for real life, not for educational systems that provide the people with an education that is irrelevant to the problems that they are going to face.

I know that in Congo, French is the official language, but one of the things that we have to be very careful and I think Congolese officials need to be careful about is the fact that if you want to educate people, you need to consider their local languages. When I was growing up in Cameroon, it was considered an insult for someone to try to educate people in their local language. The idea was in Cameroon you need to learn to speak French, you need to learn to speak English, so if you can't speak French or English you're considered an illiterate person. We called them a primitive person or backwoods person, someone who has no ideas and as a result cannot think, cannot articulate. I think this is a really bad thing to do, so we need to understand how to educate our people, how to provide them with the tools that they need to be able to solve their questions or problems. I'll stop here and I will attend to some questions later on. Thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, John. Let's turn it over to you. Please feel free to raise any question that you think is of relevance to Congo today, but specifically of

course we're interested in the elections and the politics of the country and the security situation. So please just wait for a microphone, identify yourself and we'll start here in the third row.

MS. EVELE: Thank you very much for the presentations. My name is Nita Evele with Congo Global Action. My question is for Mvemba and Tony Gambino regarding the November 28 election. We probably know that the election on the 28th if it takes place it's going to be very messy because they won't be able to deploy all of the ballots, et cetera. One of the recommendations is to sit down and figure out what to do in case where the election is not possible on the 28th. As a Congolese and as I know the Congolese, to get everybody to agree on one type of transition or anything else between November 28 until the election takes place is going to be the issue. What type of advice or technical, or what do the people have to do to get all the parties to agree to change the date because our constitution does not allow a transition and anything else doesn't really point to people sitting together and agreeing? So what would you suggest for that? Thanks.

MR. GAMBINO: May I start? Thank you, Nita. That's a crucial question because as Nita was suggesting, that if the elections are postponed for any period at all, it creates an immediate constitutional crisis, but we point out in our paper a few things to be considered. The first is that the Congo faced such an issue in 2006. In 2006, Congo had a two-round system where the winner had to win at the presidential level more than 50 percent of the vote. No candidate won more than 50 percent of the vote and so there was a second round of elections between the two top vote getters. By the way, this time the constitution was changed earlier this year. It's just a one-round system, so whoever gets the most votes win so that you can win theoretically with 25 or 30 percent of the vote and there are 11 candidates for president.

In 2006 for the second round the then Electoral Commission saw that it couldn't get it together for logistical reasons. It went to the Supreme Court to ask for a

postponement. This was beyond constitutional considerations. The Supreme Court at that time agreed to this exceptional measure because of the material and logistical difficulties and the fact that the postponement would not affect what they called the regularity of the ballot. So the Congo itself already has a precedent for what do you if you face this, and note that we are talking only about the kinds of logistical technical difficulties.

Now let's get to the specifics. If we assume a scenario where we get to this as Nita's question does, number one is the question of how long. The longer the period the greater the crisis I think it's fair to say. The shorter the period the easier it is to figure out some kind of arrangement that is acceptable. The different parties whether they're in the opposition or the government surely will have different visions of how to manage this period. My hope, I'm just speaking personally, is that if the period is relatively short and what I mean is that it's measured in no more than a couple of months or so, that those parties will come together in good faith and agree to something. There are any number of things you could agree with, it's just for some period of say one month or two months, that will just tie things over until we have the election, we see what's going to happen and we move forward. That really will be up to the Congolese to come together and do it in good faith and I really think they can. I think that's something that could happen.

MR. DIZOLELE: I also think it's an important question that I think just as recently as September or August we had the code of bon conduit. I think all the major parties signed that code except for the UDPS. What does this means? I don't know if that worked very well or not but at least they came to an understanding. Using the same type of platform, they can agree on the issue. It's a very thorny issue, it's not the greatest of solutions, but what is better? Is it better to have elections on the 28th that are much less credible and get UDPS to the streets, because they will get to the streets? There is no making a mistake about that. In fact, they've been rehearsing for the last 3 months.

They just cannot get around the UDPS when it comes to mass protests. I think a platform is there. The forum the parties exists. I think if there's pressure on CENI and the various political parties to do this, they can do it. One problem is actually also the political parties themselves. I think the political parties think it's okay if the elections don't work well for various reasons. That's I think another risk that we need to be worried about. I don't think there is a silver-bullet solution, but this is why should talk and they know the situation better than we do.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to add one very brief point, taking the prerogative here to mention that in other countries where there have been these kinds of issues, there is a bit of a precedent which I think is consistent with what Tony said that if there is a need for a 3- to 4-month delay, that can be worked out. Again I don't want to hold out Afghanistan as the model for successful elections, but it's still fair to say that when the presidential elections had to be postponed from spring 2009 to August, that fact itself did not cause the problems that we've seen since that wound up being an acceptable compromise insofar as the timing was one of the fundamental issues. In this kind of a situation, appealing to other countries' experiences and to the U.N. to provide technical advice I think can often provide a way out.

SPEAKER: Nigeria did that. In 2006 they did a terrible job. Congo looked so great in 2006 compared to Nigeria. But in the last election in Nigeria there was a lot of give and take including some delays.

SPEAKER: Including a delay.

SPEAKER: And it worked better. Imagine Nigeria in terms of explosiveness compared to Congo. We look really good.

MR. HARBISON: John Harbison with Johns Hopkins-SAIS. I came hoping that I would hear that this election is not going to be a train wreck. It sounds like it's going to be. My point is we've known this for 5 years. I'd like to ask the entire panel to reflect on how we've gotten to this point. Why have some of the concerns that John



Mbaku mentioned -- how have we gotten to this point? Beyond that, this election sets a precedent. If the international community and the country are over a barrel on this election, that sets a precedent for other countries in the region, I'm thinking of some countries in East Africa particularly, that we had elections no matter what no matter what the consequences are. How did we get here and how do we not get there in the future?

MR. O'HANLON: Shall we start here and maybe work toward regional implications? Let's start with Congo.

MR. MBAKU: We got there and the history goes back to 2006. I think in many ways we got here because the transition in 2003, from 2003 to 2006, the foundation of that transition was bad. What I mean is you have a transition where you allow the warlords to run the country in the name of peace. Fine. But then we didn't prevent any warlord from running for office meaning for president for instance. Liberia did a better job with that. In Liberia, President Sirleaf Johnson or Johnson Sirleaf just got the Nobel Prize, a different story. But if she were able to emerge, it's because the system was created that allowed people like her or people like George Weah to emerge in the process. We didn't have that in the DRC in 2006. So the Group Nonachmay, the UDPS, groups like that who had more interest of the people at heart were marginalized and were not part of the process. Instead we end up with President Kabila continuing his term, we end with Jean-Pierre Bemba, Mbusa Nyamwisi, you name them. Not the characters you want to mess with. Those are the guys who were in government.

Then the goal became for them, first of all, they didn't really believe in the elections until the UDPS started putting pressure on them. It's kind of like what we're having today. If you don't do this by such a date, we'll take to the street. So -- force to have the elections, but again then it was really for them to adjust whatever. So the militias became the political parties. This is a serious problem because you don't have a lot of grassroots political party institutions or organizations. And if you go from there then it becomes about perpetuating their own power at all costs. To me that's the immediate

source, not even what happened with the Belgians, but we have a history here that we had an opportunity that we missed.

Then for the next 4 years or the next 5 years, everybody forgot the election which it's hard for me to understand because if you're President Kabila, I presume you think about winning in 2011. The sooner you start the better because you have more money, you have the wind of the incumbency which every incumbent in the world has. You have access to the state machine. So what exactly is your malfunction? That's really the question. There is no easy question but I think there's a combination of those answers. And then the international community like Tony had said kind of said this is great. You guys can do this yourselves. It's ridiculous as a proposition to think that these people can do it themselves, and our U.S. ambassador is still kind of saying that message today even at this critical point. This is a serious problem. So we as the international community has part of the responsibility in that as well. Thanks.

MR. GAMBINO: I'd like to make three points, John. First, you used the image of a train wreck, but let's talk a little bit about what's at stake. In 2006 for the second round there was street fighting with heavy weapons in downtown Kinshasa and dead bodies on the street in downtown Kinshasa and those were for elections that we ultimately concluded were relatively okay and free and fair. This time around if it goes wrong it could be much worse. Much worse. We could take a whole session and talk about negative scenarios with street protests leading to increased repression by state authorities as well as militias that are now being recreated among youth in Kinshasa and elsewhere in the country. You can get to just a horrible nightmare right away, so let's not forget that. That is what is at stake and so that is why many of us are doing everything we can and believe that this disaster must and can be avoided and we keep coming out with suggestions and proposals for how to do it.

My second point to agree with Mvemba, the point I would say, John, is really the international community in particular indulged in what can only be called wishful

thinking. The big U.N. mission had come in 1999. People long before 2006 were saying, my God, they're still there? Can't we get them out? By the way, the international mission is still in the Congo and still needs to be in the Congo today. But starting in 2003 and 2004, what you heard in New York and Washington and European capitals was this is expensive. Can't we get them out? So in Washington and other capitals after the 2006 elections, the focus was not on how can we now deal with this period of greater risk and help the Congo move forward? Rather, the initial focus was let's get this U.N. mission out of the country. Let's withdraw them. And it was only when there was another round of serious violence in Eastern Congo in 2007 that people woke up from their crazy fantasy and said we got to get at least a little more serious, so just crazy wishful thinking.

My third point is that if you want to think about ways to do it better, the World Bank has done I think all of us a service. Their 2011 "World Development Report" is on conflict and security and they have very clear recommendations of how to think about states like the Congo as they try to emerge. They talk very candidly about how difficult it is, how long it takes, but the kinds of steps, very concrete, that countries and outsiders who want to support these countries can take so that ultimately they can emerge from this terrible cycle that the Congo has been in for too long.

MR. O'HANLON: John?

MR. MBAKU: I would make a short comment. I think we have to be very careful here when we talk about Congo and other situations in Africa, and one that comes to mind is South Sudan. The reason I say so is because we have to remember that no matter how much we try as foreigners, the ultimate decision on how to reconstruct Congo should be left to the Congolese people. Unfortunately, many of the foreign missions including the U.N. mission in Congo are not giving the Congolese people the wherewithal or the opportunity to actually articulate what it is they want to do with themselves and their country and I think no matter what we impose on Congo is never going to work regardless of how magnanimous we are primarily because as hard we can try, we are

never going to as foreigners be able to understand exactly what it is the Congolese people are going through and the problems that they have. Only the Congolese people can define their problems and how they want to solve them. What we should be doing is providing them with as much help as we can but giving them the opportunity to take the lead in resolving those problems no matter how dysfunctional we think the solutions that they come with are because in the end they are the ones who are going to live with those solutions.

Another issue here that we also have to keep in mind is that the international community especially those who are involved in the extractive industries, I don't want to be callous in characterizing them, but the thing is that their interest is only to maintain the type of peace that is necessary for them to continue with their activities and that that might not be the peace that the Congolese people really want. I think that one way to answer the question how did we get here may have something to do with the fact that while Congo and the rest of Africa is boiling and ready to explode, as long as those people who are interested in the extractive industries don't consider that explosion as dangerous to their activities, they probably are not going to be interested in trying to resolve whatever issues we have in those countries with respect to peaceful coexistence, the rape of women and things like that as long as they don't interfere with business activities. I don't want to make the Chinese angry at me, but I think that when I came back from South Sudan what I basically saw there was that the foreign companies that are exploiting oil there were really not worried about the mass killings that were going on because they didn't interfere with their oil explorations.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, sir, here in the blue tie. Actually, why don't we take both of these gentlemen together and then we'll have the panel respond collectively?

MR. KATABANA: Shatana Katabana. I really don't have a question but I have somewhat of a few comments for Mvemba and Tony.

MR. O'HANLON: If you have a comment, may I ask for one, because it really is supposed to be Q and A? I'll let you make one comment.

MR. KATABANA: Thank you. I could not help but notice especially since I'm a big fan of yours, Mvemba, but if I was to close my eyes, you sound very critical of the CENI and also those that are in power currently, and if I close my eyes I would probably think you were running for the opposition for the presidency. I want to give you an opportunity to say something positive or at least from your experience what you've seen as being a positive act that's actually taken place currently in the Congo. I just came back from Bukavu about a week ago and to your point about illiteracy, I beg to differ. What I found were folks who were highly intelligent. I take great concern, Tony, with your comment that every single woman in the Kivu region is illiterate.

MR. GAMBINO: That's not what I said.

MR. KATABANA: I think that was your thought. I'll allow you to rectify that if you will.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, a question?

MR. ADALANDONI: Ben Adalandoni with IHS International. My question is my greatest concern is security to me. If you look at what is happening in the Eastern Congo today, we continue to see formation of militias, rebel groups, each and every month. But we are more concerned with this issue of elections believing somehow that it's going to resolve all the problems. In 2006 we have seen the same thing because people thought with the elections we are going to end the activities of militias. There are parties that are associated with these militias today and the greatest fear is that if a candidate who is associated with a militia loses, it is more likely that all these rebel groups, the parties associated with the rebel groups, will continue to fight no matter what. The composition is the elections are going to great. Things are going to be fine after the elections. But does anybody have an understanding on how the Congolese can come to a point where they deal with all these local issues that are driving these militias to be

created every month rather than just thinking that the elections are going to resolve all the problems?

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. I think what we'll do is these two questions or comments were for Mvemba and Tony and we'll get them to respond. Then I'll finally give the back of the room a chance, we'll have a couple of questions from there and then everybody can finish up.

MR. DIZOLELE: Thanks. No, I'm not running for office. However, you said I'm very critical of the CENI. It's not the CENI necessarily, I mean the process. I said with the government that was elected, they were elected in 2006. If you are elected, the reason the Congolese put up with whatever shortcomings were in the transition from 2003 to 2006 because the Congolese were promised certain things, i.e., they will live in peace if you're in Bakavu and Naturi. If you're in Bakongo, Angola, if you're in Ecuador, the same thing, that things will get better. So we saw the people in Kinshasa with SUVs and life seems to get better for them. Life has not gotten better for anybody else that I know who lives in the rural areas. Fine. But then do the things that you were elected to do including having transparent, credible elections now. Why is it that you take 5 years to appoint your CENI? There is really no explanation for that. And then to expect somehow that the CENI will do a miracle, and when they mess up, I'm not going to applaud that. If they do good things -- recently the Reverend Mulunda has been more forthcoming with information. That's great. He was here and I told him that. I almost had tears in my eyes when I saw him. I was why did it take so long? Why was it when you were in 6 months ago you couldn't have this speech where we can all connect and meet you half-way because we know the problems? So the defensiveness of the leadership in Kinshasa alienates the rest of the world. As an analyst, if there are good things, I say it. If you read my writing, as early as 2003 I was writing in "The New York Times" why the U.S. should support Congo. Why the U.S. should support President Kabila. But how much longer do we have? Look at your generation and my generation. It's the sacrifice

generation. I'm sure you have kids or maybe you don't. Now we have kids. We're sacrificing our kids. Are we going to continue to look for positive things however small they are in the haystack? Or are we going to look at the clock and say there's urgency? So that's what I'll leave you with.

MR. GAMBINO: Just a few points. Let me clarify. I was speaking about literacy and illiteracy which has nothing to do with intelligence. You can be highly literate and very stupid. You can be utterly illiterate and extraordinarily intelligent. I said nothing about intelligence, so just to clarify. I was only speaking about literacy rates and I was only speaking about rural areas. Rural areas. I was not speaking about places like Bukavu, Goma, any city, Kisangani, wherever it is in the Congo where of course literacy rates are higher although you will find large numbers of illiterate people even in major cities in the Congo. But I will tell you, going to rural polling stations it was amazing. And then we checked this. We were Carter Center observers. I went back in 2006 and met in a room of observers from around the world who had observed in every province of the Congo and I shared with them just what I shared with you, that in the rural areas it was amazing the high degrees of illiteracy and every person in the room agreed that they had seen it all around the country in the rural areas. So again just a question about illiteracy and what you mean about illiteracy, absolutely nothing about issues of intelligence.

A brief comment on the point of security again to clarify. Certainly neither Mvemba nor I hold out elections as a cure for anything, and if you go back and watch the video of this you will not hear a syllable by either of us that says if Congo has good elections then everything will be solved. If anything, we have tried to say the contrary, that actually even if Congo has great elections and I hope they do, there will still be a long list of very difficult problems that Congo faces including the ones that you mentioned. But elections are a necessary albeit insufficient set of actions that must occur for Congo to be able to deal with the full set of issues. The elections are in front of us right now. If these elections fail and I just tried to say in answer to John Harbison's

question, that could make the security situation worse, that could make any number of the other situations that go beyond elections worse and so that's why we focus on them this morning.

SPEAKER: Also the elections provide a voice for the people. You talk about local issues. Local elections have been postponed almost now indefinitely. We don't know if we'll have them. They're saying 2013. Those are the elections that will provide the solution to the local issues that you're talking about.

SPEAKER: And just a quick comment to support what Tony said. I think we have to put elections in the right perspective. The idea of elections in Congo as in any other country in Africa is that you choose a government and you give the government the opportunity if they are willing to take it to then bring people together. If you can bring Congolese people who as far as I know by nature are not violent people. Most of this violence has been perpetrated by opportunists who are looking for opportunities to enrich themselves. If you can bring the Congolese people together under some kind of stable umbrella, they can sit down and resolve most of these issues and decide how they want to live together peacefully. And I think that's what the role of the government chosen by elections should be.

MR. O'HANLON: It's time for the lightening round. We're going to do two questions and three responses in 5 minutes because I owe you all a 12 o'clock departure. So right here in the back and then we will finish way up here in the front. Then we'll go from John over.

SPEAKER: My question is something that Tony covered brief, the switch from two rounds to one round. It might be water under the bridge right now, but it might have consequences later on because you could have 11 candidates or a very diluted result. Could you cover what could be the potential pitfalls of that after the elections are done especially if you have a candidate that wins with 25 percent.



MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. All the way up here, please, for the last question. Way in the front.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: Thank you. Ambassador Mitifu of the DRC. Thank you first of all for organizing this panel. I think it's been a diverse panel in the sense that we have the government and we have the experts of civil society. I like the challenge and the pressure that this panel is putting on the Congolese government which I represent, but also of course on the Independent Electoral Commission and I am still confident, I remain confident, especially after the recent delegation of the Electoral Independent Commission here in Washington, I remain confident that elections will take place. But also I take into consideration the suggestion of a Plan B just in case if there is a 1-week delay or 2-week delay or a month delay, absolutely, and that is quite well taken. But also I want to say that the pessimism expressed during this discussion, we went through it in 2003 prior to the transition. There was no one here in Washington who believed that the transition was going to go the way it did. So I take this as a challenge as a representative of the government, and we're not saying as a government that this is going to be an easy ride. We are very much aware of this challenge and we hope that everything is going to go all right.

I think I just wanted to say something about Alex, I think it was Alex, and John.

SPEAKER: John.

AMBASSADOR MITIFU: John has already touched one point that I wanted to bring to Alex. Of course, Alex, we do condemn what happened recently in South Kivu and we condemn what has been going on in South Kivu in terms of those different pockets of violence. You used the word genocide. It doesn't just apply to what happened recently. It can apply to what has been going on with women. It can apply to what has been going on back in 2004. So let's just not isolate this one particular case. The people of Congo have always been a united people and contrary to South Sudan,

the international community accompanied what the people of South Sudan wanted. So you cannot come here to this forum and advocate a Congo divided in several pieces because if there's something that the Congolese people have always wanted, it has been a united Congo. We can sit together and discuss what kind of Congo we want as Mr. John suggested, but you cannot come to this forum to advocate for a Congo divided into pieces as a Congolese yourself. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Madam Ambassador. Let's begin with John and then work this way, please, for final comments.

MR. MBAKU: Since we have a high-ranking Congolese representative here, the message that I would like for her to take back to her people, the Congolese people, is that I think when the new government comes into effect after the elections, the government needs to spend the next 3 years or so engaging very sector of Congolese society because really believe that the only way you are going to have peace in Congo, and without peace we wouldn't have development, the only way you're going to have peace in Congo is if the Congolese people are given an opportunity to sit down and decide how they want to govern themselves and how they want to relate to each other. This is something that we really haven't given a lot of thought to in Africa because the people who live in the center, Kinshasa for Congo, always think that they know what is good for the rest of the country and it's really not true. Until we in Africa start doing this, we are not going to have any peace because people who live in the rural areas especially are really frustrated and we have to get out of our minds, we meaning the government, this idea that only people who are educated especially educated in the West have ideas about governance. We need to get rid of that idea and start giving the people themselves an opportunity to decide how they want to govern themselves. If we can do that in Congo, I believe that Congo will stand as an example for the rest of Africa on how to develop a democratic system of government. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Tony?

MR. GAMBINO: A few comments on the two questions and comments that were just made. But first I think it's important to give a special thanks to Mike O'Hanlon. Mike said at the start that he's gone and worked on other issues and anyone who reads pretty much any newspaper in the United States knows that Mike O'Hanlon is working on a whole series of other issues. But we wouldn't have these events on the Congo at Brookings if Mike did not retain his concern for the Congo, so I want to thank him for that.

Then to the first question. As you know, perhaps not everyone in this audience knows, there was a rapid change of the constitution early this year to go from a two-round system that I described earlier to this one-round system. We could have a long discussion of those circumstances. I'm not going to take time given the shortness of time. What I will say is I think it makes the present situation more complex. If we had a two-round system, then probably with 11 candidates and a handful that are really national and well known, it's likely that no one would have gotten 50 percent and then we would have had a second round between the two top vote getters and I think it would have been easier to come to an outcome of, okay, we don't have that system. That requires therefore that much more focus on free, fair and transparent because if the winner has under 50 percent which is highly likely and the elections are fairly close, then the people of the Congo have to have confidence that when those numbers are announced by the Electoral Commission and then ratified if they are by the Supreme Court, that those are right that it actually has worked out and that's a very complex thing as we've tried to suggest in our comments so another reason to really focus on getting it right and not rush to something because if you rush and then you have say thousands of voting places where it's kind of irregular and violence here and problems there and then you announce a very close outcome, it's pretty hard to see how that leads to a kind of smooth transition.

Ambassador Mitfu, thank you very for being here, first of all, and then for your comments. I want to say something about the pessimism point because I think it's

awfully important. I was in the Congo working on these issues in 2003 and I completely agree with you. We faced every day from Washington and elsewhere when we would come back and say things are starting to move, people say it's the Congo. Nothing ever moves in the Congo. It's hopeless. We said, no, it's not hopeless. We can move forward, and we were right. The Congolese wanted a transition. They transition came. The transition was messy. It had all sorts of problems, but various actors including the United States I'm proud to say put our shoulder to the wheel and tried to work with the Congolese to make it through that transition and it was successful. In 2006, the same thing. People were looking at the elections and remember, the country was trying to come out of a divided situation. There were rogue, strong militaries active all up and down Eastern Congo to a much greater extent than is the case today, Laurent Nkunda, for example, to give the best known, was highly active in North Kivu during this period. So you got universally the elections, there's going to be horrible violence. They won't possibly be able to vote in Kivu because of all of these militias, et cetera. Again, various people said, no, wrong. But it took an enormous effort by the Congolese and by the international community, among other things just to make this clear in 2006, the U.N. as today had roughly 15- to 20,000 armed people and they and others went to these militias and said don't even think about disrupting the elections because we have the mandate to shoot to kill if you do things and we will. Again I can tell you I was there on Election Day in North Kivu where every observer thought there would at least be some violence. There was not a single incident of electoral-related -- not one in the first round. So it is possible and I know that Mvemba and I make these proposals not out of pessimism at all, but out of actually a deep sense of hope and optimism that if it's done right that as the process started in 2003 and 2006, we could keep moving forward.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. And the last word to our good Congolese friend.

MR. DIZOLELE: Thank you, Mike and thank you my fellow panelists and Brookings for hosting this, and I think the Ambassador for (speaking in French) with your presence. I think that speaks to the seriousness of which you consider this issue. I think it's important that this discussion continues. To Shakina and everybody, for those of us who are analysts, yes, sometimes we sound pessimistic, but it's because we're talking to everyone and when you're talking to everyone you kind of get the full picture. Is it the perfect picture? Maybe not. But based on whatever you're getting from the various people, we are trying to give the best analysis that can be including the risk, and Congo has been just on the cusp of risk for the last 14 years. It's almost like we will almost make it but we almost stopped. So I'm hopeful that this will work out. As I said Pastor Mulunda was here and I was able to attend a lot of meetings with him even helping organize some meetings with the Congolese community. I was personally encouraged that he was much more forthcoming in discussion with the people. I think having been in the job for a few months now, I think he himself has realized that there is the political spiel and there is the what's happening and eventually it's not about him, it's not about me, it's not about you, it's about the country. So our research and analysis are there. There are a lot of policymakers in the room. We hope that you read it. We hope that you consider wherever you can contribute in moving the discussion close to a better place as opposed to the risk, the risk of violence which is very serious. So thank you again.

MR. O'HANLON: And let me ask you to join me in thanking the panel and wishing the Congolese people --

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