THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

FINDING A LASTING SOLUTION TO INSTABILITY IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO:

A CONVERSATION WITH U.S. ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE JOHNNIE CARSON

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. KIMENYI: Good afternoon. I'm Mwangi Kimenyi. I'm a senior fellow here and also the director of the Africa Growth Initiative, and I would like to welcome you to this event on the DRC with—a conversation with the Assistant Secretary Johnnie Carson, who is with us here today.

Just as a note before I introduce, this event is live Webcasted, so it's already on the webcast, and we have a hashtag, it's #DRCsolutions, so for those of you—those people watching us on Webcast—can send their Tweets and messages to us.

So, as we all know, the DRC has been a big issue in Africa and it's a very important country, and its stability is crucial to the development of the entire region, and we are very happy that Assistant Secretary, Ambassador Johnnie Carson has accepted to come and discuss this very important issue with us this afternoon, and we think we will give the audience time to ask him questions and he will give us insights.

As you see, the title of his talk is "Finding a Lasting Solution to the Instability in DCR." I would like to introduce Ambassador Carson, who was sworn in as Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs on May 7, 2009. Prior to this, he was the national intelligence officer for Africa at the NIC, after serving as senior vice-president of the National Defense University in Washington, DC.

Ambassador Carson's seven-year—that seven year Foreign Service career includes ambassadorships to Kenya, Zimbabwe and Uganda, and Principle Deputy Assistant Secretary for the Bureau of African Affairs. He has also served as desk officer in the African Section at State's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, staff officer for the Secretary of State, and staff director for Africa Subcommittee of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Clearly, a lot of service to the U.S. in Africa.

After his comments, the discussion will be moderated by our own Mike O'Hanlon, a senior fellow and director of research in the Foreign Policy Program at the Brookings Institution where he specializes in U.S. defense strategy, the use of military force and American foreign policy. He is also a visiting lecturer at Princeton University and adjunct professor at John Hopkins University, and a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. He is a member of General David Petraeus' External Advisory Board at the Central Intelligence Agency.

If I were to read everything for Mike it would take us a long time, so I'll stop there except to say he served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Congo, Kinshasa, then Zaire, from 1982 to 1984, where he taught college and high school physics in French. That seems like contradiction of what I know Michael does.

So, Ambassador Carson, welcome to Brookings again. Please come to the podium.

(Applause)

AMBASSADOR CARSON: Good afternoon, everyone, in a very, very crowded audience. I want to first of all thank Dr. Kimenyi for his warm introduction and also the Brookings Institution for agreeing to host today's event.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize three individuals who are here with us this afternoon including the ambassador from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ambassador Mitifu, the ambassador from Rwanda, Ambassador Kimonyo, and also the ambassador from the newest country in Africa, but also in the world, the ambassador from South Sudan. I know there are a number of other distinguished individuals in the audience with us this afternoon, please pardon me for not recognizing you by name, but I will warmly welcome your presence here this afternoon.

The Brookings Institution has long, long been a center of excellence in public policy and in foreign policy, and its African Growth Initiative Program, drawing on the knowledge of both African and American scholars and researchers, is now making significant contributions to our understanding of some of Africa's most challenging economic and social problems.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, or the DRC as it is commonly known, is one of those countries that deserves greater research and attention, as well as a higher place on our foreign policy priority list.

Since its independence on June 30, 1960, the DRC has been mostly a poster child for many of the problems that have afflicted Africa over the past five decades: military coups, rampant corruption, anemic development, health pandemics, runaway inflation, conflict minerals and poor governance. After many years of looking at and trying to deal with a string of recurring crises in the DRC, many people have ignored or written off the country as simply hopeless.

That would be a serious mistake for the people of the Congo, for those countries in Central Africa who neighbor and border it, and the global community who recognizes that we have a stake in promoting stability and social progress around the world and that the instability in the DRC is not cost free to the United States.

Your presence here today reflects your interest and concern about finding lasting solutions to the instability, social upheaval and unrealized economic potential that has plagued the DRC for so many years. I think there is a very strong constituency among Americans, Africans and the broader international community that wants the DRC to reach its true potential. And I believe this Administration has parallel support within Congress to elevate the issues affecting the DRC to a new level of importance.

Today, I would like to discuss why I think the world should redouble its efforts to end instability in the DRC. I also would like to lay out some ideas for your consideration for moving forward.

First, a little background: The DRC should be one of Africa's economic and political powerhouses. It is the second largest nation in sub-Saharan Africa and home to the third largest population after Nigeria and Ethiopia. The DRC has some of Africa's most fertile soil and possesses almost unparallel hydroelectric potential.

The country also contains many of Africa's most precious materials and sought after land. In fact, if you brought a cell phone with you into this room today, you may have some of the DRC in your pocket or in your purse in the form of coltan.

But as all of you know, the DRC is not one of Africa's political and economic powerhouses. It has had a recurring U.N. peacekeeping presence since independence in 1960. It has the fifth-highest child mortality rate in the world, the 17th highest maternal mortality rate, and less than 2,000 miles of paved road. The DRC's poverty, infrastructure deficits and other development benchmarks are among the worst in the world.

The Congo is ranked last, number 187, on the United Nation's Development Program's Human Development Index. Instead of peace and prosperity, the Congolese have been plagued by decades of mismanagement, corruption, poor governance and recurring civil strife. These problems, as the proliferation of foreign armies, rebel groups, ethnic violence, arms trafficking and illicit mining have exacted a horrifying toll on the DRC and its people.

The international community has invested huge sums of money into the DRC over many years with sometimes little to show for it. Why should we continue to do so when there are so many other competing and compelling global challenges out there?

First, no other conflict or act of violence since World War II has come close to taking so many lives. Rwanda, Somalia, the civil war in the Sudan and the conflict in Darfur all have commanded our attention. Eight hundred thousand people were killed in Rwanda in the summer of 1994, just over one million in Somalia's two-decade long conflict, 300,000 in Darfur, and two million people were killed in the conflict between North and South Sudan before the Naivasha Peace Treaty was signed in January of 2005.

However, in the DRC, conflict and resulting disease have killed more than five million people since 1998. Let me say that again. Since 1998, more than five million people have died in the DRC as a result of violence.

I think that the international community has a moral imperative to act more effectively in the DRC to break this cycle of death and suffering and to address the other consequences of this violence, the unmitigated rape and sexual violence against women and children, the nearly two million internally displaced people, the approximately 450,000 Congolese refugees who have been forced to flee into neighboring countries, and the absence of secure and prosperous lives for virtually the entire country.

Secondly, the DRC's chronic instability has consequences for U.S. national interests and the interests of the nine other countries that border the DRC. These interests range from multi-nation efforts to dismantle the Lord's Resistance Army, to climate change and the protection of one of the world's most important ecosystems, to advancing global energy security, and to the economic benefits that derive from open and secure borders.

If the DRC were more stable and had an economy that benefitted all Congolese, it could become a leading exporter of natural resources, agricultural products, and scientific research that could attract substantial U.S. and other foreign investment.

The DRC also possesses the second largest rainforest in the world and it

must be a critical partner in any global effort to combat climate change and to conserve and protect our biodiversity.

Thirdly, there are good fiscal and financial reasons for redoubling international efforts in the DRC. The United States, as well as many of our other international partners, has a number of competing international priorities that cry out for the money of American taxpayers. The crisis in Mali is only the most recent demand on those resources, the spending of which sometimes requires making enormously difficult tradeoffs among equally important causes.

During our last fiscal year, the United States provided $410 million in assessed contributions to the U.N. peacekeeping mission in the DRC, MONUSCO, and we have provided more than $3 billion for MONUSCO since 2000.

We also provided nearly $115 million during our last fiscal year for humanitarian efforts in the DRC. These are essential expenditures that must continue in the medium term, but this is not a strategy that can be sustained indefinitely. We need to begin now to ensure that these investments address the underlying causes of the conflict and pave the way for an enduring solution to the continuous problems that that country has faced.

And lastly, and quite simply, the world cannot afford to fail in bringing stability to the DRC. If we are sincere in our hope that African countries will continue to make progress towards greater economic growth and development and toward achieving a more central role in the international community, then the DRC will have to be a significant element in meeting these continental-wide and international aspirations. Otherwise, it will continue to absorb scarce resources rather than reaching its potential to make contributions to global security and economic prosperity for its people and the region.

I am not a pessimist by nature, but I also am not a romantic optimist either. The DRC has some very serious, some might even say Herculean, challenges, but there are some concrete reasons to be optimistic about the DRC's future. More of the DRC soldiers and police are being paid regularly and increasingly through mobile banking. Its economy is slowly stabilizing.

During Prime Minister Matata's visit to Washington last week, we were all encouraged to learn of the reforms he is instituting to increase the DRC's macroeconomic stability and to strengthen oversight and transparency. Inflation is down. The DRC's GDP is up and no one sees the country returning to the Mobutu era of 1,000 percent weekly inflation and the one billion Zaire note that characterized the DRC's devastated economy less than two decades ago.

While resolving instability and other challenges in the DRC has not been as high an international priority as Somalia, Sudan, or Cote d'Ivoire over the last four years, we have not been sitting with our hands folded, ignoring the complex challenges of the Congo. Rather, we have been working closely with others in the international community to resolve the underlying causes of instability in the DRC, as well as helping to mitigate the most recent crisis in the Eastern Congo.

We recognize a comprehensive approach is absolutely essential and we have proceeded in such a manner to address security, political, humanitarian, and development challenges simultaneously.

Let me briefly review what we have recently done. We have made reducing sexual and gender-based violence and fighting impunity top priorities. In 2009, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited the DRC on her very first trip to Africa. She met with President Kabila and she also visited Goma to speak out about the treatment and prevention of sexual violence against women and issued the demand for

greater accountability for perpetrators.

We have advocated, at the highest levels, for the arrest and prosecution of five officials of the Congolese army, the so-called Fardic Five, accused of sexual violence in 2008 and 2009. The most senior of the five is now on trial and other Fardic officers accused of subsequent atrocities have been convicted and sent to jail.

We are training frontline Congolese soldiers on gender-based violence, human rights law and other issues intended to improve civilian and military interactions, and we have urged the Fardic to complete the process of removing child soldiers from its ranks. Last year, the Congolese government took an important step by signing a U.N. Action Plan to address this issue. And across all of these and other issues, Ambassador Barry Wakley has continued the work of the late Howard Wopey to improve our coordination with African, European and other partners to address the problems in the eastern DRC.

We know that much, much more needs to be done.

In September of last year, after the M-23 rebellion erupted in the Eastern Congo, former Secretary of State Clinton met with presidents Kabila and Kagame to urge them to engage in a constructive dialogue to bring peace and stability to the region.

In the U.N. Security Council, we proposed the listing of five of the M-23's top commanders and the M-23, as a group, for targeted sanctions. All are now subject to a worldwide asset freeze, and the five individuals also are subject to travel bans.

President Obama spoke with President Kagame in late December to underscore that any support, any support, to the M-23, would be inconsistent with Rwanda's desires for stability and peace in the region. He further encouraged the parties to reach a transparent and creditable political agreement that includes an end to impunity. And based on a large body of evidence, and as required by law, we suspended

foreign military financing funds to Rwanda and we will continue to review carefully, and when it makes sense to do so, we'll withhold other assistance to partners in the region who may be providing support to the M-23 or otherwise impeding the peace process in the region.

In addition, Ambassador Susan Rice in New York, Undersecretary for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, Ambassador Barry Wakley and I, as well as other dedicated members of our diplomatic team in Kinshasa, the region, and back here, have worked tirelessly to help address the underlying causes of stability. So far, the cessation of hostilities between Congolese forces and the M-23 appears to be holding and the international community is helping to foster dialogue between these critical players.

But the M-23's takeover of Goma at the end of last year, showed the world that the collective efforts of the DRC, its neighbors, and the broader international community have not been sufficient to lay the foundation for a durable solution. If the world does not get more serious about finding a formula that will lead to a lasting arrangement for stability in the DRC, then it is highly probably that the same cycle of violence and its subsequent horrors will continue into the future.

I do not believe that we can or that we should accept the status quo. We must do better.

Clearly, a sophisticated and internationally backed solution is the only way forward. We were able to achieve such a solution to end the conflict in the former Yugoslavia through the Dayton Accords. We were able to end Africa's longest running civil war, the conflict in Sudan, through the comprehensive peace agreement that was negotiated by the IGAD states and supported by the United States, Norway and Great Britain.

A similarly energetic and international effort is now required for the DRC.

First and foremost, the DRC government and its people have primary responsibility for rising to the challenges that they face, but the international community should be complementing these efforts with a more focused and holistic approach.

I believe this approach requires four basic components, all of which are interdependent and all of which are equally important. First, the DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and other countries in the region, must sign and implement the United Nation's framework agreement as soon as possible. The United States supports the principles in the agreement and the ongoing efforts by the United Nations to secure signatures.

However, simply signing the agreement is not sufficient. The signatories also must follow through on their commitments with concrete and visible actions on the ground and they must be held accountable if they fail to meet their commitments.

Second, we need to put flesh on the bones of the agreement by establishing a comprehensive peace process around the agreement's principles. This process needs to include all of the relevant parties, not just the countries in the immediate region, but also local communities in the Kivus, civil society and a clearly defined role for the international community. Such a peace process will not happen overnight, nor will it be easy, which is why the United States supports the appointment of a senior high-level United Nations envoy dedicated to the hard work of bringing together the relevant stakeholders to work out and enforce the peace process over the long run.

As we all know, many agreements have been signed in the Great Lakes region in the past that have not been respected or faithfully implemented, so we also should develop strong enforcement and incentive mechanisms to ensure compliance. For example, the U.N. should regularly report to the U.N. Security Council on the implementation of this agreement. U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon should continue to monitor its adherence closely.

The United States is prepared to work with other U.N. Security Council members and our African partners to discuss how to move forward on the DRC. And other key international partners also have a role to play: the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the African Development Bank, the African Union and the European Union's structures, among others, all should elevate their focus and attention on the DRC.

Third, the United Nations must complete its re-evaluation of the role and strength of MONUSCO and implement necessary changes to the mission structure as soon as possible. For instance, the mission and its troop-contributing countries must have the capacity and the political will to prevent a relatively small group of rebels from taking over one of the largest and most populous cities in the DRC.

The United States strongly supports the integration of a regional intervention brigade into MONUSCO. We believe that integrated force will be able to maximize the mission's impact by ensuring coordinated action and the best use of existing resources.

However, increased military pressure is not a solution in and of itself. Any security solutions must complement the peace process and other essential political steps and measures.

Fourth, and finally, if we are to adapt a holistic approach, the DRC government must build on the incremental reform progress it has made by implementing long overdue reforms and demonstrating much greater political will and inclusivity. And if we are serious, international assistance should be conditioned on the DRC government making further reform progress.

The primary responsibility for stability and prosperity in the DRC lies with its government in Kinshasa. Just as it has a reasonable expectation that the international

community will live up to its commitments in the DRC, the international community has an equally reasonable expectation that the DRC will deliver on its promises and utilize the contributions of the international community to the benefit of the country and its people.

For us, there are two primary areas in which reforms must take place. First, the DRC government should overhaul its security sector, including its army, military, justice system and police force. Specifically, the country needs a Congolese-led, long-term security sector reform strategy that can be supported by the international community.

Second, the DRC needs to expand its democratic institutions across the country including working to address the most salient governance issues in the east, such as land disputes, refugee returns, the protection of minority communities and the need for electoral changes.

We accept that some of these reforms may take time, but the world needs to see the DRC taking the initiative and beginning to implement them assertively.

Without such visible steps, it will be increasingly difficult for the world to continue its massive investments in the DRC.

Finding a sustainable solution to the protracted instability in the DRC will continue to be a daunting challenge for the global community, but we should not shrink from acting just because it is hard, nor should we abandon the DRC because its challenges are complex. If we have low expectations, these will prove self-fulfilling. We must continue to aim high and expect a lot from our DRC partners as well as its neighbors.

I know the Congolese people are courageous and resilient. We all have seen evidence of this during our engagements and many visits to that country. We should not miss this opportunity to build on this courage and resiliency for a brighter

future for the DRC and its people and for a brighter future for those states around it and for Africa as a whole.

I'm going to stop here and I will be glad to take a few questions. Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Secretary Carson, that was a fantastic speech, inspiring despite the challenges that you've been facing and the Congo's been facing. I'm honored to be up here with you and also want to welcome friends, especially my friends from Congo, where I was privileged to be a Peace Corps volunteer many years ago.

I just want to start with two questions of my own and then we'll go to the audience, and we've got about a half hour to talk, and I thought if we could, to draw back just briefly, you're now at roughly the four-year mark in your tenure, and Secretary Clinton's just stepped down, and I wondered if you could just say a word broadly about the sub-Saharan Africa that you're working with.

We all hear about Mali and other places to the north in the newspapers, and maybe that will come up in discussion, but that's not what I'm asking about. I'm hoping you can reflect on what you've seen happen in sub-Saharan Africa in these last four years where I know there's been a lot of positive as well, which I want to congratulate you for, but also give you a chance to sort of remind our friends in and around Congo what's available, perhaps, to them as well if we can get beyond some of these immediate challenges. It just seems like a good moment to ask that question to begin, please.

AMBASSADOR CARSON: Michael, thank you very much, and it is an excellent question. I think that the trajectory for Africa is strong and positively moving

forward in every area—in democracy and governance, in economic development and growth, and in increased stability and peace.

Let's look at all of these three areas. Democracy and governance. Over the last four years and continuing a trend, which has been moving forward since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, we have seen an increase in democratic adherence and democratic governance and democratic elections. And we're not just talking about the handful of African countries that we hear about all the time.

We know that there is progress being made in Botswana and Mauritius and in South Africa, but if you look around the continent and see what is happening, you see strong democratic governance and trajectories, both in East and Central, and in West Africa. Tanzania, Uganda, we see the progress moving forward. Zambia, we see just a year ago a sitting democratic president replaced by an opposition leader without a shot being fired, without a tank rolling into the street, and without any demonstrations. In Malawi, we saw a peaceful transition of the second female president rising to the presidency after the tragic and unexpected death of President Mutharika. And in Ghana, we've seen close but democratic elections where we have seen the ability, over some 15 years, various democratic parties replacing one another.

We've seen the return to democracy in Niger where there was a military coup. We've seen democracy emerge strong in Cote d'Ivoire where former President Gbagbo attempted to steal the election. And we've seen democracy return to places like Guinea, Conakry, which had not experienced a democratic election in over 50 years and had been ruled by a succession of military and authoritarian leaders.

Around the continent, if you look at the opinion polls that are taken of the views of African citizens, there is a strong thirst for democracy and democracy, indeed, is on the move.

A number of years ago, people said that there was a democratic recession taking hold on the continent. This is far from the truth. I know of no African leader, whether he has been legitimately elected in a multiparty process or whether he has been there for a number of years, who would stand up and say that he is not in favor of democracy of that he is not in power because of it. Democracy does mean something across the continent and it's moving forward.

Let me also say that the same thing is true of Africa's economy. For far, far too long, most of Africa's growth was built around the exploitation of oil, gas and mineral resources. If it was being exported, it was seen to be driving the economies of African countries. This is no longer simply the only source of Africa's growth.

The urbanization of African cities and populations, the rising number of educated and professional Africans, the creation of both small and medium-size and large businesses in urban areas to cater to growing urban populations, to cater to new export markets, have created a new dynamic in economic growth so that the growth that we see in Africa today is no longer simply a resource-driven growth, but a growth that is driven by a larger consumer class, a larger urban class, a larger professional class that is in need of goods and service.

I might add also, not only internally, but across the continent, a much more mobile African population as well.

So, there is growth out there and it's important, and I'll give a plug at this point to something that we've done, and that is the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which has opened up the U.S. market to some 6,000 products from Africa, duty free. This is an important economic tool that has enabled African countries to increase the level of their exports into the U.S. marketplace, something that I think we can take a great deal of pride in.

Thirdly, I said there was greater stability and peace, and while I've noted in my own remarks the difficulties and challenges that we find in the Eastern Congo, that's true, but Africa is more peaceful and more stable today than it was five years ago, 10 years ago, 15 years ago or 20 years ago. Let's quickly do a review of the map.

Just before she left office, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had the opportunity to invite to Washington the president of Somalia, President Hassan Sheikh. We exchanged notes, which led to U.S. recognition of Somalia for the first time in 22 years, for the first time since Black Hawk Down in 1993.

I, myself, went into Mogadishu this past June; our undersecretary for political affairs has been there. Mogadishu and southern Somalia is more stable than it has been in 22 years. The central government effectively controls all of the major cities in the south—with the support of ANISOM force—and Al-Shabaab has been put on the run.

So, we've seen progress in a place that was highly contentious.

I mentioned in my opening remarks that the ambassador of South Sudan is here. In 2011, the United States, along with a number of other countries in the international community, worked very, very hard to ensure that the Naivasha Accords were fully implemented and that the people of South Sudan had the right to choose self-determination or continued integration into Sudan. A referendum was held in January of 2011 and independence was granted in July, six months later.

This is, again, an indication of the peace that has been brought. For nearly 22 or 23 years South Sudan and Sudan had been in a civil war. That civil war is over. It's not to say that there are no longer tensions between Juba and Khartoum. There are, as there will be between twins and siblings from time-to-time, but the conflict probably will never return to what it was for many years in the late 1900s and the early

2000s.

Equally true, we have no longer the conflicts that tore apart Liberia where we had Charles Taylor, who is now serving a sentence in Europe, or in Sierra Leone, where we have had the rough, which destroyed many lives in that country. And equally, the conflict in Angola has also disappeared.

Yes, indeed, there continue to be issues. We continue to work with Uganda and states in the region to track and find Joseph Kony and the LRA. We continue to search for and look for peace in the eastern Congo. But there has been a very sharp increase in stability across the continent.

What you need to look at is not the headline, which frequently brings only the most troubling of news, but to look at the broader and fuller story and to look at it in the context of both time and history.

So, I'm optimistic. I'm optimistic about the democratic and governance trajectory. I'm optimistic about where things are going economically and commercially. And I'm optimistic about stability and the end of conflict. All of these things remain challenges, but I would argue that we are making progress collectively, and I say we, as partners with Africa, and the international community. Collectively there is an effort being made to address these issues and I think that the news is, despite the headline that you may read, much more positive than it might appear.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you for the very encouraging and persuasive overview, but I want to now bring back, of course, in my second question, to the immediate and challenging problem of Congo, and I want to begin by paraphrasing President Obama in an interview he just gave with *The New Republic*—that I'm sure some people in this room also saw a couple weeks ago—in which he was asked about Syria and whether the United States and the international community should intervene to

help stop the mayhem and the slaughter there. And he compared Syria to Congo and he said, how am I to decide—obviously, we all know he's speaking for a war weary nation, a fiscally constrained nation, and he said, "How am I to decide whether to intervene in Syria or in Congo?" And obviously no one was holding him to that exact choice, but nonetheless, it raises an intriguing question about whether the United States is doing enough in Congo, whether the tools that we have brought to bear ourselves have been adequate, and especially, as we're now out of Iraq and downsizing in Afghanistan, to put it bluntly, whether the United States could consider being part of that U.N. force with a modest number of people.

I'm not asking you to propose or endorse that today, but I am wondering if you see value in a debate about that, as to whether that's the sort of an idea, whether it's in the military realm or maybe in terms of potentially greater economic resources and aid, if Congo can make some reforms of the type you mentioned, whether we need to sort of increase and strengthen our toolkit to be able to do a little bit more in addition to the process and the negotiations and the U.N. frameworks that you've mentioned.

AMBASSADOR CARSON: I think it's important to recognize that we alone, no matter our great strength and our enormous influence, can resolve any one issue by ourselves. We have to work effectively in concert with others in the international community and across Africa who share our goals, our concerns and our desire for peace, stability and democracy.

We have, in fact, been engaged in the DRC. I think that we need to step up our engagement, sustain it, but we also, more importantly, have to get others who have been on the sidelines to engage, step up their engagement and sustain it over a long period of time, working with the government of the DRC to achieve durable solutions.

We have, over the last four years, not contributed peacekeepers to MONUSCO, but we have participated in the training of one of the new Congolese battalions, and we have said to the government of the DRC that we are prepared to work with them on training additional DRC soldiers, but not without conditions—not without conditions.

We have encouraged, and the DRC government has done so, we have encouraged them to sign on to a U.N. protocol prohibiting the use of child soldiers in their military, and I'm glad to say that the DRC government has done this, after many years.

We have also asked for other significant reforms to be undertaken, and I think that if indeed these reforms and commitments are made and implemented, we're prepared to put trainers on the ground, as we did two and a half years ago, in Kisangani to help train soldiers, but we must hold these soldiers to a high standard and the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo must absolutely ensure that these soldiers perform as professionals, that they are there to protect and defend the country and its borders, and not to prey on its people.

And so, these are things that we're prepared to do. The larger question of whether we should or should not participate with U.S. forces on the ground in peacekeeping missions is something for an internal discussion and an internal debate, which I shall not attempt to have with the audience or with myself here.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thank you. And let's please go to you in the audience. So, please get your hand up to get my attention and then wait for a microphone please, and identify yourself when it comes. We'll start here with Mark in the second row and go from there. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Just, if I could, once again, let me thank you, Ambassador Carson, for the leadership that you've shown over many years.

You spoke about the actions that have been taken, sanctions against five members of the leaders of the M-23, five members of the Fardic that we supported actions taken. You mentioned as well the concern that the M-23 was supported by external forces and the report of the U.N. panel and your own testimony last December indicate that Rwanda had provided that kind of support.

Why haven't we pressed for any of those individuals—individual soldiers, officers of Rwandan military to be sanctioned, and in that context, doesn't that kind of action by a government, which did receive military training from the United States previously, indicate that the kinds of conditions that you spoke that should be in place if we're going to provide more support for the DRC in terms of security sector reform—shouldn't those same conditions apply and be implemented against the government, which then takes action that you, yourself, has said has been a source of the M-23 rebellion in the DRC?

AMBASSADOR CARSON: Mark, I think our concerns about Rwandan support for the M-23 have been made very clear. They have been made clear by me in congressional testimony, and as I referenced in my remarks about the president, President Obama to President Kagame directly telephonically.

We looked at the information, a wide array of information, that suggested that there was external support from Rwanda, and we took action. Our action was to cut off the FMF that the Rwandan military was receiving from the U.S. government and to ask for a course correction, an end to the hostilities and an end to the support.

At this point, we have seen what we believe to be an end to the hostilities, and we want to see the Kampala Agreements fully implemented, and we are also continuing to monitor that there be no additional support.

I think our actions have been appropriate for the time and we will

continue to monitor and look and if the situation warrants us to make a policy adjustment or change, we will do so.

MR. O'HANLON: Here in the blue shirt.

MR. RUNDY: Good afternoon. My name is Dan Rundy, I'm actually from Tampa, Florida, just came up for 23 hours to listen to you speak and I wanted to thank you for speaking.

I work for a small consulting firm, and one of the things you touched on were the small and the medium businesses and being able to engage the population, and one of the things we're starting to see through social media and crowd funding is actually the populations outside of the governments of the world actually have more money than all of the governments combined in the world. And to start small businesses and to engage that population of—actually all the Congo Basin, where would you tell somebody to start? To engage that population will actually exceed the power of the government itself, because if you have an engaged population, the government's going to follow.

AMBASSADOR CARSON: The DRC has the third largest population in sub-Saharan Africa. It has probably four or five, maybe six, major urban areas from Lubumbashi to Kisangani to Kinshasa, and it is an increasingly linked population because one of the things that has happened across the DRC is the pervasive use of mobile phones and digital communication, for just about everything. I think that probably the average citizen in Kinshasa does more financial and banking business through mobile banking than anyone in this town does. I'm not sure how many people in this audience is engaged in mobile banking, but I think probably a great many people in the DRC every day routinely move money and buy services through their mobile phones. They get paid through them, they do business through them.

Where do you start? If you're a small or medium-sized business it

depends, I guess, on what the product is, but you do have larger urban communities that are in need of services, large urban communities that need housing, need transportation, need places to eat and need to have services given to them.

And so, I think the number of things that small- and medium-sized businesses can do is as infinite as the needs of people are within a different community. Not to give you a brushed off answer. I can't say precisely what it is, but there are lots and lots of opportunities out there for small- and medium-sized businesses to do things in the DRC, as well as across Africa, and I would say just one thought is that we, as Americans, are sometimes slow to try and take full advantage of the many opportunities that exist in Africa because we are frequently frightened away by the headlines that we see and the lack of understanding that we have that—we're talking about 49 countries south of the Sahara and not just one.

MR. O'HANLON: Over here in the third row, the woman on the end. Here's the microphone.

SPEAKER: (Speaking in French)

MR. O'HANLON: We'll summarize in a second

SPEAKER: (Speaking in French)

MR. O'HANLON: Wrap up so we can keep going, but those are two very good questions. Can I summarize for the crowd? Is it okay that I stop you there? Because those were two very good questions.

Just to summarize, she's interested in an independent election commission so that the next time around there could be perhaps an election that goes better than the last one, and also in an army that is somehow better integrated ethnically and otherwise throughout the country. So, could I ask you just to let him respond now because we only have about five minutes left in the whole event? Thank you.

AMBASSADOR CARSON: Thank you. Thank you very much for both of those questions and I accept that my words and my remarks will not fall on welcome ears throughout the entire audience, but let me say something about elections, if I could.

We were extraordinarily hopeful that the elections, the presidential elections, the parliamentary elections that took place in November of 2011 would represent an improvement on the elections that had occurred in 2006. The elections in 2006 had been largely managed by the United Nations and the international community.

We had hoped that in the 2011 elections that they would have been managed better, but they were going to also be managed exclusively by the Congolese government.

We spent an enormous amount of time, along with others in the international community, encouraging the CENI, the electoral commission, which was chaired by Pastor Mulunda, to hold free and transparent elections, to prepare well and to make sure that everyone who wanted to participate could participate.

We sent, and paid for through USAID, a number of experts to go in to help the election commission and we know a number of other governments did the same.

I can tell you that following the conclusion of those elections, I was extraordinarily disappointed with their outcome. I was as disappointed as many of the Congo's citizens who felt that perhaps their ballots had not been properly counted and accounted for, but following the completion of those elections, we said very clearly what our view was. I personally have said it many times that those elections were deeply flawed, they were lacking in transparency, and they did not come up to the standard of many of the recent African elections that we had seen.

The good news is that there were elections held. The bad news is that they didn't live up to the kind of standard that everyone wanted. It was a pause for the

process, but it was not an end to it. The thing that must be done is to look forward, to make sure that the next set of elections are better prepared, that the independent electoral commission is more independent, more responsible and more able, and that the elections will be able to reach more people and that more people will have confidence in the ballot.

I will also say two other things, one is that the disappointment about those elections was universal, it wasn't just my remarks or the remarks of others, and we've been, I think, fairly candid about how we see and call elections over the last four years. If they're good, they're good; if they're bad, we say so.

The reality is, is that all of Africa passed a judgment as well. When the president was sworn in, only one African head of state came, only one African head of state came, and that was President Robert Mugabe, who probably would not be welcome at many tea parties in this town. So, that was an indication of where people thought.

But we must look ahead and we must look at ways to continue to build a better process.

Last comment, my own impression as someone who looks at the situation is that even if we had had a fair accounting throughout this process, I think President Kabila probably would still have won, but again, that's my assessment and it's just an analytic assessment, not one based on anything else. But the fact that we got no visitors except one for this election was an indication.

The army. One of the great disappointments has been the absence of effective security sector reform. The army has not performed well. That is evident by what has happened in the east and it's evident by the continued presence of a large MONUSCO force in the country, and it's evident by the need for a more robust and aggressive intervention force to be a part of a redefined MONUSCO.

It is absolutely important that security sector reform move ahead. The Congo cannot be a strong and independent nation without a creditable and professional military force that represents not just one region, not just one people, not just one leader, but represents the interests of the entire country.

MR. O'HANLON: I think we better leave it at that unless you want to take one more. We've already exceeded your time. You've been very kind and generous.

AMBASSADOR CARSON: We'll take one more, and we'll stop after this one.

MR. O'HANLON: Okay, over hear along the side, please. Yes.

SPEAKER: Thank you, Ambassador, for that great talk about Congo. I'm a public health consultant dealing with health in sub-Saharan Africa but my question is about justice.

You named a few international organizations that have a role to play in bringing peace and stability in the Congo, but I have a question about what is your take on the role of the International Criminal Courts on justice and peace in Congo?

AMBASSADOR CARSON: Thank you. While the United States is not a signatory to the ICC, we certainly believe in the broad principles and values that the court represents, fundamentally, an end to impunity, and the requirement that all of those who carry out crimes against humanity, all of those who carry out war crimes, should face the judgment of the courts. All of this is preferably done in the host country if the legal systems and the court systems are fair, effective and are running properly.

But if not, there are circumstances in which individuals need to face justice and that justice sometimes can only be rendered through international tribunals. So, I'll end where I started, while we are not a signatory to the ICC protocols and

principles, we believe that what they stand for has strong legal and judicial meaning.

MR. O'HANLON: Please join me in thanking Secretary Carson.

(Applause)

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