THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

FALK AUDITORIUM

A STATESMAN'S FORUM

WITH UNITED NATIONS DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

JAN ELIASSON

Washington, D.C.

Wednesday, October 16, 2013

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. PICCONE: Good afternoon, everyone. I'm Ted Piccone, I'm the acting vice-president and director of the Foreign Policy Program here at Brookings. Thanks for coming. We have a very privileged discussion this afternoon, it's what we call the Statesman's Forum and I can think of no other better title for our guest today, Ambassador Jan Eliasson, who is the current deputy secretary-general of the United Nations.

On behalf of Strobe Talbott, our president, and all of us at Brookings, I want to give a big welcome to the Deputy Secretary-General and also to Ambassador Tom Pickering, a distinguished fellow with us here at the Brookings Institution and I'm sure well known to many of you, and I will introduce him in a minute.

Ambassador Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson, that's a long title, took up this post on the appointment of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in July of 2012. He has a long and very distinguished career in diplomacy around the world, in the UN system, and for Sweden. He's served as Sweden's ambassador to the United States. He also spent time as Sweden's foreign minister. In the early 90s, he was the first UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs. He was also the special

envoy of the UN Secretary-General in Darfur in 2007 and 2008. And the list goes on and on, many years of experience, in particular, in Africa, Somalia, Sudan, Mozambique, as well as the Balkans. He is particularly well known for his work in humanitarian affairs including on prevention of landmines, prevention of conflicts, getting to the people most in need on human rights, and increasingly speaking quite a bit about water, quality of water, and how important that is to the future of healthcare around the world.

We will take some time to hear from the Deputy Secretary-General and then I will turn to Ambassador Pickering, who served, in his last post, as the Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs at the State Department. He is a career Ambassador, which is the highest rank in the U.S. Foreign Service, and has served as Ambassador on every continent in the world, Russia, India, Nigeria, Israel, El Salvador just to name a few.

He also served as the U.S. representative to the United Nations in New York during a particularly critical time of the first Gulf War, and has held a number of other positions and we're very honored to have him here and he will be able to stay for part of the time and provide some comments on the Deputy Secretary-General's remarks, and then we'll have a little conversation and we'll open it up for some questions and

answers.

So, with no further ado, Deputy Secretary-General.

(Applause)

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Thank you very much, Ted. It's great to be here, great to be at Brookings. When I was Ambassador in Washington 2000-2005 to be close to the think tank circuit here was quite a consolation and quite an inspiration and I congratulate you who live in Washington that you have this environment in which you can discuss and debate and create what sometimes is called Washington consensus.

Interesting to be here in these dramatic times for the United States and the world. I hope it turns out okay and that I can return to New York by train in a correct manner and also to tell you that I'm extremely honored to have one of my best friends at the podium, Tom Pickering. You are the one I think it's more fitting to be at a Statesman Forum than for me. You certainly are a legendary figure in American and international diplomacy. Very glad you could come, Tom.

I will start with a story, I shouldn't do that because it takes a precious two minutes away from my prepared remarks, and then I will be available for you for informal discussion, but I was noting that I had no

title. There's no title given, I suppose, for my speech except giving a few ideas about what I will cover.

This reminds me of the time I was an exchange student in America, American Field Service, back -- a long time ago, I will not say how long ago in front of the ladies. I gave a standard speech there about Sweden and about a Swedish student coming to the United States and it was a standard speech, you could awake me at 2:00 o'clock in the morning, I would deliver that speech.

I was invited by Rotary and I gave 44 speeches in the state of Indiana with this standard stump speech of mine. Then I was faced for the first time in my life with a completely new situation where I had no inkling what I was going to speak about because the following thing happened: I was invited by a wife to a Rotary president to the Presbyterian women's yearly convention in Indianapolis, 400 ladies, white hair, blue hair, shining glasses, enormous expectations, an 18-year-old exchange student, me in front of this group of ladies, pants, sport shirt, crew cut, 18 years old, prepared with his normal speech, the only one he knew how to hold.

And then the lady who introduced me with a big smile, great expectations said, "And now let's welcome our Swedish exchange

student, Jan Eliasson", that's the way they pronounced it, "He will speak to us about the following subject," remember, it was a Presbyterian Church, "how well have we shared our Christian joy."

So, I said, my God -- but I delivered the same speech.

Anyway, long story about your not having a title. Thank you very much.

I will now have some prepared remarks and then ready for a more informal exchange, but I wanted to be a bit precise here in the beginning.

I have been in Washington two days now to speak about Syria, Afghanistan, a number of crisis situations in the world, Iran, as a diplomatic challenge, of course, and also the post-2015 development agenda.

I think that I want to sort of cover these subjects by this introduction and then ready to speak about these subjects or any other subjects you want to raise.

And I will take as a starting point this year's session of the General Assembly, which was unusually productive, with implications not only on specific issues, but more broadly, on the state of the UN and of multilateral cooperation.

In his main speech to the member states, Secretary Ban Ki-moon appealed to world leaders to embrace what he called “the global logic of our time” -- the global logic of our time. Another way of framing this that I sometimes use is to say that the challenge is today, in today’s globalized world, that the task of the United Nations is to show that good international solutions are in the national interest of the member states.

Take an issue like migration or climate, I think the international solution is basically a national interest. If we can come to that conclusion, we are home, because then we take away the false distinction between international and national.

We may live in an age of what some call a la carte multilateralism, think G-20, regional arrangements, coalition diplomacy, but this year’s UN General debate was another reminder of the strength of universality and the strength of global norms.

Let me go into a bit of detail. I need not explain to this audience the significance of the Security Council’s breakthrough resolution on chemical weapons in Syria. This was the first sign of unity after a painful period of division that has prolonged the conflict and led to Syria’s criticism of the UN and of the Security Council.

We all welcome, of course, this latest step of the Council and

recognize the hugely important and difficult task that is now before the UN, the Organization of the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, OPCW, and the international community to safeguard and destroy Syria's arsenal of chemical weapons by the middle of next year. Quite ambitious, but doable.

People tend to think of the UN sometimes as bureaucratic, and I don't completely deny that, but let me tell you that the joint operation hit the ground in Syria within four days of the Council's decision and I am happy to note that it was such a fast and effective start of the work.

In addition to being quick, I must also say that the chemical weapons teams have also been brave. The earlier investigation mission led by (inaudible) confirmed that the use of chemical weapons moved -- they moved through battlefield conditions to do their job and at one point was targeted by shots from a sniper. They just went back to their base and shifted to cars and went back again. Fortunately, they didn't call me and ask for permission to go, they just went back and then picked up a new car and went in and did their job.

And now, of course, the OPCW richly deserves the Nobel Peace Prize that was just announced, not only for its work within Syria, but for more than a decade of determined efforts to rid the world of these

horrible weapons. I've seen the effect of them during the Iran/Iraq war when I was negotiating. It was one of the worst things I've experienced to see the soldiers come back to Tehran from the field where the Iraqi, at that time, used these chemical weapons.

And, of course, you all know about the use of Saddam Hussein of chemical weapons against his own population, Halabja, 18th of March, 1988. Unthinkable. And I hope we will get rid of these weapons generally.

At the same time, action on chemical weapons is just one step on the road to peace in Syria after all the killing with conventional weapons goes on.

We continue to place the appalling figures before the member states, the death toll of more than 100,000, the refugees of two million out of which one million are children, think about that, one million Syrian children are refugees in neighboring countries. There are 4.5 million people displaced inside Syria and we have seriously underfunded humanitarian appeals. About 45 percent of what we need has come in in terms of disbursement money.

And as you know, the entire region is being destabilized. We have great fears for the neighboring countries, not least Lebanon and

Jordan.

We need to use the diplomatic momentum now, in my view, created by the world's response to the use of chemical weapons to push for a diplomatic solution and we also need to work on the humanitarian access. Fortunately the Security Council continued its good work last week by agreeing on a (inaudible) humanitarian access. That has to be translated to concrete action on the field.

The situation is horrible. There are areas, there are cities that are completely isolated where starvation is critical and the conditions are absolutely horrifying. And now with the winter approaching one more time, we have further challenges on the humanitarian front and the refugee front.

The road ahead will be difficult. There are still those who believe, vainly, I would say, in "military solutions". I hope you saw the quotation marks, "military solutions". There are two ways of ending this war, either by a negotiated transition, as was negotiated by Kofi Annan on the 30th of June last year, to create a governing body with full executive powers and a transition then being, of course, one of the main agenda items for the negotiations.

Or there is this belief in a possible military solution, but I

would say that so-called military solutions could easily lead to a situation that is even worse than the present stage, with a wave of revenge against one ethnic or sectarian group or the other.

So, we hope now very much that the Secretary General and Lakhdar Brahimi and all of us involved can now focus completely with all the help of member states, of course, not least regional states, on convening the Geneva 2 conference in November.

Syria was, as you know, the top concern during the Assembly's opening session two weeks ago, but there were also other important steps on peace and security challenges. I'll just give you some examples -- Middle East peace process quartet met for the first time in more than a year and a half to support resumed direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians, who were there with their chief negotiators.

Lebanon, we launched a group of friends to deal with the effects of the Syrian crisis on the country's -- not only humanitarian, refugee needs, but also the pressure on schools, health system, and infrastructure, absolutely important now to have a relationship between the humanitarian and the development side. We work, not least, with the World Bank and the European Union.

Thirdly, transitions in the Arab world, member states came together to support the national dialogue in Yemen, continued attention was given to more troubled transitions like Libya and Egypt.

Myanmar intensified focus on the danger of communal violence and on the need for greater inter-faith dialogue.

During the Assembly session we also stepped back from specific crisis and took stock on where we stand in strengthening mediation.

Many tend to focus on Chapter VII of the UN Charter, which opens up for the use of force, and it is, of course, an absolutely crucial charter because it provides the muscular capacity that is sometimes needed, but I am convinced that there is a highly under-utilized potential in Chapter VI on the pacific settlement disputes, and all the things we need to do before we get to Chapter VII. I always have the charter in my pocket, I have it here, and my favorite article -- the chapter's name is beautiful, isn't it? Pacific settlement disputes, pacific, not even peaceful. Poetry. And Article 33 is Christmas Eve for a diplomat and a lawyer, I hope, what the parties should do before a conflict, the parties to end a dispute shall, first of all, seek a solution by count on your fingers what you should do -- negotiation, inquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial

settlement, result to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

This is what diplomacy is all about and we have so much to do on that chapter.

We also saw, again, last week or two weeks ago, the great value of the UN as a meeting place and of the dialogue, informal meetings, and bilateral contacts that take place in the margins of the Assembly sessions. This year, Iran used the UN platform for diplomatic openings to the world, including on the nuclear issue. Tom Pickering is a specialist in this and we have talked about this many, many -- through many years and only just 15 minutes ago.

I know there are several interpretations of this effort on the side of the Iranian leadership. I would hope only that the opening is tested seriously, tests and verify -- trust and verify, but trust, test, and verify, I would suggest. Reducing tensions around Iran is of great regional and global significance and this reminds me of a quote of John F. Kennedy in his final UN speech almost exactly 50 years ago he said, “It is never too early to try and it is never too late to talk.”

Now, beyond the political crises of the moment, the Assembly period highlighted some of the longer-term and even existential

challenges we face. Several streams at work will converge in the crucial year 2015. 2015 is the deadline for the MDGs, Millennium Development Goals. Remarkable progress has been made, global poverty has been cut in half during these past 15 years -- 13 years, there are two years remaining -- Africa is writing a new narrative of dynamism and opportunity, more girls are learning to read and write than ever before, great progress on education generally.

At the same time, progress is uneven, to say the least, and we need to accelerate efforts in areas where development is lagging. There are more poor people living in middle-income countries than in poor countries today. There are more poor people living in middle-income countries than in poor. That sure says a lot about inequality.

But there's also need for progress in two very specific areas of the MDGs, maternal health -- it's a shame that so many women are dying in childbirth -- we need midwives all over Africa, I saw that in Darfur most recently -- and we need, of course, to make progress in water and, above all, sanitation.

Sanitation is scandalously behind and water, still, this glass of clean water, tap water, I suppose, is a luxury for 768 million people in the world, 2.5 billion people don't have sanitation, that's a euphemism for

toilets, and more than 2,000 children under the age of five die every day -- die every day, out of diarrhea, dysentery, dehydration, and cholera, and I have seen them die in front of myself, in the Horn of Africa, several times. This, we have to do something about.

So, we have the ongoing goals that we have to work with.

2015 is also the year in which we plan to adopt a bold, post 2015 development agenda. Our hope is for an agenda and a set of goals that will mobilize the world just as the MDGs have done. We believe we can eradicate extreme poverty in the period ahead, eradicate extreme poverty by 2030; 2030 should be our goal.

We want to see sustainability take a hold. You are the first generation that have to think about the existence and health of this planet. You may have Plan B in your life, but you certainly have no Planet B. We have no Planet B.

So, sustainability has to be combined with poverty eradication. And then we want to add to the development picture a strong focus on institutions, the power institutions, transparent, effective, rooted in human rights and the rule of law. Such an agenda would indeed be inspiring -- daunting, but inspiring, and I hope the member states will move in this direction in the next two years and present this set of new goals and

targets with this background.

2015 is also the year in which member states have pledged to reach agreement on -- legal agreement on climate change and the Secretary-General will convene a climate summit in 2014 to generate new political momentum.

The centrality of the UN today is encouraging, but the Secretary-General and I recognize the responsibility this confers upon us. We have to learn from our failings and our shortcomings and we do have them. Syria, of course, represents a collective failure to stop the destruction and the killings.

With respect to Sri Lanka, an internal review of the UN action at the end of the civil war in 2009 noted a systemic failure of the different parts of the UN. Member states did not meet the tasks they themselves had set. We in the UN system did not adapt properly when the final brutal stage of the conflict put great pressures for a broader UN presence, which had been focused mainly on development.

We are working very hard to draw the right lessons from this experience and our approach is focusing not only on Sri Lanka, but beyond, since we must be on the lookout wherever we have a presence.

Internally, one main lesson is to ensure that the UN system

has political and human rights expertise and resources in place whenever and wherever they are needed. Another is to recognize -- and this is important I say to those young people who want to work with something very important -- prevention. The human rights violations are our best early warning signals in emerging crisis.

If you look back at crisis, look at the beginning, the first vibrations in the ground of human rights violations, and that's the beginning of what, in the end, often ends in horrible violence, maybe even ethnic cleansing and genocide.

So, a third aspect really says we must have the courage to act on such signals and speak out about what we see, and I continue to lead this process of internal scrutiny on behalf of the Secretary-General. We'll be reaching out to the member states soon since this is a collective responsibility and there is an important task for us all to do.

In conclusion, it's not a banality, I hope to say, that we are at a crucial juncture, at a crossroads in world affairs. We see big trends with big implications -- migration, urbanization, population growth, the emergence of the global south, we're making strong inroads against longstanding problems such as poverty, even as inequality grows, as I said.

The 21st century promise to finally be the center of women's empowerment in spite of remaining bias and cultural gaps. We see the world growing more connected through trade, commerce and social media, but at the same time, there are strong inward looking and xenophobic tendencies.

Technology is making tremendous advances possible against hunger, disease, wasteful use of energy, and at the same time, it empowers organized crime and raises the specter of crippling cyber attacks, so there is an upside, a downside to everything, pluses and minuses.

People in the world are looking to the UN for big decisions, big ideas, big changes. The expectations and hopes are high. The United Nations provides immense value, feeding 90 million people in 75 countries, vaccinating 58 percent of the world's children, assisting dozens of countries every year with elections, keeping the peace with more than 100,000 peacekeepers, the services we provide -- aviation standards, maritime safety standard for telecommunication -- provide part of the backbone of the global economy and the global practice of cooperation.

So, I would hope that the American people and taxpayers should feel proud of their contributions to this work, not just our shared

values, but our shared work, everyday to build a better world, and again come to the conclusion that this international cooperation is basically a national interest.

Our fates are more connected than ever, our future must be one of ever greater cooperation, we need to put problems at the center, determine who can contribute, and then work together. I wish you look at the United Nations not just in terms of the world we hope to build, but in terms of national interest. Engagement at the UN is not something you do for someone out there, but rather for yourself and your children.

An old friend of mine, Richard Gardner, said -- paradoxically he said, “I love my country, that’s why I’m an internationalist.” You can turn it around. I’m an internationalist, that’s why I love my country.

Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and I are determined to make the most of the current moment. From the very beginning of the Arab Awakening he spoke out and called the leaders of the old order to listen to those, not least the young seeking change, while realizing that this is a long and arduous journey. As a child, Ban Ki-moon personally experienced poverty, devastation of war in Korea. I know that these memories and values guide his work at the top of the global organization in this time of global turmoil.

And, in closing -- absolutely closing -- the Secretary-General has succeeded in luring me back to the organization and to his side after a period away from the organization on my part. Friends in Sweden, like (inaudible) who is here and my wife and others know that I am addicted to the United Nations. It's a bit of a drug in my veins and I believe they are alright. I can't do much about that, but I thank you for your attention and I look forward to the more informal part starting now. Thank you very much.

(Applause)

MR. PICKERING: Thank you, Jan, my old friend. You reminded me today that we probably have known each other for a longer period than most of you have lived who are present here in this room. And it is a special pleasure and, indeed, an honor, to be asked to say a few words about Jan's speech.

How well you have shared with us your internationalist joys today, and I share them with you because I think each of us, having served together at the United Nations at a particularly interesting time, have come to understand the capabilities, the strengths, and indeed, some of the foibles and problems of the only organization we have to bring 193 countries together around the world to pursue peace and security.

Thank you for your remarks, and particularly for three points.

I'd like to begin with one that may not be at the top of everyone's agenda, but in my view ought to be, your point that diplomacy counts, that diplomacy is important, and that diplomacy can make a difference.

I grew up in Cold War days when we were deeply concerned by a catastrophic nuclear conflict and diplomacy was our main weapon to deal with the consequences of inadvertence, miscalculation, accident, and indeed, plain cussedness in terms of the potential for a nuclear conflict, and it was successful.

I remain somewhat distraught as someone whose career has been heavily in diplomacy that for the last ten years, in two major areas, we have attempted to find a way to short-circuit diplomacy with rapid military solutions and indeed have found disastrous answers.

It is now time to come back to diplomacy, but I was also chagrined by the notion that when, a year ago, I began to speak of the necessity for a political settlement in Syria everybody thought I was certifiably loco. And, indeed, the fact that we have created among ourselves, with this preoccupation with military solutions, a distrust and a disparagement of diplomacy as an effective means of maintaining international peace and security is a serious one and thank you, Jan, for bringing us back to that reality, which I think is important.

And we now see in a serious way that reality being used to address two very difficult problems, which again, you have recalled for us in a very important way, one is Syria, and the breakthrough in Syria opens the door -- and I say only opens the door -- to possibilities, because we must obviously be realistic about the difficulties of what must be achieved.

But the fact that within hours a seemingly throw-away proposal by the American Secretary of State was accepted by the Russians, who incidentally had on hand in Moscow at that very moment the foreign minister of Syria, who immediately marched to the drum of future diplomacy rather than to the war drum, is an interesting indication of, in fact, that this was something that people had been thinking about for some time, even if they didn't reveal it at the time or, indeed, subsequently, and it's important.

But it also, I think, brought oceans of skepticism about whether this is working or would work, and I think much of that has been dispelled in recent weeks by the points that you made, Mr. Deputy Secretary-General, about the degree to which, in fact, the inspectors arrived on the scene and the process has begun, and an almost impossible deadline seems much less impossible now than it did three weeks ago, and I think that's important.

But it also opens the door to other things. It opens the door to the possibility that the U.S. and Russia can cooperate not only in destroying chemical weapons in Syria, but in moving back to Geneva, to the Annan Principles, and indeed to a process that can undertake what clearly is, in my view, impossible on the field of battle. There is no military victory around the corner within sight, or indeed, in my view, within the years ahead. Those who, two years ago, thought it would be three months have been proven wrong, and my sense is the destruction of 100,000 people should be enough on itself to take us to the conference table, whether we, in fact, believe that that can happen or not.

My own sense is that it is extremely important that preconditions to negotiation should no longer vex the problem. It is, in my view, very important that the parties should agree that no linkage, that nothing is agreed until everything is agreed, a perfectly fine diplomatic principle, but one which works against progress, in this case, should be dropped, but I also think it is imperative that we move, as I think the Deputy Secretary-General has suggested, toward a ceasefire, humanitarian relief, and all of the things that are necessary to protect the Syrian population against what are clearly the arbitrary vicissitudes of a civil war.

Beyond that, the challenge will be a new government for Syria. The parties all agree that that will have to happen one time or another. My sense is that the diplomatic challenge of negotiating a new government for Syria is a serious and tough one. It will be made easier if a ceasefire can be achieved, and there I see a huge role for the United Nations, not just in monitoring a ceasefire, but in finding a way, hopefully, through the deployment of peacekeepers to protect those minorities, whoever they may be -- Alawites, Druze, Christians, Kurds -- who will be under pressure as a result of the conflict, which will not going away, even if a ceasefire can be achieved, and that is a huge and very difficult challenge, but in my view, closer today than it was a month ago, and we have to find a way to move that.

The second issue you mentioned was Iran. A meeting took place yesterday. It was not a Millennial come-to solution -- meeting, but it was certainly a meeting that, in my view, has moved things beyond where they have been stuck for many decades, and my hope is it will be the beginning of change.

Iran will be challenged to be specific about what it is putting on the table with respect to the limitations which it is prepared to accept in the inspection, it is prepared to permit to allow the kind of transparency

that can assure those who have been skeptical about Iran's nuclear program that it is not leading to weapons, but is devoted to peaceful purposes. And we will be challenged on our side, not only to accept the notion that as they make serious moves ahead, and I believe they have started, we will have to undertake serious moves on sanctions, in fact, to create the sense of mutual confidence and to restore the trust that has been lacking for 33 years to move that process ahead.

It won't be solved easily, it won't be solved in a summer, it won't be solved before, in fact, the end game is reached in whatever form that will take, but I think it is clear that Iran will have to have a peaceful program, well monitored, and that sanctions will have to go away as this particular process proceeds.

We will also be challenged to deal with what has been the remnant of past negotiations, whether in fact there has to be a period of zero enrichment in Iran as a sine qua non on our side for a full agreement. I believe we are well past that date, but many people are still mesmerized by it and that challenge will continue to come.

In the center of all of this will be the United Nations. Almost everything that you touched on involves the most serious problems before today's world, the challenges -- if I could call it -- of 2015, and indeed, all

of the issues that are out there that will once again require us to come together with 193, 192 other countries to deal with them wherever that may be.

So, Jan, thank you for coming down, either by plane or train, thank you for being with us, but thank you even more for your words, for your inspiration, but even more, because I know this first hand from having worked with you over the years, for your dedication, for your determination, and for your refusal to quit in any times of adversity, many of which you've had to face.

(Applause)

MR. PICCONE: Well, let me thank Tom again for joining us and making those comments. I think he hit on so many of the key points, and bringing it back to the UN role in some of the most important crises and challenges facing us right now, so I appreciate very much his comments and now I just want to maybe be a little provocative and come back to a couple of the points you made before we open it up to you all.

One thing you touched on, which was very important, but since we are in Washington I think I'm compelled to ask you about the role of the United States in the world right now.

There is an increasing debate about where we're headed in

terms of the way the world's changing and the leadership that we can offer to the rest of the world, and traditionally, and for many of us who grew up during the period of the Cold War and after, it was assumed that the U.S. would be at least up on a pedestal in some ways, and sometimes we put ourselves up on that pedestal, in some helpful and unhelpful ways, and I'm thinking, of course, right now what's happening in Washington and the crisis that we're facing in our own governance.

President Obama has played, I think, a mixed role in how he's asserting U.S. leadership. We talk about the importance of diplomacy, but in the way it played out in Syria, there was an element of coercive diplomacy, and I'd like you to comment a little bit about the use of force or the threat of use of force in getting action, in getting states to act, and did that make a difference in moving the parties along on the Syria front?

But more generally, I'd like you to say a little bit more about what your reading is of the U.S. role. We have rising powers that want a bigger voice, bigger seat at the table. You did not touch on UN Security Council reform. Of course, that is centrally a question for the member states, but I'd like you to comment a little bit about that shifting templates in the world and the role of the United States.

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Thank you very much, Ted. I see Kathy Calvin in front of me here, president of the UN Foundation. I hope I'm not disclosing too much if I say that the latest polls in the United States show, in fact, a growing support of the United Nations as an organization.

It's possible that the Syria developments have played a role in this regard, and I, of course, wanted to say to you I spent -- I wasn't only an exchange student to this nation, I was first secretary to this embassy for four years, I was ambassador here for five years, I've been working in the United States so long and the commitment of the United States is true in multilateral, it's true in the United Nations, is absolutely crucial for the health of our organization.

And therefore I made the point pretty strongly, maybe I over did it a little bit, that I would claim that the work we do is in the national interest of every country and also the larger countries. The larger countries don't have to worry so much about it because they have enough muscular power to create their own "solutions" on a number of issues political and economic and on other areas, but I would say that also the larger countries should, by the logic of these global -- the global cooperations that we have today, realize that it is a national interest. It's

almost impossible to think, I mean, it's like migration climate, and finding solutions in the national context.

So, I would hope that this will more and more be realized.

Of course, the United States also has, like the other four on the permanent -- on the Security Council, realize what a tremendous responsibility and gift they have been given by the world by having the veto power in the Security Council. And I hope that that veto power will be used at a minimum and that, in fact, the Security Council, more and more, will become a body where you negotiate and where there is a duty to come out with a solution at the end.

And I would also hope that the Security Council would take the work more in the direction of prevention. The Security Council is to act on threats to international peace and security. What is a threat? It is before anything has happened, but usually we are like a fireman who gets there when the house is in full fire, not when the smoke develops or when the arsonist reaches for the match.

So, there should be a culture of prevention that could, I think, really revitalize the Security Council. It is right -- you are right, it is an unsolved issue. When I was president of the General Assembly, it was the most difficult reform item to get that Security Council reform. There

are many nations who say this is a reflection of the world from 1945, not the world of today, particularly some of the major emerging powers who play an enormously important role.

On the use of force, I am a great friend of Chapter VI, you know, I showed you the charter, but I'm also saying to myself, without Chapter VII, Chapter VI cannot be effective. See, I think the best way of the use of force is the credible threat of the use of force. The best case is when that threat comes from a united Security Council. It is less -- more problematic if it comes only from one or two in the Security Council because then you will have an action outside the Council.

But I would certainly say that to show that the Security Council can be unified on the use of force will probably have a positive effect on the willingness of the parties to agree to solutions according to Article 33 of Chapter VI.

MR. PICCONE: Building on that same theme, and we covered a lot of ground on Syria, and I'm glad we did because it really is such a pressing concern, but there's a concept wrapped up in what we see in Syria right now, that has been a very important sign of progress, exactly as you talked about in the marriage of national interests and international interests, which is the responsibility to protect, adopted by all

member states at the head of state level in 2005, used for the intervention in Libya, that has been very controversial and, I think, you can -- it's fair to say the Syrian people are the victim of that circumstance.

Is R2P -- what's the future of the R2P doctrine and how do you see it playing a role going forward? Because, certainly, there will be the next crisis and it will look something like Syria, I'm sure, where some government is not protecting its own people and the international community is called to intervene.

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: I'm very proud to have been President of the General Assembly when that formula was gaveled on the 16th of September 2005, and I think it's a great step forward.

In the wider context, I would put it in the context -- I would put it in context of the preambular part of that declaration where it says -- we say -- I paraphrase -- there is no peace without development, there is no development without peace. And there is no lasting peace or sustainable development without respect for human rights and the rule of law. In other words, for an international system to work and for even a nation to work, you have to have peace development and respect of human rights and rule of law and you have to deal with it at the same time.

If you have serious violations of human rights, you have, by definition, instability and lack of prosperity. So, that is the basis.

Now, here is a tension in this organization. We have the principle of sovereignty, but we also have, in everything, the principle of solidarity with people in need, and the paradox is that sometimes international law puts us in the position where solidarity has to stop at a border and not at human beings in need.

So, when humanitarian intervention came up as a concept in the early 90s, people said, no, humanitarian intervention means infringement of sovereignty, you're interfering in internal affairs, it's going to be a political Trojan horse by the Western powers, forget it. So, when we created the first humanitarian mandate, we had to abstain from using it.

Now here comes the stroke of genius. A commission set up, Canadians, Gareth Evans of New Zealand -- of Australia -- he would never forgive me -- said, listen, if sovereignty is so important, wouldn't that imply that you have an obligation to make sure that your own population does not -- is not subject to ethnic cleansing and genocide and mass killing? The answer is yes, of course. Sovereignty is that important. But if you accept that, then you have to answer the second question. What happens

if you, as a state, fail and do not guaranty your population that security? Well then, it is finally now stated in this document, 2005, that the international community has a responsibility.

It is a bit difficult to follow the sequence of that second paragraph. Read it and you will see diplomacy at its worst, because it has as appropriate and on a collective basis, which I don't mind, but in the end, of course, it's a Security Council decision.

So, in the end it comes back to the Security Council. But we have established a principle, the states are responsible for the safety of their population. Libya was a crisis for this concept. Syria is, of course, now a constant reminder that we certainly should have applied better, but we had a debate both last year and this year and I was taking part in that and in both years I came to the conclusion that the concept is there to stay, and there was only one or two nations who were skeptical or talking negatively.

We have to put a pretty strong emphasis on prevention, the prevention element, and then of course, spread the word among member states that they have the primary responsibility of to prevent atrocities to occur.

MR. PICCONE: And can I come back to reform of the UN

Security Council? Do you have any thoughts on that issue?

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: You're really making life a bit difficult for me here.

Well, the veto right is written into the charter, so the veto powers have all the chances to stop a veto -- abolishing the veto, so I have come to the conclusion that it's probably an unrealistic proposition. So, the other road is to reduce the use of the veto. And I would say that there have been several proposals. Some nations called S-5, small nations, five -- Liechtenstein, Switzerland, Singapore, New Zealand, and one more -- Jordan -- came up with a proposal that every time a veto is cast, it should be reported, one should give the reasons for it to the General Assembly as a sign of the very exclusive situation where a veto is cast.

I am, as a negotiator, more interested in just using the Council as a negotiating body where they have this privilege of having the veto as a last resort. They should negotiate. And I jokingly said once when I was president of the General Assembly to the P-5, Permanent 5, that they should work like the Catholic Church when they select popes. I don't know if you know what I mean, you know, the white smoke, he locks them up in the Sistine Chapel and then when the white smoke comes up,

there is a resolution, if Papa is elected.

But anyway, I say this only that I think we had, unfortunately for too long, Cold War impulses that the vetoes were automatic and couldn't be changed. Now, I think, we have a situation where hopefully growing between the United States and Russia, there is more of a cultural negotiated solution.

MR. PICCONE: I'm glad that you raised the issue of human rights throughout your comments and it's something that if you step back and actually look at how money is being spent in the UN system, I mean, it's one of the three main pillars at the UN, but it, in fact, only gets about 3 percent of the UN budget.

And so, I'm wondering -- you know, we've had some dramatic reform in getting to the Human Rights Council. The Council has proven to be more active than the Commission and a number of independent experts who are deployed on the ground, exactly as you said, in the early warning facility that they provide, should we have any hope that the member states are willing to put more money behind the human rights pillar of the United Nations?

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: I was mentioning the work we are doing, conclusions from the Sri Lanka tragedy

2009, and I think there are three conclusions. We will have to improve and strengthen the human rights pillar of the United Nations. In my view, there is need for a stronger presence out in the field and we need to better integrate these three pillars' work.

We need also to be better at protection of civilians once we fail to listen to the early warning signals on human rights. Unfortunately, that happens, then we have human rights violations during a period when civilians are severely affected.

And then we need to work more speedily and get -- change the minute -- in Sri Lanka we had more or less completely a development team while, in fact, there was fighting going on and human rights violations taking place and we didn't have flexibility to change our presence in the field.

So, I think we're moving in that direction and I hope that we will see human rights as a universal obligation. The whole declaration of the 10th of December 1948 is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and I think we have to be very, very careful to make sure that the human rights complex is universally accepted.

We have, for instance, to accept more than we do, I think, particularly in Western countries, that the economic and social rights are

also part of the human rights body. It's important also to create that universality around the concept. R2P, I'm very glad we have so many countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa who really are behind this to make sure that the human rights dimension becomes universal.

But the most interesting new factor that I'd like to mention is that there is a new -- not new concept, but a concept that is revitalized, which is the rule of law. The rule of law is post-conflict institutions, rule of law is anti-corruption for development, it's women's rights, it's children's rights, rule of law is, of course, human rights, and I would say the rule of law is, to me, a door that can open up to human rights.

When I talked about the post-2015 agenda, remember, poverty eradication, sustainability, and rule of law -- institution building. The reason why sometimes countries fall apart is that there are no institutions. Look at Afghanistan, look at Somalia, and now some signs in Libya of the same character, there are no institutions to hold it up, and institutions play an enormously important role.

I can talk about my own country. Sweden was one of your poorest countries eighty years ago. Three things happened in the 30s: build up of good infrastructure, a strong educational system, which made it possible for me to get the first education in my family ever, and strong

institutions -- strong, honest institutions. These were the three factors that built our country and therefore, I think, institution building, rule of law, and by that, the rights perspective introduced is so important and that that qualitative element enters the goals and targets for 2015, to me, is very crucial.

MR. PICCONE: Great. Well, why don't we now open the floor? We've got five or so minutes. Why don't we take a couple questions --

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Three.

MR. PICCONE: And then we'll come back to the Deputy Secretary-General. Gentleman in the middle by the aisle.

MR. WEINTRAUB: Thank you. I'm Leon Weintraub, University of Wisconsin. I wonder if recent statements we've seen in Kenya about a possible withdrawal from the ICC might signal perhaps unraveling of some global organizations or do you think that's just a political statement?

MR. PICCONE: Up in the front row here?

MR. MITCHELL: Thanks very much. I'm Garrett Mitchell and I write the Mitchell Report, and I want to ask the Deputy Secretary-General a question that comes from one of your opening remarks about

the global logic of our time.

And expand a bit on a question that Ted asked you about the Security Council itself, I wonder if we could broaden that out a little bit and try this. In 1945 the global logic of our time led us to create three institutions that have played an enormous role -- an important role in global relations. Now there's a new global logic of our time, as you and Ban Ki-moon describe it, and I wonder if you could do two things for us. I wonder if you could flesh that out a little bit and try to give us some sense of specificity about what some of the elements of the global logic of our time are. And given that it has already led the IMF to make some institutional changes and that Dr. Kim is afoot at the World Bank to do the same, I wonder if it calls on the UN to do something along those lines?

MR. PICCONE: Thanks. I saw one hand in the very back.

MS. NEWLAND: Thank you very much. I'm Kathleen Newland from the Migration Policy Institute and I was so pleased to hear you mention migration particularly in the context of the post 2015 development agenda because almost no one else does, and I wonder if you could share with us what you think the UN in particular has to offer on that subject. In the last two weeks we've seen 400 people die in the Mediterranean because of a lack of an effective migration regime, but is

the UN the institution that can help with this? Thank you.

MR. PICCONE: Great. Thank you very much. Please.

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Well, there is a situation now which is cause of concern for the SG and myself and that is that several African nations are reacting to the fact that Africa and African leaders are the object of the ICC. What we should remember is that four of the eight cases where Africa is involved are brought to the ICC by African states themselves and two of them by the Security Council.

But the matter has become more dramatic after the fact that two people who were going to go to hearings at the ICC became president and vice-president of Kenya, and there has been many discussions about whether one could find pragmatic ways of hearing them in their own countries or in the neighboring countries. These formulas did not work out and there was a reaction from the side of Kenya, but also from several other member states in Africa that sitting heads of state should not be prosecuted or should not be -- there should be a deferral as long as they were sitting heads of state.

This is problematic, I can say, because Article 27 of their own statute does not make that distinction. Anyone who has been -- who's charged with this should go through this process.

But there was a resolution adopted in Addis Ababa last week along these lines.

We have suggested to our African friends to bring up this issue with the assembly or parties that is meeting in November to go through whether there could be changes made to their own statute being brought through in a more regular way. I don't know to what extent that will be done. We hope very much it will be chosen that way.

There is not a mass walk out, fortunately, after the meeting in Addis, but we are extremely concerned that this discussion takes place because fighting impunity or accountability for the kind of crimes that this court is to work with has to be accepted by all member states, so it is now a challenge for all of us. It takes up a lot of time and efforts on all of us.

The global logic of our time, I think that we have probably reached the stage now where we have never had closer cooperation between the United Nations and the World Bank, particularly, the Bretton Woods system, Bretton Woods, so San Francisco and Bretton Woods are coming together in a great way and if you remember my model, no peace without development, no development with no peace, is now translated into a very ambitious agenda. And the new president of the World Bank, Jim Kim, is working hand in hand with us and we with them on a number

of issues. The SG and Jim Kim visited the Great Lakes region in Africa recently. They are on their way to Sahil and we're also working together on issues like rule of law in a completely new way, which has given us the link also from the humanitarian side, which is very much a UN activity, and the development side, because there has to be a connection between humanitarian relief, rehabilitation, development.

You see that for instance now in the neighboring countries to Syria. It's not enough to give humanitarian assistance or help with refugees. You have to help them with crowded schools, crowded health clinics, jobs that are disappearing. So, we work now along these lines in a completely new way.

My view is that with the global logic of our time -- I could spend an hour on this, I won't -- but I think the thing is that if you come to the conclusion you've got to do it together, but you look at the enormity of the tasks, then you realize United Nations cannot do this alone, World Bank cannot do it alone. You need to put the problem at the center, and how about glass of water or whatever or migration -- you put the problem at the center and then you ask yourself, this is today's global problem, who can do something about it?

And it turns out that you need them to have not only the

dimension of peace, security, development, human rights, and rule of law, you also need to reach out. Maybe sometimes the expectations are too high on the UN to solve all problems. UN is in the lead in a number of issues, and I'm very proud we are in the lead of a number of issues, but UN, in some cases, could be a catalyst or even be a part of doing the job, because we will not be able, for instance, to fight -- reach the goal of eradicating poverty in 2030 if we don't have the help not only of Bretton Woods, World Bank, and so forth, not only of regional relations, European Union, not only the private sector with technology, training, innovation, and we need, of course, the civil society, many of you have a background in this, playing an enormously important role as actors in the world scene, and the academic community, the scientific community, science and research in general, and each and every one of you.

I have a line that I use that I believe in very strongly. Nobody can do everything, but everybody can do something. And that we have to realize, because I sense, in several parts of the world it's sort of hopelessness, that the situation is so difficult, the enormity of task is so high that you turn off the television, you say, stop the world, I want to get off. It doesn't work. You've got to divide up the problems into parts and realize that you have a part to play in that international division of labor of

at least this system of shared responsibility, which is necessary. That's my take on the global logic of our time.

Another question -- Kathleen, yeah.

MR. PICCONE: Migration and then we'll --

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Well, there are a couple of issues that I've been asking for a long time that we should do more about. Migration has been one. When I was President (inaudible) we had the first dialogue, as you know, and we had finally the second one two weeks ago, and of course it's a huge issue. You know that the remittances from migrants is bigger than the whole official development assistance in the world. Migrants, human rights is a huge issue. The political explosive nature of that issue, in many countries, where you divide humanity and people into us and them is fed by this. The tragedy of the situation of the huge inequalities is demonstrated by those -- it's absolutely horrible -- 300 and now 400 if you add the second disaster, people drowning just a mile outside Famagusta. I was sitting with Cecilia Malmstrom, the European commissioner, in the room when it happened and she almost cried and I was feeling -- it was so bad. We went down to the General Assembly, I don't know whether you were there, and I suggested a moment of silence, the least we can do, but there has

to be action taken.

But if we don't take into the migration dimension in the post-2015 development, we do a major mistake. So, I hope the member states will build in that issue because we cannot disconnect that from the 2015 work.

Same thing goes for other issues that I think are growing -- we need to focus on them more like the urbanization, which is both a potential and a problem. The problems that I sort of described on sanitation is mostly, now, in the big cities. Sixty percent of humanity will live in big cities -- will live in urban areas in four or five year's time. That's where you'll have problems of sanitation, no infrastructure, poor people moving into poor countries, big cities.

We had a cholera outbreak in Sierra Leone just recently, so that's another issue that we need to focus, a new issue of our time, and one issue, which I think is completely disregarded, is the role of organized crime related to drugs, related to illicit arms transfer, related to prostitution, trafficking, it's horrible and growing on us. Add it now to what I said here, the cyber security openings for organized crime.

MR. PICCONE: It's funny you mentioned organized crime. Just yesterday on this platform we held a forum on organized crime and

political finance. We've just issued a -- we just published a new book on the subject, particularly as it relates to this issue and its impact on democracy in Latin America, so I couldn't agree more.

One of the comments made was that, you know, this is new, cutting edge research that needs to be done and that we'd like to do here.

I want to really, from the bottom of my heart, thank you for your comments because I found them to be not only thoughtful and substantive, but really inspiring, and I think when we talk about the global logic of our times, I think we also have to think about it in terms of leadership.

I think what we heard today was a global leader for our times. Please join me in thanking him.

(Applause)

DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL ELIASSON: Thank you very much. I was just inspired by -- this is my absolute last comment, one minute -- I was inspired by Tom Pickering when he said that I had proved -- tried to prove, I think -- that diplomacy counts and I was visiting professor at Uppsala University before I was drafted into this job and I was challenged by my colleague, Peter Wallenstein, who is known to this institution, he's a great peace researcher. He said, "Can you list the

reasons you fail or succeed in negotiations or mediation or in diplomacy? Because we need to be more systematic about how we succeed or fail." So, he forced me to think over a whole weekend of my failures and my successes.

I have negotiated in six different crises, I've had lots of humanitarian situations which required negotiation. And I came to four conclusions why you fail or succeed. The first one is how you use your language, the word. If you look at your own life, your most important tool is your word, your spoken word or your written word is your most important tool in your hand. And how much do we take care of that tool? How much do we work with the nuances of words? How much do we find synonyms? How much can we twist or turn around a sentence so that you can make it meet the problem better? It's a journalist's life, it's also a diplomat's life, a lawyer's life. The love of words and the care for words.

Hammarskjold, Dag Hammarskjold was very stern on that. He has a very strong statement in one of his markings, he called them, where he says that to misuse a word is poisoning the wells, or something like that.

The second reason to fail or succeed is a very simple thing, but extremely important in negotiation, in mediation, and that is -- in

conflict resolution -- it's timing. Timing. We often -- we most often do things too late, but I can tell you what, I've been in so many situations where we've done things too early.

You need to think very carefully about timing.

The geniuses, when it comes to timing, are children. Have you ever had a child ask for a raise in allowance Monday morning where you're on your way to work? Friday night with a glass of wine.

Third reason to fail or succeed is cultural sensitivity or insensitivity if you fail, the importance of respecting culture, history, traditions is absolutely crucial to create the right atmosphere, and not in a manipulative way, but in a -- just your curiosity and interest and openness and recognizing the equality, the equality of nations, the equality of people.

And the last reason, and the most important, I say, after a long life in this, is personal relations and your own personality. The most important word in diplomacy, in negotiation, in mediation, is trust. Be truthful. Be absolutely exact in your recording of what others say when you pass it on, to create that personal relationship is absolutely crucial.

And when you meet a university class, when you are here at Brookings at a seminar, and you create networks, remember that those

personal relationships will help your life enormously, and build on that.

My friendship to Tom Pickering goes back so many years and we have been in contact from all over the world, different parts, and always try to find each other and find our colleagues. (Inaudible) the group of ambassadors that were ambassadors back in 1988 to 1992 at the end of the Cold War, we are still a group of friends that have our addresses in the computer or in the inside pocket and we call each other.

And remember that personal relationships are important, for those of my -- I was inspired by Tom to say that, it wasn't part of my preparation. Thank you.

MR. PICCONE: Brilliant. Thank you.

(Applause)

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