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**Introduction:**

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**Featured Speaker:**

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**Moderator:**

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

MR. TALBOTT: Good afternoon, everybody. I'm Strobe Talbott, and it's my pleasure to welcome you here to Brookings this afternoon. And by definition, all of you who have turned up this afternoon are stalwarts in appreciating the importance, both of the speaker and the subject today. It's real proof that the Washington winter is finally over, I think. And in addition to that, I gather that the sports bars all over Washington are filled with -- what do I say, soccer fans or football fans? But you know what I mean. It's Ghana versus the United States this afternoon.

We are really very, very pleased to have the cast of characters here that I'm going to introduce in just a moment. This is also an inauguration event in a way. We have, because of the generosity of one of our trustees, Alan Batkin, and his wife, Jane, we are in a position to now have in perpetuity, a new series that is called "The International Leaders Forum Series," and it is going to be hosted, as it is today, by our Foreign Policy Program here at the Brookings Institution. And it's going to be an opportunity to hear from thought leaders, and statesmen, and diplomats as they come through Washington on important subjects.

We couldn't have a more timely topic to hear about today, and we couldn't imagine a more distinguished person to address that topic, and that is the Foreign Minister of Norway, Børge Brende. As I say, the topic is, in some ways, poignantly appropriate, given that he is going to give us a sense of how the Norwegian government thinks about the guiding principles of peace and reconciliation. And as we all know, these are two commodities that are in very short supply in some critical parts of the world where Norway has been taking a very constructive role against very tough odds. I'm thinking about the Middle East, which, of course, we all have on our minds, and dominates the headlines and the front pages of the world press. Also, South Sudan,

Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Colombia.

I think it's fair to say that Norway over the decades has made the promotion of peace and the ending of conflict a national vocation. We all understand that, and we've been the beneficiary of that here at the Brookings Institution. The Norwegian government has been supporting our Foreign Policy program, led by Ted Piccone, who is here in the front row, for 30 years. So we have a long institutional partnership with the government of Norway, and in particular, Mr. Minister, with your ministry. And I particularly appreciated the chance to sit down with you not long ago to talk about some of the issues that you will be addressing today.

Now, just before we came in here to start this program, the minister and I signed a memorandum of understanding that declares Norway's intent to provide \$4 million to another of our research programs here at Brookings, Global Economy and Development, and specifically, this funding is going to go to support our Center for Universal Education, to advance work in a number of areas, prominently including advancing learning metrics and also reaching marginalized youth, and particularly girls, in particularly the developing world.

Now, since there is empirically a direct correlation between the quality and breadth of coverage of education inundation and the degree of peacefulness in that society, the gift that we're getting from the Norwegian government, the memorandum of understanding that the minister and I just signed, is really quite closely connected to the topic of discussion.

I want to just point out a couple of other colleagues who are here. The Center for Universal Education is well represented, including by Rebecca Winthrop, its director, and also somebody who is a relative newcomer to Brookings but I feel as though she is already good friend, and that is Julia Gillard. She is a distinguished, nonresident

senior fellow in the CUE we call it, the Center for Universal Education. You all know that she is the former prime minister of Australia. Julia, we take it as a form of impact when we have people go into government service and have people come from government service to Brookings and to have somebody who has been a head of government as a particular distinction for us, and we are very proud to have you as part of the community. She is also, by the way, appropriately, the chair of the Global Partnership for Education, which Norway supports. And I also want to acknowledge the presence here of Ambassador Korda Aus, who has been a very good friend of the institution and has been helping us with her work.

Now, we're going to proceed. Thus, the minister is going to make some remarks, and then there will be a moderated conversation with Mike O'Hanlon, a senior fellow and director of studies in our Foreign Policy program, who is particularly expert on what happens when peacekeeping fails, if I can put it that way. And then he will open the conversation to all of you.

Now, we are living not just in the age of conflict and peacekeeping as the kind of bookends to the conversation today, but we're also living in the twitterverse. So if any of you want to tweet on the proceedings, you can use #norwayfm. And, if you want to follow Julia, it's @juliagillard. You can keep track of her tweets as well.

So with that, let me turn the proceedings over to the minister, and thank you again for being with us.

(Applause)

MR. BRENDE: Thank you, Strobe, for that great introduction. Excellences, ladies and gentlemen, I'm really grateful for this opportunity to inaugurate the Alan and Jane Batkin International Leaders Forum series here today. And also thank you to Brookings for our collaboration that I think has been mutually beneficial for moving

a lot of important topics for many years.

I've been asked to speak on the Norwegian guiding principles for peace and reconciliation. Guiding principles makes our work sound very formalized, so let me state up front that we have never had any rigid list of principles or commandments for our engagements in pursuit of peace and reconciliation. Nor, has any Norwegian government presented any white paper setting out our policy in this area. Nevertheless, it is probably accurate to speak of a distinctive Norwegian approach. I mean, distinctive not in the sense of something uniquely Norwegian, but certain features have crystalized in this area of our foreign policy over the past 30 years or so.

So in my remarks today I will comment on what I consider to be some of the most important of Norway's guiding principles. First of all, I would like to reflect briefly on the question "Why Norway?" As a relatively small country, with an open and competitive economy at the northern periphery of Europe, we feel we have a responsibility to make a contribution. But we also see that it is clearly in Norway's interests, as part of a globalized world, to help to resolve and prevent violent conflict.

Not only do we see escalating tensions in our immediate neighborhood, as illustrated with the annexation of Crimea for the first time since the Second World War, one European country has taken a peace of another European country, but the facts of radicalization, organized crime, and refugee streams caused by conflict and instability are also being felt in our own country.

Young, radicalized Norwegians, believe it or not, are joining the fighting in Syria. Illegal drugs are being sold in the streets of our cities. We also know that there will be no development without peace. Behind Norway's investment in peace and reconciliation is the recognition that preventing and resolving violent conflict is a cost-efficient way of fostering development.

The cost of war is enormous. The most shocking example at the moment is Syria. In the space of less than three years, it is estimated that more than 160,000 people have lost their lives, 25,000 of them being children.

Three years ago, Syria was a safe haven for refugees in Delavont and in the whole Middle East area. No Syria itself has given rise to one of the most massive refugee crises since World War II. Three years ago, Syria was a middle income country. Now, its GDP has been halved. 9.3 million Syrians are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance. Half of these are children. More than two million children inside Syria don't go to school at all. It's going to be a lost generation I'm afraid. 6.5 million people are internally displaced. That, on top of the 2.3 million people that have registered as refugees in Syria's neighboring countries.

Norwegian engagement in peace and reconciliation goes far back, as I mentioned. Our role as facilitators to the peace processes, as mentioned by Strobe in the Middle East, Sri Lanka, and now Colombia are perhaps the best known. However, just as often, we work with groups that are not yet engaged in a formal process and try to bring them to the negotiating table.

In Colombia, Norway is together with Cuba, a facilitator in the peace talks between Colombian governments and the FARC. And we also have been facilitating initial talks with armed group ELM. With our five million people displaced and hundreds of thousands of people being killed in Colombia during 50 years of conflict, there is a lot at stake. The part played by the illegal drug trade in the conflict is also a reminder of the conflict's global ramifications. The reelection of President Santos provides a continued opportunity towards the road that is favoring peace in Colombia.

I would like now to highlight five principles or characteristics of our policy, all of them rather basic, but at the same time fundamental. First, there is a fundamental

belief that is shared by various political parties in Norway that dialogue and negotiation is a key policy tool, even in circumstances of severe conflict and strong disagreement. We actively look for opportunities to put this belief into practice. Talking to the parties in a conflict is essential in order to develop an understanding of the conflict and the various positions of key stakeholders. Dialogue is also essential in order to build trust and gain the confidence of the parties. If you have their trust and confidence, we are in a far better position to support the process and foster a peaceful solution.

This means that we engage in dialogue with virtually all parties and political actors, by the individual leaders, political or armed groups or countries, even those that we do fundamentally disagree with. We engage in dialogue with actors whose behavior we consider reprehensible and unreservedly condemned. And in rare cases, we engage in dialogue with actors we are involved in military action against. It follows from this that generally we do not think it's a good idea to close all channels of communication, no matter how strongly we disagree.

Engaging with groups like the Taliban allows us to give them our reading of their situation and to get their views. It also lets us raise with them the importance of Afghanistan's commitment to protect universal human rights and to ensure women's participation in society, and hope this is also in the Taliban's own interest.

I want to be clear that I'm not promoting a naïve belief that dialogue will always be successful. There is a point where we draw a line. Our control question is do we see this group as potentially being part of a negotiated political solution, even if this seems unlikely in the current situation? Clearly, ISIL, which has recently advanced with worrying speed in Iraq, falls short of this criterion. A political solution with Iraqi Sunnis is necessary, and as much as I would argue that even groups with a Baathist past should be included in a political process in order to better include the Iraqi Sunnis in the political

system, it would not be helpful to talk to ISIL, or ISIS in English.

In arguing for dialogue as a powerful foreign policy, too, I also acknowledge that the use of military force will sometimes be justified and necessary in self-defense to safeguard international peace and security or to stop genocide or large-scale killings and severe human rights violations. Yet, several recent examples have demonstrated that while military interventions may stop fighting or address other issues in the short term, this is not enough to ensure that sustainable political settlements take hold. Political engagements, dialogue, and negotiation are also required.

There are severe limits to the use of military force as a tool of peacekeeping. Military engagement also has a high cost in terms of funds and personnel. Even then, there is much hard work and no guarantee. I understand that the moderator afterwards is an expert in failed peace processes, so this is going to be interesting.

This brings me to the second principle, taking a long-term perspective. Norway is not a day trader in peacebuilding business. We do not look for quick fixes or media successes. Rather, we aim to stay on course, even when the course is long and daunting and with no certainty of positive results. In Sri Lanka, we maintained our engagement for more than 10 years.

When I visited the Philippines in January and reconfirmed our readiness to continue as a facilitator in the peace process, there were people in my delegation who had been involved in this work for more than a decade. A broad political consensus in Norway allows us to be a predictable partner and a patient partner for peace and reconciliation. Positive results do not depend first and foremost on Norway or other external actors, of course.

This brings me onto a third principle. In our role as facilitator or



mediator, we do not seek to put pressure on parties, nor do we attempt to force solutions. Sustainable peace will always depend on the willingness of the parties themselves to find common ground. But as an interlocutor, we can and should give advice, assist, encourage, and give a gentle nudge at the point where we detect an emerging willingness from the parties to engage.

A follow-on from this last principle is that it is not for Norway to define who should sit at the table. This, too, is a matter for the parties to decide. Syria is an example of a case where we will probably have to recognize that a negotiated, political solution will have to include actors who we find difficult to accept.

It is also important to look for political openings. For example, in the form of relative moderates in the different camps and to strengthen their ability to make headway politically. Myanmar is an example. Recent developments here strongly suggest that engagement rather than continued confrontation turned out to be the right policy on the part of the international community. Norway started looking for openings and building contacts with the military government at quite an early stage. When the country opened up and cease fires with the various ethnic groups were concluded, we chose to support the process through political engagement and concrete projects in the cease fire areas.

This brings me to the fourth principle. Norway does not engage in a vacuum. Our contributions are part of international efforts. An overarching guiding principle for us is partnership. There are many examples. Syria, Myanmar, Somalia are just some of the countries where we are working with the United Nations. In Syria, we continue to support an active role for the U.N., and despite the challenges encountered so far, we encourage the U.N. to seize the opportunity to engage whenever it arises -- when the opportunity arises.

We are also cooperating closely with other countries with particular focus on regional actors. The longstanding Sudan and also Sudan Troika with the United Kingdom and the U.S. following the CPA from back in 2005 is one example. Troika cooperates very closely with the IGAD countries, the surrounding, neighboring countries, and garners support for the current IGAD-led process for peace among warring parties in South Sudan.

Another example is Colombia, where cooperation with regional actors is essential. Regional players, be they individual countries or regional organizations, are taking an increasingly active role in conflict resolution. Developments in recent years suggest that it is becoming difficult to facilitate a solution to a conflict without regional actors being actively involved.

The closest of all of our partnerships is with the United States. I would like to insert a remark from former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton made in Oslo in 2012. On issues of security and peace, on human rights and development, Norway has no better or closer partner than the United States. This, of course, does not mean that we always agree. Whenever we engage in peace and reconciliation efforts, we do so for distinctly Norwegian risks because we believe that doing so is the right policy.

We sometimes have different roles. There will be times when the appropriate policy for Norway is to challenge the accepted wisdom in a way larger powers, including the United States, cannot or will not do. An example, in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, Norway could offer a secluded place for the parties to negotiate and hammer out the Oslo accords. Norway offered places to meet, facilitated the process, and ensured secrecy. The parties knew that they did not have a stake in the substance of the agreement; that we could offer ideas rather than advice; but that we were also close allies of the U.S. on whom the main responsibility for supporting

the implementation would be placed.

Based on the trust established between the parties to the conflict, the U.S. and Norway, we were requested to chair the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee (AHLC). The coordination mechanism for assistance to the Palestinians. This assignment has continued for two decades. It continues irrespective of changing Norwegian governments. The fact that Norway is able to talk to representatives of all shades of Palestinian politics is an asset. The fact that Norway enjoys trust in all camps and has short chains of command and can thus be flexible with adjustments when needed is also essential. The fact we are among the biggest donors is less important for our role.

The last principle I want to highlight is the importance of inclusiveness. Norway seeks to be a consistent advocate for the inclusions of local communities and civil society, and their critical role for ensuring sustainable peace. Concrete projects that provide the peace dividend and help to build trust and confidence are important. In Somalia, Norway supported the mayor of Mogadishu in putting up streetlights when al-Shabaab was pushed out of the city. Almost overnight, children were back in the streets playing football, a clear illustration of the dividends of peace.

The inclusion of women in peace and reconciliation processes is crucial. Women make up half of the population in most countries, but more in countries in conflict. They suffer some of the worst consequences of conflict, and their concerns need to be addressed in the peace process. The absence of women at the negotiating table means less discussion of issues affecting women and girls. Sexual violence, abuse, and maternal health are just a few of these issues.

But women do not only speak for women. They also bring to the table questions and concerns that are of importance to the entire population, such as land issues and issues of livelihoods. Ensuring the participation of women is also a question

of justice. Women have the same rights as their fathers, sons, and brothers.

In Afghanistan, we speak with women's organizations about their expectations for Afghan reconciliation efforts with the Taliban. Norway is helping these organizations to strengthen their negotiating skills to prepare for participation in reconciliation. Together with these Afghan women, the Georgetown University Center for Women, Peace, and Security and my U.S. and African colleagues, I will host an international high level symposium on the situation for women in Afghanistan beyond 2014 this autumn in Oslo. It is vital that we work together to help Afghanistan safeguard the progress made in these areas and to ensure the participation of women in any peace talks. Without the participation of women, not only development of democracy but also peace and stability will suffer.

Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to conclude by acknowledging that peace and reconciliation work is not clear cut but full of dilemmas. In Norway, too, we are confronted with questions that go to the core of our values and identity and that challenge the national consensus.

Let me mention three very different examples. The international community, including Norway, is at times faced with the dilemma of whether or not to engage with extremely violent groups who target civilians and whose political motives are either undefined or difficult to understand, let alone accept. For example, al-Shabaab in Somalia is a case in point. My inclination is to say that we should be prepared to enter into dialogue, even with groups such as al-Shabaab if and when we detect a willingness on their part to engage politically. We know that a willingness to enter into dialogue does not in itself lead to agreements, surrender, or cessation of hostilities. However, knowledge and dialogue are critical in the long run for managing these and a host of other complex security challenges. Let me emphasize that we are impartial but not

neutral when it comes to fundamental human rights.

This takes us to the next dilemma, that of peace and justice. The next agenda item in the Colombia peace talks on victims is one of the most difficult, but finding a way to safeguard the victim's right to truth, justice, and reparation is essential in order to achieve a sustainable and legitimate peace. An agreement that provides for blanket amnesties for the most serious international crimes, such as crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide will not be accepted by the Colombia people or by the international community.

The third and last dilemma is the question of whether financial resources should be used on mediation when the likelihood of success is small and results are difficult to measure. To that I would say that peace and reconciliation work is not very costly in relative terms. If you take into account the costs of military engagement or the negative impact the conflict has on development, you will find that mediation is a cost effective tool for promoting development and security.

Ladies and gentlemen, peace and reconciliation is not a quick fix. It is not always a comfortable space to be in, and it needs to be seen as an integral part of the foreign policy toolbox. Nevertheless, I would like to turn the question around and ask whether we can afford not to try.

Thank you.

(Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Mr. Foreign Minister, that was a remarkable set of remarks and very challenging to cover so much of the world as you did, and I know others are going to have questions that probably bear down on one country or another. I'm just going to ask one question to get the conversation going, but I'm going to ask about the problem that you said was perhaps the hardest and certainly at this point the

most tragic, or at least the most violent, which is Syria. And I thought you were very, very, again, heartfelt, very pithy in how you listed the various dilemmas, challenges, tragedies of Syria. And when I remember those, and then I go through your list of priorities and guiding principles for Norway, the importance of dialogue with the occasional importance of using force, the need for patience, the need to catalyze the process but to include the parties themselves, and then finally, to put this in a broader context, not to do peace and reconciliation in a vacuum, it leads me to wonder what you think the key next step would be in Syria. So it's a very hard question. But is this a case now where we need to use more force as an outside international community? Is it a case where we need to be more inclusive about the parties? You mentioned we may have to do a deal with some people we might not prefer to as a matter of reality. Is this a case where we just need to be patient and let the war burn on for another six or 12 months because there's no plausible way that it can be brought to a successful conclusion? So again, it's an extremely hard question. And I want to thank you for the way your presentation helped me identify these questions, but of course, one could imagine different next steps, different policy prescriptions, and I wondered if you had calm in your own mind, or as the government of Norway, to a specific proposal that you thought was the most promising at this juncture.

MR. BRENDE: Thank you for that question. The situation Syria has not become any less complicated with the situation that has now unfolded in Iraq. And if someone had said a month ago that you could be in a situation where ISIS would have partly control from Aleppo in the western part of Syria to important cities in Iraq, people would seriously question your knowledge about the region. This shows how fast this is changing.

I, also, in my manuscript, mentioned that on Syria I underlined the strong

responsibility and the support that you have given the U.N. in this, and that was not a coincidence. I think Syria is a question for the Security Council of the U.N. It is very sad that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we can see a humanitarian catastrophe with no access in any areas for humanitarian assistance and also no real willingness in the Security Council to rise to the occasion and take the responsibility to stop this appalling humanitarian catastrophe.

We put probably some of the best people in the world on this. First, former Secretary General Kofi Anan. Then, Lakhdar Brahimi, a friend and one of the most skilled people in this in the world. He resigned. And now the secretary general is putting his thinking cap on how to move this forward. Personally, I think there has to be a political solution at this point, and that's the only viable one for Syria. I think there were other options at an earlier stage without going much into that because that's history, but to make a deal and to break a deal in Syria now, I think it makes sense for the secretary general to call on important actors like Russia, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, and Turkey to sit down. Did I mention Saudi Arabia? Yeah. To sit down and just assess the different alternatives. I think it needs to start there and to just check the willingness to address the elephant in the room.

It should be, of course, based on Geneva I and Geneva II, but everyone has, of course, to show flexibility in negotiations, but there are red lines also in this. People with a lot of blood on their hands are, of course, not the solution for the future, but at the same time, we also know from Iraq what happens if a leader does not include an important part of the population. When Maliki has known for years, not seriously reached out to the Sunni minority, and it's 25 percent of the people and there were more moderate people in the Baath Party. There were even more moderate people in the former Saddam Hussein army. I think if the Kurds, the more moderate Sunnis, had been

integrated in interaction, I think things could have been different, and the polarizing politics has not been helpful. With pressure from the U.S., and also now from -- hopefully from Iran -- I learned that there is no (inaudible) considering also bringing Iran into that equation. I think that can make sense.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you.

Well, I'm going to open it up. We've got about 15 minutes, and welcome very much your questions for the foreign minister. Please wait for a microphone, identify yourself, and then if you could just limit yourself to one question, please, that would be great.

So let's start here with the woman in the blue blouse, and then right after, the gentleman behind her. Here in the fifth row, I think, or the fourth row, up front.

MS. SANCHEZ: Good afternoon, Jimena Sanchez from the Washington Office on Latin American and former Brookings employee.

First, I'd like to extend an incredible thank you to Norway for the important role it is playing in the Colombia conflict. It's really exceptional and wonderful. I would add to some of the dilemmas that one of the biggest problems is how do you resolve a conflict where you have such a great deal of illegal financing that really makes the parties imbalanced and also where the actors are on the foreign terrorism list.

In any event, I would like to ask you what do you think the role should be in terms of U.S. foreign policy changes towards Colombia now that we are more than likely to see this process moving forward?

MR. O'HANLON: So, would you like to take that one or get a couple of them at a time?

MR. BRENDE: I feel that we have support from the U.S. for this facilitator role that Norway has asked to take on. With the reelection of President Santos



now, I think he's got the mandate to continue the peace process, both with FARC and ELN. As you were saying, there is a lot of very different questions still on the negotiating table. This whole nation of impunity, how to -- I think this is something that has to be addressed. Also, as you indicate, all the illegal money being -- the monies that are available for financing and the drug issue and also serious initiatives for changing from then cocaine -- cocoa productions to ordinary agriculture production will be a major issue where the international society has to contribute.

But I am not an expert on the U.S. role here, so probably someone else is better equipped to answer this -- Mr. Talbott or someone else, but we have throughout this process informed the U.S. on how it's moving forward.

MR. O'HANLON: Another question. Yes, sir. Here in the fifth row. Wait for the microphone, please.

MR. MALIK: Hello. My name is Qudus Malik, and I'm not a former Brookings employee, but I'm a current husband of a Norwegian citizen.

Thank you so much, sir, for your remarks. I had a quick question about sectarianism. If you look at a lot of the conflicts, whether it's in Nigeria, with Boca Haram or Congo, the Middle East, Pakistan, sectarian differences play a really important role. Even what ISIS did, they picked out the Shias from the troops and killed them. How do you -- how do the guiding principles account for sectarianism, and I guess the only meaningful way to really address sectarianism is provide for religious freedom. So I was just curious what Norway's position on that was.

MR. BRENDE: Can I take a couple more?

MR. O'HANLON: Okay. A couple more questions.

Let's go ahead and take the woman right behind and then we'll move up front.

MS. BLOOM: Hi, I'm Erin Bloom. I'm from the Public International Law and Policy Group. Thank you for being here.

You spoke about Norway's work with Myanmar and remember, we saw a split in the ethnic groups between those who wanted a cease fire before the political dialogue and vice versa. What do you see Norway's role in navigating a split within one side and not just in Myanmar but globally?

MR. O'HANLON: And then we'll take one more in this round and see if we have time for a final round after that.

So here in the second row, please. The gentleman in the jacket.

QUESTIONER: I am Dr. (inaudible) with (inaudible). Thank you very much for such an insightful presentation.

My question pertains to the region of Saltasia, where you mentioned about Afghanistan as well. Your central test was engagement, focus, patience, short-term, long-term, but peaceful negotiations which are failing there and the military -- Pakistani military has taken the action against the Taliban actively there having raids and killing them and fighting. How can the international community and your country contribute to bring peace and stability in that region? Because all that region is virtually inflamed. The entire region is inflamed and in that context I would like to get your feeling on this issue. Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Over to you.

MR. BRENDE: Thank you. I agree that there are still major challenges in Afghanistan, but also in neighboring countries like, for example, Pakistan. On Afghanistan, I think we should -- the elections, both the rounds have gone a lot better than anticipated I have to say. It's, of course, now exciting to see who will win, be the winner in the second round, but it is very interesting to see that both of the candidates

have said that in 24 hours they will sign a basic security agreement with the U.S. and then you will also have this SOFA agreement.

And Afghanistan, of course, is very complex. There have been major developments, but there have been also staggering investments in (inaudible). There are still severe problems, like, for example, on the opium production that has been increasing, not decreasing. For example, in the education field, there were one million children school in 2001, and almost none of them of them girls. Now, there are eight million children in school in Afghanistan and 42 percent of them are girls. And this is what I mention also in my speech. We just need to make sure that the positive developments that we have achieved is not compromised. Girls should continue to go to school in Afghanistan. Women should actively have the right to participate. What we have seen in the health sector is also very positive. So if there are talks with Afghanistan, talk with Taliban from the new president, I think a priority has to be an agreement on keeping and security those positive developments.

On religious freedom, I think religious tension and interface dialogues and all this, this is crucial. But no, it is not only conflicts between different religions, there's also now in the Middle East, unfortunately, we see this big challenge between Shias and Sunnis.

It was very touching when I was in Ankara a week ago and I spoke to young people and they just underlined, you know, 30 years ago, people were not conscious about whether there were Shias or Sunnis and all this. This has changed and it has gone to the worse. And how is it possible to reconcile and get back to where we were? I agree with you, this is a major challenge of our time.

On Myanmar, when I was in the Parliament in the '90s, I headed this group of international parliamentarians for a free and democratic Burma. There were

hundreds of parliamentarians all over the world, and I wouldn't have imagined that developments could have gone so fast in Myanmar. The fact that Ann Senser, she's now an elected member of parliament, I don't think even we could have imagined four years ago. Of course, it's not perfect, but this is where my strong belief, and as I mentioned in my speech, nothing succeeds like success. If the start is good, and of course, the constitution should be changed and there are things that need to happen in Myanmar, but we know from history when a positive development starts it as a tendency of at least at the scale we're seeing now in Myanmar, done right I think it has a tendency of ending in a good way.

MR. O'HANLON: Excellent.

Let's do a couple more questions if you have a minute and then we'll wrap up here.

So the woman in the black jacket here in the fifth row. And then David in the back.

QUESTIONER: (Inaudible) from Finland and interning at the Atlantic Council.

You spoke on the next steps in the Syrian crisis and how that could be solved, and you mentioned how including Iran and other international actors would be important, but at the beginning of this year, the U.N. actually disinvited Iran from the negotiations and from their previous efforts to reach peace. So what do you think are the chances that we should establish negotiations where -- which would be more inclusive and whether that could be instrumental in reaching peace?

MR. O'HANLON: And the last question will be for David Sedney, and he's sitting right behind Kai Eide. We should recognize the Norwegian diplomat who did so much for Afghanistan as the special representative. Anyway, we're all very --

MR. BRENDE: And his fantastic book on Afghanistan.

MR. O'HANLON: Yes, indeed.

MR. BRENDE: When I was secretary general of Red Cross in Norway, I gave that book as a gift to all the senior management of the Red Cross, and after Christmas I just checked that all of them have read it.

MR. O'HANLON: Very nice.

MR. SEDNEY: I will second the admiration for Ambassador Eide.

My question, Mr. Minister, is a little closer to home and more focused on the peace than the reconciliation side. In 2008, your neighbor Russia used military force to take advantage of a complex situation in Georgia to essentially change the political dynamic there. In 2012, your neighbor Russia again used military force in a very sophisticated way to take advantage of a -- I'm sorry, in 2014, used a complicated situation in Ukraine and used a very sophisticated set of tools, both military and nonmilitary, to change the borders in Crimea as you mentioned.

So in looking ahead, what is Norway's view on how to either control or to make Russia more peaceful or however you might want to define it because as you pointed out, this kind of violence in Europe is something that's not been seen for a while, but is it something that's going to continue?

MR. O'HANLON: Do you want one more or is that enough?

MR. BRENDE: Well, on the last one, I'll take another one, but it's too tempting on how to control or is it possible -- how to control Russia. It reminds me about the old Margaret Thatcher story with Denis Thatcher walking along with Sharon Cross and went into a bookstore and they went to the information desk and he asked the person behind the desk, "Do you have a book on how to better control your wife?" And the person said, "Sir, fiction is upstairs."

But on the question of controlling our neighbor, Russia, and Norway has a border with Russia, so many of us have spent some time in Russia visiting many times, I would say that a good start is that Russia again starts to comply with international law. I think this is a prerequisite for dealing with any nation in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. What we do have to face is that there is no asymmetric warfare going on in the heart of Europe. There are no tanks rolling over the border. It's quite sophisticated, but acceptable measures taken. We saw this in Crimea. There were on Russian soldiers there and no Russian interference until the two chambers of the state Duma decided that it was part of Russia.

So more seriously, I would say that I think that the correct third phase of sanctions already have worked in the sense that there is not likely with Russian innovation in Ukraine. There is not in Eastern parts. It is not very likely that Russia will go from Crimea to Odessa and all the way over to Transnistria. What we need to work on though, and Poroshenko needs to find, is a modus operandi based on the territorial integrity of Ukraine. He needs to find a modus operandi with Putin that is in the interest of the Ukraine, but of course, supported by the west and all of us. And he has to start undergoing serious reforms because if the reforms are not taking place, I think that will complicate the full matter.

I was in Poland a week ago celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first and free elections and the solidarity and, you know, the numbers are striking in the sense that in 1989, the GDP per capital in Poland was the same as in Ukraine, and now it's three times higher in Poland. Of course, there have been some investments from the E.U. in Poland, but even taking that into account, we know that good governments, anticorruption, and economic reforms do matter. But we have to hold Russia accountable and we also have to show that not sticking to international law comes at a

cost, and I think the depreciation of the ruble, the outflow of capital, hopefully has sent a message, so we will try in the post-Cold War period, to get Russia back on the track where they comply with the agreements they have committed to.

On the question of the Syrian crisis, the challenge in Montreux as you mentioned, it was decided after pressure against the secretary general of the U.N., Ban Ki-Moon, as we remember vividly, I remember Iran was not invited to the negotiating table since they were not accepting the principles of Geneva I. What I said, I think now informally there should be talks among the countries I mentioned to establish a kind of framework on how to move forward. And things are changing very fast now. As we heard, I think there even were talks between Riyadh and Tehran very, very informally. I don't think confirmed by any of the two countries. Today, I saw my colleague, Secretary Kerry, also mentioning not excluding having talks with Iran on the situation in Iraq.

So I think the numbers and the situation is so bad that we have to look into all available options to end this appalling humanitarian catastrophe and we have to look at the support of the military action that needs to be taken for Maliki's side to end ISIS controlling important parts of Iraq.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, you've already given us a great deal to think about, and we've kept you longer than we promised, so let me just ask everyone to join me in thanking you very much.

MR. BRENDE: Thank you.

(Applause)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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