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**Madeleine K. Albright Global Justice Lecture
The Hague, Netherlands
Wednesday, June 17, 2015**

Thank you, Abi, for that very kind introduction.

It was almost exactly four years ago that I participated in the launch of The Hague Institute for Global Justice with my dear friend Jozias van Aartsen, so I am thrilled to see how quickly the institute has established itself as a leader in its field.

This success has much to do with the vision of Mayor van Aartsen, and the determined leadership of another close friend, Abi Williams.

So congratulations to you both. I wish you much continued success.

Let me also say how deeply honored I am that The Hague Institute and Brookings have come together to establish the Madeleine K. Albright Global Justice Lecture – and I want to be clear that no, I did not pick out the name.

Like the institute itself, my hope is that this lecture series will help disseminate the high-quality research which policy-makers require, while illuminating the everyday struggles which people confront across the globe.

I also hope that it will reflect a practical approach to these issues.

In that spirit, my remarks today will discuss justice not as an abstract concept, but rather something that makes a tangible and positive difference in people's lives.

In part, I take this perspective out of necessity, for I am not a legal theorist.

I am, however, sometimes referred to as “the mother of all lawyers.”

The reason is that two of my daughters are attorneys, as well as two sons-in-law.

This means that, whenever our family gets together, everyone talks at once.

I do sometimes feel as though I should have been compensated for my time in government with a law degree, however, because virtually every major foreign policy initiative we undertook had a legal side to it.

That was true whether we were conducting peace negotiations, exploring new ideas on arms control, or bargaining with Canada about whose fishermen should be allowed to catch the most salmon.

The end of the Cold War contributed to the increased focus on law in foreign policy, because traditional structures were falling apart and new rules had to be established.

Consider, for example, the case of the former Yugoslavia.

In 1993, I took office as America's permanent representative to the United Nations.

At the time, a war was raging in Bosnia, where a UN peace mission was failing and atrocities were being committed every day.

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I was among those who said that we should create an international tribunal here at the Hague to hold the perpetrators accountable.

Many ridiculed the idea and most predicted the court would fail.

After all, Bosnia was not Nuremberg, where the suspects were in custody before the Court was formed.

In Bosnia, the chief suspects were still in positions of authority; in fact, they were winning the war.

With the fighting still going on, the Tribunal's investigators had a hard time interviewing witnesses and gathering evidence.

But I still believed in the Court.

I could not accept that, in the last decade of the 20th century, we would sit by and watch ethnic cleansing and mass rape perpetrated with impunity in the heart of Europe.

Early in 1994, I visited a mass grave near the Croatian city of Vukovar.

Serbs controlled the area at the time and did not allow excavation.

What I saw was a field of rusted refrigerators and scraps of farm equipment.

But we suspected – rightly, it turned out – that beneath the soil were the bodies of 200 hospital patients who had disappeared some months previously.

I met later with local Serb leaders.

They did not deny the existence of a mass grave.

What puzzled them was why anyone would care.

After all, they said, there were many such graves, and there had been many previous wars.

Obviously, we are all human and will never achieve perfect justice.

But I believe that every time an extremist leader is tried in court and punished for ordering a massacre, or a military officer for burning a village, or a paramilitary thug for abusing a woman, the rule of law is strengthened and the chance that such behavior will be repeated is diminished.

So I am proud that UN members stood up for the Tribunal during its difficult early years.

The Tribunal, like any such institution, is imperfect, but it has won more than seventy five convictions, established a vital precedent for prosecuting humanitarian crimes, and laid the foundation for an International Criminal Court.

Not only that, the tribunal's indictment of Slobodan Milosevic helped end that dictator's hold on power.

During my years in office, the Balkans were a major focus.

But they were not the only arena where justice itself was on trial.

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My worst day as secretary of state was August 7, 1998, when terrorist explosions struck our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

Hundreds of people were killed, including twelve Americans.

Within a matter of days, we had captured several suspects who made it clear that Osama bin Laden was behind the attacks.

The question for us was whether to consider this a law enforcement matter demanding a judicial response.

Or a military matter in which the use of armed force was justified.

We decided it was both.

We proceeded to prosecute the conspirators we had captured.

But we also launched dozens of cruise missiles at bin Laden's training camp, killing a number of his top lieutenants and failing to hit him, we think, by only a matter of hours.

We sought international help in identifying and freezing terrorist funds.

And we used a combination of law enforcement and intelligence to detect and prevent many other terror attacks, including a plan to bomb Los Angeles.

Since the 9/11 attacks, we have heard a lot more about the global war on violent extremism – which some describe in religious terms.

But this struggle is not about beliefs; it is about behavior.

The law does not care what people think.

The law cares about what people do.

And when terrorists fly airplanes into buildings or blow up subway trains, they are trying to destroy the very foundations of a society based on the rule of law.

We cannot let them succeed.

Our task, collectively, is to ensure that they are held accountable to the law.

In some cases, as in Afghanistan, that has required military action.

More often, it will require the use of judicial and law enforcement means to identify and apprehend terrorist suspects.

But that task is made harder by the chaos and turmoil now ripping apart much of the Middle East and North Africa.

When I was secretary of state, I sometimes indulged in a habit that I had developed as a professor of trying to explain foreign policy in visual terms.

Whenever I wanted to discuss Europe, I brought along a chart that showed all the different political and economic institutions that had been established on that continent.

With all the overlapping circles and lines, the chart looked as if it had been drawn by a kitten set loose in a string factory.

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I called it the “Euromess” chart because it was so confusing and even joked that to understand it you had to be a genius – or French.

I also talked about the world in terms of the rings of Saturn which, I must admit, drew some strange looks.

My idea was that the international system could be compared to the solar system with all the nations circling around like planets in their orbits, held in place by a shared commitment to law.

At the same time, there were rogue states and terrorist groups doing everything they could to disrupt the regular order.

Like the Rings of Saturn, they were simultaneously parts of the system and outside it.

What is dangerous is that advances in technology have made it more and more possible for those who want to wreck the system to cause enormous damage.

The rings are expanding in scope and gaining ever sharper edges.

This is the great challenge we face today in the Middle East and North Africa, where extremist organizations are sprouting up in areas where governing institutions and the rule of law are weak or non-existent.

In some cases, they are offering basic services and pseudo-courts, providing a semblance of order – even if it is a tyrannical one.

In this evolving terrorist landscape, no group has gained more infamy than ISIS – which calls itself the Islamic State, but is neither Islamic nor a state.

Many in the region now call them *Daesh* – and since they hate that name, that’s what I have decided to call them as well.

I have also decided that the rise of *Daesh* and other groups is both a symptom and a cause of the broader crisis in the region.

And because extremism is a multi-faceted problem, it will require a comprehensive solution.

Over the long-term, the international community must help the people of Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen build institutions that support both peace and justice.

Although each of these countries faces unique problems, one thing they share in common is that they are deeply divided along ethnic, religious and tribal lines.

If they are to become stable, trust must grow among the various factions.

But trust is based on law.

It is based on knowing that if you play by the rules, others will be required to do so as well.

It is based on confidence that violence will be punished, courts will be fair, elections will be free, and the rights of minorities respected.

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I have seen many yardsticks used to measure progress in the region but, for me, the key questions relate to law.

Do people accept the authority and legitimacy of the government?

Do they have faith in the legal system?

Do they feel safer or less safe when they see a policeman?

Until these questions can be answered satisfactorily, the situation will remain unsettled and a source of concern to us all.

Of course, these aren't the only legal questions whose answers will determine the future stability of the Middle East and other regions of the world.

There is, for example, the question of who has the right to build nuclear weapons.

Under existing law, five countries are allowed to have nuclear weapons while all nations are encouraged to use nuclear power for peaceful purposes.

This system was set up more than four decades ago and, for a long time, it worked.

Many countries that could have built nuclear warheads decided not to do so.

More recently, however, two problems have arisen.

First, India and Pakistan have chosen to remain outside the treaty regime and have openly built nuclear arms.

Second, North Korea and Iran have misled UN agencies about the scope and extent of their nuclear activities.

In the case of Iran, an extraordinary diplomatic effort is underway to reduce tensions and to develop arrangements that both Tehran and the world community can accept.

In the case of North Korea, the issues are even more complicated because the government there is not just thinking about building nuclear weapons; it has already done so.

This October will mark fifteen years since I went to North Korea to negotiate with that country's enigmatic leader, Kim Jong-il.

Our talks were conducted in Pyongyang, perhaps the strangest city on earth.

When I met with Kim Jong-il, I found a man of considerable confidence and truly amazing puffed up hair.

To appear taller, I wore heels. So did he.

His primary goal was to normalize relations with the United States.

I told him that would not be possible unless he agreed to limit his weapons programs.

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He said he was sure that an agreement could be reached, and we made considerable headway before the Clinton administration left office and we ran out of time.

As you might suspect, the Bush administration thought that a different strategy might achieve better results.

It tried to isolate Pyongyang, which didn't work because Kim Jong-il was far more worried about appearing weak than about being isolated.

Today, with Kim Jong-il's enigmatic son in charge, the situation appears no closer to being resolved, but looking to the future, we know that much depends on whether nuclear policy is subject to the rule of law or to no rules at all.

The same is true for many of our other major security challenges.

For example, in Afghanistan, the United States and NATO have been working for nearly 14 years to strengthen the central government and to defeat extremist violence.

A big problem has been the failure of the government in Kabul to establish an effective legal system.

As a result, much of the economy depends on illegal drugs; the police have a reputation for corruption; and many Afghans cooperate with terrorists because they don't see any other choice.

In the coming years, Afghanistan's success will depend in large part on whether the government can be counted on to observe and to enforce the law.

I am hopeful that progress can be made on this front because Afghanistan's new president, Ashraf Ghani, understands from his own training as a World Bank economist that legal rights are essential to peaceful development.

A country such as Afghanistan is fortunate to have a leader who believes in rule of law.

Unfortunately, there are many important countries that lack such leaders – including Russia.

By invading and annexing parts of Ukraine, President Putin has ignored international law.

And through his attacks on his enemies, including civil society and the free press, Putin has turned Russia's domestic laws into a tool of repression.

President Putin's actions, and the actions of many leaders of his ilk, remind us that while law can provide the moral basis for a just and humane society, the imposition of unjust statutes create a platform for tyranny.

In a free society, a citizen's duty is to obey the law.

In a repressive one, duty may point in a different direction.

The list of men and women who spent time in jail for violating the wrong kind of laws includes some of our greatest heroes: Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King Jr., Vaclav Havel, Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi.

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That's why our statutes must be shaped – and enforced – with the interests of true justice in mind.

We must strive for rule of law, not rule by law.

Of course, these principles are easier to articulate than to implement.

Lawyers are trained to argue every side of any case and the powerful are in the best position to see that their side is fully represented – but justice demands both fairness and consistency in separating right from wrong.

After half a millennium of international law, we have made important progress toward that goal, but we are still a long way off, and at times face serious setbacks.

The world is, to put it mildly, a mess. We are grappling with an unprecedented set of problems, and if there is one thing that all of the challenges I have mentioned today have in common, it is that they do not fit into neat categories of justice issues, or security issues.

Rather, they stand at the noisy intersection of justice *and* security – and I believe more and more of the world's focus in the years ahead will be on grappling with the complicated linkages between the two.

Making global governance deliver on security and justice is a monumental task – one that has been the focus of a Commission, supported by The Hague Institute along with their partner the Stimson Center, that I have co-chaired with Professor Ibrahim Gambari.

Yesterday, the Commission presented its report, called *Confronting the Crisis of Global Governance*.

In it, we presented a number of recommendations which will be key to advancing an international system that simultaneously delivers security and justice. Our goal is to strengthen the mutually reinforcing links between these two fundamental ideas.

We took a special look at three areas which pose particular challenges in this regard – including the rise in violence linked to state fragility and weak governance, the growing threat posed by climate change, and the challenges and opportunities presented by a hyper-connected global economy.

While we made a number of specific recommendations, if I were to step back and elucidate a broader theme of our project, it is that those responsible for international justice must work together more closely and cooperate more effectively with those responsible for international security.

What happens too often today is that institutions with a focus on security do not pay enough attention to the imperative of justice, which is central to how conflicts can be brought to an end.

Indeed, justice broadens our understanding of true, lasting security by infusing it with principles of fairness, equality, and inclusive governance.

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Meanwhile, those institutions focused on justice can be overly legalistic, failing to move beyond the world of international law to implement concrete efforts to forestall or end wars.

Incorporating security into our thinking on justice can help lead to a practical focus on safeguarding individuals and their institutions, and lend these efforts a greater sense of urgency.

Going forward, we must break down the divisions between these two, and embrace a vision of justice and security that is practical, interconnected, and achievable.

There is no better place to begin such an effort than the Hague, and there is no better time to begin than now.

I have now been out of office longer than I was in it – more than fourteen years.

In that time, I feel as if I have done a little bit of everything.

I have started a business, returned to teaching, served as chair of America's National Democratic Institute, written five books, and been involved in task forces on everything from the need for inter-religious dialogue to the prevention of genocide.

In the process, I have traveled to almost every corner of the globe.

But wherever I go, and whatever I do, the one theme that follows me is the necessity of security and the importance of justice under the law.

Law establishes the framework for political organization, commercial activity, and social relations.

It defines the balance between collective and individual rights.

It establishes a connection between each of us and all of us.

It is, in short, the cornerstone of civilization.

If that cornerstone is to bear weight, it must have the integrity that comes from legitimacy, consistency, accessibility, and fairness. And such integrity can only flourish in conditions of peace and security.

Building such a cornerstone requires a united effort, and it takes time.

Four thousand years ago, a Babylonian leader by the name of Hammurabi issued a law code designed [and I quote] “to cause justice to prevail in the country, to destroy the wicked and the evil, and to ensure that the strong do not oppress the weak.”[unquote]

Hammurabi's quest remains a work in progress.

Through technology, we have transformed the world and yet we cannot claim that justice always prevails or that the strong no longer oppress the weak.

Which means that and we still have much to do.

We may differ in nationality, ethnicity, profession, and gender, but we have a common purpose – a shared mission to complete.

And so in closing, let me say once again that I am honored to be associated with the Hague Institute and its efforts to advance the cause of true justice.

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Thank you.

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