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Moderator:

MICHAEL O'HANLON
Senior Fellow and Co-Director, Center on 21st Century Security and Intelligence
The Brookings Institution

Panelists:

ANTHONY GAMBINO
Former USAID Mission Director in Congo

KRISTIN McKIE
Assistant Professor of African Studies and Government
St. Lawrence University

THE HONORABLE THOMAS PERRIELLO
Special Envoy, Africa Great Lakes Region
U.S. State Department

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. O'HANLON: Good morning, everyone, and thank you for joining us today. I'm Mike O'Hanlon from the Brookings Foreign Policy Program and our Africa Security Initiative; and I'm joined today by three very distinguished and knowledgeable individuals who are going to talk about the Great Lakes region of Africa and what we are seeing there today, and the important developments that are happening in real time across all three countries that we'll focus on, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Burundi. Burundi perhaps experiencing the most acute immediate crisis, but all three countries in very important moments in their political and security evolutions, all three facing possibilities and opportunities, but also at the same time being run by governments with leaders who are either well into a third term or considering a third term, or otherwise raising doubts about the notion that Africa will have limits and a true democracy system in which there is change of government, the kind of thing we fought through in this country in the 1930s and 1940s when we decided FDR should be last president to have more than two terms. But this issue is really now facing a number of countries in Africa, but the Great Lakes countries in particular. Of course there are also security challenges that link the countries. We all know about the ongoing troubles for 20 years or more in Eastern Congo and the way in which this interacts with conflicts within Rwanda and Burundi, the ethnic tensions, the ongoing challenges in those smaller nations as well as they try to deal with the Hutu-Tutsi divide in their politics.

So joining me -- and what we'll do today by the way is have a bit of discussion up here and then go to you in the second half of the period for your questions, and we'll finish about 11:20. Given the pace at which things are happening in the region we'll have to let Tom Perriello return to the State Department at that time. The Honorable Thomas Perriello is the President's Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Region of Africa.

He is a Virginian, a former congressman, a lawyer, who has worked a great deal on war crimes and child soldier and other related conflict issues in the Middle East, the Balkans, and West Africa. And we're just delighted to have him here today. He has worked for President Obama's State Department for a number of years, beginning with the Quadrennial Diplomacy and Development Review and then becoming the Special Envoy after that.

To his left is Kristin McKie, who is a Professor at St. Lawrence University in the great State of New York, also my home state, and currently on sabbatical at Notre Dame University. And she is a specialist in rule of law issues, especially focused on Africa, and also has thought a great deal about politics and elections, which of course are very, very closely linked with issues of the rule of law. And so we will hear from her as well.

And then my good friend Anthony Gambino. Tony and I were Peace Corps volunteers together in the former Zaire back in the early 1980s. He has had a distinguished career. Unlike me he really stuck with Zaire/DRC. He was ultimately the AID Country Director there in the early years of this century. In between he had done a number of jobs focused on Africa and/or DRC and the Great Lakes region, including working on the hunger caucus for the U.S. Congress, and a number of important posts. He's been affiliated with groups focused on human rights like Amnesty International. He's been a consultant for this region, thinking about issues of transition, democracy, and security. And he is really sort of my sensei -- to borrow a word from our Japanese friends -- on all matters concerning the Great Lakes.

And so we're going to begin really with just the big broad question and go down the row and ask for everyone's view. I guess maybe I will just go in order according to the seating starting with the Honorable Mr. Perriello. And really could you frame for us

how you see the issues today in these three countries? What's the basic situation in terms of security, what's the basic situation in terms of politics and elections?

MR. PERRIELLO: Sure. Thanks for organizing this event. Thanks to Brookings. We really believe right now is a time where more attention from Washington and more attention from around the world on the Great Lakes region is important. In the past it's gotten a great deal of attention, but with very legitimate concerns of Syrian refugees and other crises sometimes getting attention, particularly substantive attention is of great value, so we appreciate that, and certainly honored to be up here with my colleagues.

So I think it's important in some ways we do see in Burundi what we've talked about as being a bit of a cautionary tale of what happens when leaders try to hold onto power, change rules to stay in power. But I think it's also a reminder that if we go back even just about a year and a half that Burundi was seen as a bit of a success story. And I think when we're looking across the Great Lakes we do want to be planning for the worst because there are some scenarios that are very scary and some are quite close to happening. We'll talk about Burundi more. But it's also remember to keep an eye on hope, which is the people of the region including some of the heads of state, civil society leaders, others have done tremendous work over the last couple of decades to move countries from terrible conflicts, terrible divisions, into countries that are looking forward, that are looking to be defined by their future, by their economic opportunities. And I think that's a great story. I think we feel particularly about Democratic Republic of Congo being a country that's already seen strong GDP growth, though not necessarily shared as widely as some would like. People feel that about our own GDP growth here at home. But we see a country that really has nothing but upside potential in so many ways. But we see in Burundi how quickly that can turn, where you see a country that was relatively

stable, granted obviously still very poor in many ways, but so much work had been done to build up institutions. And I think one thing we see in Burundi is while no one right would be bragging about it as a success story, we do see that the 10-15 years of investments in things like the military as an institution and post ethnic reconciliation, may well be the only things that have prevented it from already going to full-fledged civil war. Whether or not that ultimately proves to be enough to prevent it from going that way, we may see -- and again President Nkurunziza has put down a particularly unhelpful five day ultimatum that ends this weekend, coupled with some of the most incendiary rhetoric yet from his Senate President that certainly has harrowing echoes of the worst period the region has known.

So when we look I think across the region right now, we say with our policy of respecting constitutional term limits, we really see Burundi as exhibit A on why -- what we're doing is offering people our best advice. They may or may not follow it, but if you look at -- you know, sometimes the people who whisper in your ear and tell you what you want to hear are not your best friends, they're actually your worst enemies. They're telling you what you want to hear instead of what you need to hear. And I think what we see in the region is an unbelievable opportunity to turn a historic page. We hear this from private sector investors, both in the country and outside in DRC all the time. If we can get through this election cycle, if we can get through the first democratic transition of power, wow, what we'll be able to see. You know, there are certain investments you make in infrastructure if you think you might have three to five years of stability versus thirty years of stability. So as we look across the region we know that Burundi is already a humanitarian crisis. Over 200,000 refugees have fled. We've already seen, depending on your counts, a couple of hundred or many more than that killed in various forms. And that includes people in police uniforms, whether police or not, rounding people up and

killing, but it also means neighborhood to neighborhood people lobbing grenades at police officers at night in the dark of night and killing members of the security forces.

So in Burundi, just to perhaps end with a quick around the horn, we see the next 48 hours is quite crucial with this ultimatum that's been put down. And we think right now is the time for leaders on both sides or all sides, it's not necessarily just two sides, to pull back from the brink, to give peace talks in Kampala a chance, and we think it's particularly important that some of the neighbors, really all the neighbors, whether they're closer to President Nkurunziza or closer to the opposition, to be saying, you know, we're not going to be there for you as your friends if you go towards mass violence. And we need to get the talks started in Kampala. Pretty much everyone agrees that's the only non violent way to find a solution out of this. And I will say some of the actors in the region who may have been more focused on how to score points against each other earlier in the process, I think the closer this gets to mass violence are more focused now on how the heck do we stop this thing from spiraling. And so I think in Burundi we just want to keep an eye on fact that however narrow the window is there is still a window left to pull back from the brink and get to the talks.

DRC, and I'm sure that we'll talk a lot more about this, you know, again we see lots of upside opportunity here. You have a president who has been through two terms, who has helped navigate the country from war into peace, who has seen two national elections, who has helped develop Kinshasa into a major modern developed city. There is lots to be proud of there, and President Kabila's legacy. And obviously we believe the most important closing note on that is to also be the first one to peacefully hand over power through democratic elections. You have a vibrant civil society, a vibrant political opposition, an independent media. And one of the things we see throughout is that regardless of whether one likes a particular candidate or not, that there is an

importance of protecting open political space. And that's really all we've said, that it's the voice of the Congolese people that should define the future. There's unbelievable courage, wisdom in that. It's not our job to decide who should be president; it is our hope to be a partner for having a good process.

And in Rwanda as well, while they're a year further out from elections, we have publicly condemned the efforts to change the constitution. President Obama has spoken specifically about the idea that any incumbent who is looking to change rules to stay in power we think that's the wrong direction. That's not pro stability, that's something that undermines stability. And that any country that believes that its stability rests entirely on one individual is a recipe for instability, as well as the issue of the importance of open political space.

So I'm sure we'll get into a lot more details, but as a quick around the horn, again, we want to plan for the worst and hope for the best, and there is a lot of planning going on right now.

MR. O'HANLON: Fantastic. That's a very, very good foundation for us to continue on. And I'll just turn in a second to Kristin and Tony, but again just to remind folks, I think most of you know, but Burundi has already recently had this election that gave the third term to its incumbent, and now we see a security crisis related to that. Both Rwanda and DRC have elections scheduled for next year and the question is will Kabila and Kagame run again, or will they heed advice and reconsider.

So, Kristin, over to you; love to hear your take on the broader region or any -- of course you're all going to be welcome to raise questions on any specific dimension of any one of the three countries, and certainly the panelists can do the same, but however you'd like to broach the general subject.

MS. McKIE: Great. Thank you, Mike, so much for the introduction and

thank you. It's really great to see so many people in the room interested in the region. I think that's heartening.

As Mike said the focus of my research and my expertise is on the rule of law, and specifically looking at when do constitutions come to matter, come to actually have teeth in Sub Saharan Africa. And this issue of presidents abolishing term limits has been, you know, one of the centerpieces of that research. And so I think what I bring is a more theoretical question about when and under what conditions are presidents able to abolish term limits. You know, we see instances in Malawi and Nigeria where presidents have tried but have not been able to lift term limit. And then we see instances of Uganda and then, you know, recently Burundi and elsewhere where they have been able to do that. And so I look at this to understand the general trends underlying this pattern in the continent. And what I've found is that it seems not really matter about level of democracy. It seems not to really matter about aid dependents or these other variables that might think would impact term limit challenges. What seems to really matter is, is there a viable opposition in the country. And that's because term limits at their base are insurance mechanisms. The government wants term limits in place because if they lose the next election or a future election they want to be sure they're able to run again in the future on a level playing field, that no one else has incumbent advantage. And so if you think about term limits as insurance mechanisms you can kind of start to see when they get lifted and when they're not.

Rwanda I think is a great example. There's really no viable opposition in Rwanda to Kagame's party, there's no reason then for them to keep term limits in place. If the party knows they're going to keep on winning with Kagame, or even without him, you know, why shackle themselves with the term limits. And so that raises interesting questions about then if terms are only kept in place where there's a viable opposition, is

there a way to focus on building viable opposition. And I think comes from not only opposition parties, but also civil society like you mentioned. And in a lot of countries the churches have been really instrumental in leading the charge against lifting term limits. And so a think that raises a question, are there sort of opportunities there to try to build up this resistance within society.

The thing that's also interesting to think about, why do presidents actually want to lift term limits. I think we kind of assume they just want to stay in power, this aspect of, you know, complete power corrupts, you know -- what is it, complete power corrupts completely -- I'm saying that wrong. Whatever the phrase is -- absolute power corrupts absolutely.

QUESTIONER: Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

MS. McKIE: That's what it is. But I think that's not necessarily the only reason behind these challenges. I think a lot of times it's the people behind the president, his family, his associates, especially business associates, who have been advantaged by having their patron at the top. And I get the sense that a lot of the push is coming to lift term limits is coming from the next level down of the presidents' cadre. And so I think that's also interesting. If there's a way to think about not only an exit strategy for the president, because a lot of times we talk about oh, if we could just give immunity to the presidents, that they're not going to face ICC trials, oh, if we can just get them the Mo Ibrahim prize and get $5 million, they'll step down. Again I think the reason those haven't worked is because that takes care of the president at the top, but not necessarily all of the people underneath who are very invested in this president staying in power. So I think that's also worth thinking about. As we try to approach, you know, just having private conversations with the president doesn't necessarily get to that next level down where the push to lift term limits might be coming from.

The other thing too which is interesting is I think it's hard to critique challenges to term limits mostly because pretty much every country we've seen that lifted the term limits has done so through proper democratic channels. They table a bill in parliament, they have a vote, and they amend the constitution. And I think, you know, we've heard statements from various president saying we play by the rules, right, we got rid of term limits through the democratic process, isn't this what you wanted, you know, us playing by the democratic rules. And so I think that's where it gets hard to really raise critiques because the process is being followed. Now as you and I both know, the issue is beneath the surface. Sure, the constitution is amended through a vote in parliament, but what's going on beneath the surface, what violence has been used to intimidate people, and especially judges, too, if the constitution court is involved. The intimidation can be there too. You know, what manipulations behind the scenes of, you know, bribing members of parliament, things like that. And so it seems to me that, you know, that also need to be more of a focus. And I think, as you were talking about, you know focusing on the rule of law, not just sort of big rule of law about constitutions, but the sort of underlying issues about violence, about intimidation and things like that is really key to focus on.

Along with that I think -- and especially looking to Burundi now that Nkurunziza has got the third term because of the vagueness, because of this kind of loophole in the constitution and the Arusha Accords, the other thing to be wary of, a lot of time presidents are able to extend their terms because the constitution is rewritten during their term in office. And this happened in Senegal. The reason Wade was able to run for a third term even though he lost last time was because the constitution was changed while he was in office. And then he's able to say well my term started again under this new constitution. So for me, Burundi, one thing to consider or one thing to watch out for,

is there going to be sort of a constitution review started during Nkurunziza's third term that will then let him and his party argue well under this new constitution now he gets two more terms and starts over again. And I think we can see that too in the DRC about the whole idea of there seems to be slippage right now delaying elections and things like that, again because a sort of weird clause in the constitution of the DRC that says the president stays president until the new president is elected. So as long as you delay and delay and delay, there's no sort of end almost to how long a president can sort of stay in power. So I think that's something to look forward to as well, or watch out for in the DRC, is there going to be some kind of constitutional review again that could reset the clock for Kabila. Because, as I said, with the viable opposition in the DRC I don't think he can actually lift term limits all together, but what are the other sort of tactics that can be used to certainly extend terms. And I think that can be things to watch out for in both these countries.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. That's a great way to frame it in broader comparative terms, and very helpful.

Tony, over to you, my friend.

MR. GAMBINO: Thank you very much, Mike. Thanks for doing this, thanks to Brookings for doing this. It turns out your timing is very good particularly in the context of what's going o in Burundi, as we heard from Special Envoy Perriello, and also the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

I'm going to focus what I say initially on the Democratic Republic of the Congo and on the term limits issues and some of the theoretical points that were just brought up. I think I'll give some specifics that fit in very well with what was just said. Unfortunately as Special Envoy Perriello made clear, we have multiple crises in the Great Lakes region right now, also in the immediately surrounding area. They're all on different

fuses, different time lines. But what I also want to say is I think here in Washington we have a crisis of American diplomacy. President Obama made bold clear statements on term limits just a few months ago in his speech at the African Union -- Mike referred to this. They're being ignored. We're watching the leaders of the states of central Africa publicly trample American policy aims on term limits. Burundi as has already been stated is in full crisis right now with fears of escalating violence now, this weekend, right now. Unfortunately U.S. policy was much too weak to dissuade President Nkurunziza earlier from moving to stay in power, and he has low led his country into greater violence, instability, and perhaps now even larger scale violence and chaos.

I'm going to say a little bit about Congo-Brazzaville, out of the region but a neighbor on the other side of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. President Sassou-Nguesso just called a snap referendum to break out of his term limits. The U.S., after the fact and too late, has called this publicly a "deeply flawed process". Okay, yes, but also another failure of American policy, and a slap, a hard slap to President Obama.

In Rwanda, yes, the constitutional process is under way. But in a society -- I'm not the only person saying this -- read recent State Department testimony, they say the same things -- a society without truly open discussion and free expression of ideas. This process as it is moving forward right now would amend the constitution to potentially give President Kagame another 17 years in power. You heard that right, 17 more years. What does that say about the statements that President Obama just made? Frankly, it shows them as seen by the leaders of the region as toothless and as meaningless.

That brings me to the Democratic Republic of the Congo. American policy on term limits looks to me to already be in tatters and then you add to that that Congo is in an electoral crisis right now. Now why is it in electoral crisis right now? As Mike said, the national elections are scheduled for next November, basically exactly one

year from now, but here's a rule of thumb to prepare for elections, all the things that need to be done in a huge country like the Congo, you need roughly one year. Yes, you can collapse it a little bit, but certain processes of voter registration and other things inexorably take a certain amount of time. What's been done to date to prepare for these elections, what's been done -- nothing, nothing. There's been an electoral commission operating. They have done nothing. And it gets worse. The two top officials of the Congo's electoral commission recently resigned. So the electoral commission charged with organizing elections today is headless and powerless. Now, what have we seen from President Kabila and many of the key members of his government regarding this round of elections? It's as regrettable as it is apparent that President Kabila and a clique of henchmen around him led by Vice Prime Minister Evariste Boshab have been doing everything they can to obstruct, delay, and undercut the holding of national elections on time. They've already been doing this. Judged by their actions to date, this group has only one aim, that aim is to keep President Kabila in power as long as possible so that they can continue to corruptly feed at the public trough, enriching themselves while impoverishing the vast majority of Congolese. Let me remind everyone Mike O'Hanlon and I were working on this for the 2011 elections. This same group in 2011 cynically said that it would be easy, a breeze, to prepare elections in six months. Those elections were catastrophically bad. This same group now, if you're following the press on the Congo, is saying oh my goodness, to have good elections we need two years, three years, maybe four years to do it right. And at the same time they're stifling free speech, harassing the population, harassing the opposition, repressing, doing everything they can to obstruct. This is bald faced cynicism on the part of President Kabila and these people. It's obvious, it's offensive, it's outrageous. It's a direct challenge to the Congolese people and to stated American policy and it needs to be countered.

Also in 2011, and this goes very much to a point just made, President Kabila changed the constitution rapidly to make it much easier for him to be reelected. And let's be clear, that was the only purpose the changed the constitution. On the surface it was done constitutionally via parliamentary votes. But the reality is that President Kabila paid large bribes to secure those votes. Is bribery constitutional? Is bribery acceptable? Of course it isn't. And we ended up with a process that betrayed the Congolese people.

So what does the U.S. have to think about doing now? Special Envoy Perriello made a strong statement, and I want to salute him here for the great work he's doing. I'm being critical of American policy, but in no way do I want to be critical of the great work that he and the people in his office are doing every day, and I encourage you to look at the statement he made before the House of Representatives just a couple of weeks ago. But now it's time to look clearly at what President Kabila's people are doing and think about what we need to stop it. And so I'm going to quote, if I can, something you said in your testimony. You said, "Given what is at stake with these next elections" -- he was referring to the Congolese elections -- "we" -- and of course he meant the United States government -- "should not resist using every tool available to support this historic electoral cycle." But to date, the U.S. has showered President Kabila with kind words without any public specificity about negative consequences for what he and his people are doing. So it's time now to be much more public and clear about one of those tools, and that's the use of sanctions. If Kabila doesn't change and doesn't commit to work hard for free and fair elections, that he will step down once his successor is duly elected as required by the constitution, that the U.S. will impose sanctions now against people who are obstructing the process. That means that in addition to what the Special Envoy can do, we need action by the Secretary of State and by President Obama himself. The

President has called President Kabila already. He needs to do so again soon, but this time I think we need some sticks along with some carrots. And so President Obama needs to tell President Kabila that if he does not move forward positively on organizing these elections, that his immediate family and closest political allies will be subject to U.S. sanctions. The U.S. has spent the last six months sweet talking Kabila and his cronies. It's time to show some seriousness to what the Special Envoy means when he says use every tool available to get these outcomes.

We've talked about the carrots available to President Kabila if he does the right thing, but now we have to be equally clear, publicly and privately, in the strongest terms and at the highest levels, that there will be a lot of pain if Kabila and the people around him continue to do the wrong thing. Obviously we have to do this in maximum coordination with like minded allies in Africa and in Europe.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you, Tony. Thank you, everyone. What I'm going to do now is have one more round for the panelists to add any further thoughts, any further detail, to respond to each other if they wish. I'm going to first mention that there are three questions that come to me listening to you. I'm not asking each one of you to address all three, but in the course of your responses to each other perhaps if you could keep them in mind. And then we'll go to you good folks in just a moment.

So on the issue of Burundi, of course I'd like just a little more background if possible on where we are. Many people in this room understand exactly why we're talking about a weekend crisis in Burundi, but perhaps a little more of the back story as well as a discussion of what policy options we have since that is imminent.

Also, in Rwanda, while we're talking about President Kagame now looking for a way to make Putin seem like Thomas Jefferson by comparison (laughter), nonetheless it does raise the very real question with Kagame, one of the most

complicated figures on the world stage today in my mind because -- again I'm not a specialist, but to me he looks like one of the great heroes of humanitarian intervention because he and his fellow RPF stopped the genocide, and also made Rwanda into an economic success story thereafter and prevented another eruption of violence. And yet now he risks having the second big phase of his political career be seen as the period when he became an autocrat. And the question I have is how does -- if you're trying to get inside of Kagame's mind, how do you persuade him that a fair election is not going to bring to power somebody who is going to reignite the sectarian and ethnic tension that led to the '94 genocide. That may or may not be his sincere concern, but it would certainly be a reasonable question to think through.

And then that leads to the question, let's just say that there are some cases where a person going for a third or fourth term, it's a more egregious affront to human decency and democracy than in other places. I mean maybe we should just think that every person who wants more than two terms a bad guy, but then I'm going to have to rewrite my history books about FDR and a few other cases. So we all know it's a little complicated to figure out exactly how make the case that two terms is enough, three terms is not only excessive, but meriting of sanctions against one's family. So how do we establish the political predicate, the legitimacy of Tony's idea? How do we say to Kabila, in your case in particular, going for a third term or just delaying the elections in such a way that you effectively have one, is so out of line that we're not just going to maybe cut the aid budget a little, we're going to sanction your family. Whereas with Kagame, you know, at least for one more term maybe we'll wink and not because we can't see an alternative. So how do you establish, how do you make that kind of a distinction?

So those are questions that are on my mind, but again don't feel obliged to respond to anything more than what you'd like to say anyhow.

Mr. Special Envoy, over to you.

MR. PERRIELLO: Sure. Well, it's always hard to follow the ever understated Tony Gambino. (Laughter) So I appreciate the tee up there.

Let me say a word about Burundi and then maybe circle back on a couple of the issues. So as noted before, President Nkurunziza a few days ago put out an ultimatum that basically said everyone must turn in guns, this is our last call before we will go and commence operations. The President of the Senate gave a speech that was leaked on line that he didn't know was being recorded in which he used the language of saying we must pulverize and exterminate, we must -- these are people whose only worth is in dying. There is a lot of -- and then, you know, talked about sort of house to house operations. So in all these situations I think there's a sense that -- and even independent of those speeches, I think all independent observers, of which there aren't a lot left in Burundi, have understood this to be getting closer and closer to a line where you're almost in a civil war or a failed state. We have a lot of lives at stake in Burundi. Again the African Union has spoken up with tremendous clarity over the last few weeks in particular about the need to get everyone to a dialogue table either in Kampala or in Addis. The Security Council backed that up and called on President Museveni to immediately resume the dialogue that had begun in various informal forms, but that need to get folks there.

As we all know, I mean every night that someone who is opposed to the government kills a police officer, that police officer has cousins and brothers and for them they're already in a war. And if you're on the opposition side and someone in a uniform has come around and pulled people out of a home and killed them, you're already feeling like you're in a war. And that person has brothers and cousins and others. So over the last several weeks you see that natural escalation that can take you to a breaking point,

but again we want to reiterate we're not to the breaking point yet. That's an excuse for leaders not to show leadership. There is still time in the next couple of days, maybe next couple of weeks, to pull back from that brink and say, you know what, we're not going to take our country in this direction, we are going to look for nonviolent means to try to solve the situation. As often happens in conflict dynamics, people are all going to pick their moment of what the first shot fired was. Obviously there has been a lot of international consensus, including at the AU, that the decision to go forward with the third terms was the trigger, the major trigger going forward. As I mentioned there was a coup attempt, but these are also long-standing disputes. I mean this really started as an internal split within the CNND-FDD. It was not a Hutu-Tutsi split, it was not even a CNND-FDD versus other parties split. It was an internal split within the party. And part of that was around an effort to use a legitimate parliamentary means to change a constitution, and President Nkurunziza couldn't get the support. And I think this goes back to being very clear about what constitutes legitimacy. This was just a failure. He didn't have the political support to go forward, even within his own party. And we'll come back to that in the DRC case because the number one thing that has I think DRC still on a path for the potential for this historic transition is not a matter of international policy, it's a matter of Congolese voices in politics, but also outside of politics that have so far said to every attempt President Kabila and his team have come up with to get off of that path, they've essentially shut that door. Now I think our policy and others have helped reinforce the idea that we need to stay on this path to historic constitutional elections, but if there is one thing I've learned from working not just overseas but in communities in the United States, people in those communities are always going to know more, be more dedicated, and see this through than the international community is going to be. And I think what you see overwhelmingly in Congo -- but also in the fact that this term limit policy has over 70 percent support

across Africa in the polling that's been done. The polling among the people, I mean I think it's like 78 percent. Now if you did that poll among heads of state in Africa my guess is you're going to get potentially an inverse result to that result. (Laughter) So we also have to think about who it is that -- you know, President Obama did not pick this policy out of thin air, he picked this policy based in -- and put a marker down because he knew this was something we keep hearing over and over again from people across the continent, and frankly across the world. He saw it as a constitutional scholar who looked at the tremendous leadership of a George Washington to say I'm not going to become that guy, because as a young nation, you know, we frequently hear from leaders well we're too young of a nation to -- we're not ready for that. And you think about whether or not one's listened to Hamilton recently and think in that context, what a transformative moment as a decision. So Burundi right now is on that brink.

But I do think partly while we are putting carrots and sticks on the table, and you've seen that, I think it's important that we want to be partners to both people in Africa and leaders in Africa, and not dictators. If a leader wants to wreck their country, there is often very little we can do on that. If a leader wants to work with us to make their country stronger, there's a lot we can do. And I think what we're seeing as well, and I do think this is where I would say -- not that I would necessarily disagree with much of what was said -- but I think we also have to take a slightly longer-term view. There are immediate issues that are going on and we need to be very serious about those. But I would say this, three months ago I think that there were leaders in the region and elsewhere who were looking at President Nkurunziza as a model, as a playbook. Oh, here's a guy who got away with it. I have asked some of them very directly now, would you want to be President Nkurunziza right now and not a single one has said yes. If you could go back a year and give President Nkurunziza advice would you give him the

advice to go this route? Not a single one of them has said yes. I won't tell you what they did say, but I will say not a single one of them has said yes. Nobody thinks Burundi is better off right now than a year ago, nobody things President Nkurunziza is better off than a year ago. Here is a guy where the government is in terrible economic shape, the country is in terrible economic shape, he is living under a tremendous fear. And again we've spoken out against all assassination attempts on all sides. This is a country that's in a very bad place. I don't think President Kabila or President Kagame look at this and say this is where we want to take our countries.

So when we think about that, and not to mention the fact that you already have EU sanctions and, you know, there may be more things that come in in terms of consequences. So these are smart people who care about their countries, they care about their families. And I think when we're looking at the situation what you're seeing is that actually maybe that advice they were hearing a year ago was good advice, but it's not something where we can come in and dictate to countries how that happens. We want to partner with them because we actually do genuinely care about the region and about these issues.

And I'll just end there with a legitimacy point. There are a lot of different forms of legitimacy in terms of how to go forward. President Obama has made clear that he thinks changing the rules, even under totally legitimate circumstances is a bad idea. That's his best advice. I happen to think it's excellent advice. In addition to that there are ways that are more and less legitimate in going forward. And I think what you saw again with President Nkurunziza was he failed at pursuing those legitimate means. President Kabila has also run into that problem. He has an unamendable constitution, it's unambiguous. The various efforts to use a census or trial balloons or the political dialogue, he hasn't built the support there. Now we want to keep working with everyone

to find a way to get on track to meet the constitutional deadline as we go forward.

So again I think that those who want to see more sticks, particularly from the United States, those are legitimate issues to raise. But again I think it's very important that actually the evidence that's coming together I think shows that this policy is one we're doing from a place of love and partnership and not from just wanting to lecture people.

MR. O'HANLON: And Kristin?

MS. McKIE: I think Mike does raise a good question about how can the U.S. make the case that, you know, two terms is great, three terms or more is too much. I think the tricky part is that this is not a new issue. In Namibia Sam Nujoma was the first to get an extension on term, and that was back in '99. So we've been dealing with this for 15 years in Sub Saharan Africa. And I think the history has shown that when presidents have extended or lifted term limits there hasn't been strong of a reaction from the U.S. Museveni has not had that much push back, and Cameroon and Gabon, all these other countries. So I think that current presidents looking at the third term issue can look around and say yeah, the U.S. has made statements before and maybe they've threatened sanctions before, but all these other presidents have been successful and they're still in power and they're doing just fine. And so I think it is hard to know how to frame the issue.

I think the other thing too that presidents consider is that even if they were to face sanctions like Tony said, they can get support from China, they can get support from elsewhere that might lessen the sting of those type of sanctions. And so I think it does make it tricky to know how to come out strongly against Kabila when he can say well why didn't you come out strongly against Museveni, why am I being targeted. And then it gets spun as then the U.S. targeting certain countries and what not. So I do

think the semantics are important, to think about how this is being framed, against kind of other historical cases.

MR. O'HANLON: Before I go on to Tony I'm just going observe that in Afghanistan, as a couple of my friends in the audience who also studied that country and have worked on it know well, we did feel very strongly about two terms to the point where Secretary Kerry spent a lot of time eliminating any doubt in President Karzai's mind about whether he should step down, and then really trying to midwife the election process which was very troubled, and yet wound up in a sort of okay place, knock on wood. And here of course we had all the implicit leverage that if you want to keep American security support and a very large amount of aid, presumably you don't want to go around your own constitution, your own democratic system. But there we did feel that we should take a fairly firm line and we made it pretty clear. In other cases -- anyway --

MR. PERRIELLO: Can I just come in on that analogy very quickly?

MR. O'HANLON: Please do.

MR. PERRIELLO: Because I think it was also relevant that when Karzai called that final loya jirga thinking he might get support for busting through that line, he didn't have the support, even in a form that he had actually created. So I think it is this combination of where we're very clear on our policy, but it's also policy that really represents the will of the people of that country who I think were extremely ready to move on from President Karzai.

MR. O'HANLON: Tony?

MR. GAMBINO: Well, that fits in very much with some of the points I want to say. First just a quick point in Burundi to say a little bit beyond what the Special Envoy said. I think it's also very important as he indicated briefly in his opening comments, to be very sensitive to the regional dynamics of Burundi's neighbors. There is

a deep political animosity now between Tanzania and Rwanda that is affecting how those two countries are thinking about what to do regarding Burundi. The relations between Uganda and Rwanda have been troubled for a long time. So the neighbors, who are playing a very important role in this, are not necessarily all together. And I know that inside that Special Envoy Perriello and others are trying to manage this, and I believe he actually alluded to this in a delicate way. And I hope that it's going better, because I think that's what I heard you say. But I know that that dynamic has not always been helpful in trying to move Burundi in a direction that we would all like to see it to go, away from violence, to avoid the brink.

I am not going to take your tempting bait, Mike, and say anything about how to persuade President Kagame; that's just too long a discussion. That's an important point and a very long discussion. But I am going to say something about Rwanda and Congo as relates to your third question. In Rwanda where they are scrupulously following a constitutional process, it becomes much more difficult as was indicated initially to go in and say it gets a little tough. You know, you're talking about vaguer things of people aren't expressing themselves. Well, they'd say we have these petitions, we'll show them to you. We have millions of petitions, here are the signatures, you want to verify them? Go out and verify them. What do you say there? Now I'm not saying you don't say anything, but it's delicate and I think it gets highly complicated to move to things like sanctions.

But in the Congo, just a few points to make. One, absolutely it makes no sense for the United States or any outside government or actor to just lecture the Congolese leadership. We have to do, as Special Envoy Perriello just said, support what the Congolese people, many in the Congolese opposition, and Congolese civil society want. And it's that partnership between people of good faith in the Congo and those on

the outside that will make this work. But here's the dilemma, and this is what I was trying to say in my opening remarks, President Kabila and the people around him so far have been a lousy partner. So what do you do when they're a lousy partner? And at a certain point you have to find ways to make clear to that group that they have to change, they have to stop being a lousy partner. And I think that you brought up Afghanistan as a great model, and I know that the Special Envoy and people on this staff are quite familiar with this model. And I hope that they can use that intelligence to think about what's due. But what has to happen now is we need to have confidence that elections will be held on time in a year. And we're right at the breaking point on that now. We need a clear statement from Kabila that he'll turn over power to his successor in December. Yes, there is a constitutional provision, but there is also a timetable out there of elections in November and a transfer of power in December. A statement from the president saying he will turn over power to his duly elected successor would change everything in the Congo right now. We need genuinely independent credible technocrats to run the electoral commission. And we need the president's people to be in favor of that. Unfortunately, the new story of today is that they've nominated someone to go to on the electoral commission who doesn't fit that description at all.

And then the difficult process of registering voters and establishing a credible voter role, that was a process that was done horribly for the 2011 elections, has to be done and Kabila has to commit himself and his government to do those things. As I said initially, they have done none of those things despite the efforts of the United States and others to talk about it. That's why when you're faced with a lousy partner you have to move to the sticks.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, thank you. A very, very rich discussion, and I've really benefited from it. I hope you have too.

So let's take questions from the audience. We'll start here with the gentleman in the third row. Please wait for a microphone, please identify yourself, and please just ask one question if I could so we can get through a number in 25 minutes.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much. My name is Nee (inaudible). I am an immigrant from Ghana, but I've worked on U.S. foreign policy in Washington for almost 40 years. I even know both Mike and Tony Gambino when we worked on the anti apartheid issues.

Now I look at the three countries that we're focused on and I'm unhappy because why leave out Uganda? Mr. Museveni has been power since 1986. Also why the big focus on Burundi? And I'm not fan of Nkurunziza, but it seems to me we are overlooking the big guys. I mean Rwanda and Uganda have invaded Congo twice. They sponsored armies in eastern Congo. So the reasons Africans here and on the continent don't listen when you later tell them, you know, we want democracy is because there's a long record of the U.S., which I adore and which is why I've lived here 40 years, supporting undemocratic governments. And so our leaders have learned, oh, democracy, they just talk about it. If you cooperate and you vote the right way in the UN they will wink at anything. So I think that the pressure should be on Rwanda and on Uganda as well. And it breaks my heart that we are letting them off the hook.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Since that was more of a comment than a question I'll take one more before we go back to the panel. Here in the second row please.

MR. KNUTSON: Hello. My name is Robert Knutson, I'm President of Omni Housing. We produce a little house for people to get them out of lower quality housing. I've cross crossed Africa. I don't know everything, but I know one thing, that

this panel has been very good in me understanding this situation. When I was in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya, one of the covers of the magazine that I picked up was, "Should I Stay or Should I Go". And I didn't know. You know, I went school in Washington, D.C., I'm pretty global, but this morning has been very informative for me on the fact that it's very obvious as many of you stated that continuing presidencies is really a disguise for perhaps siphoning off the country's resources. And thank you, I know I speak for many, about helping me understand this subject.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Okay, we'll take one more before we go to the panel. So we'll take the gentleman in the fifth row and then we'll go to you folks, whether this is a question or not. (Laughter) But thank you for the eloquent comments.

QUESTIONER: My name is Louie from Rwanda. I go to George Mason University. I'm a little troubled with the kind of direction the panel is taking and --

MR. O'HANLON: You've got to make a question. We'll allow your editorial predicate.

QUESTIONER: I'll make it a question, especially to you. So we are focusing on the negative side of the region, and by this I mean we're taking -- you know, we're putting good fruits on one table and bad fruits on the other. And when you look at the region as a region, when you look at the Congo, we look at Rwanda, we look at Burundi, if Congo is doing well and Burundi and Rwanda are doing bad, we don't see the future for the region. If you have an issue with election, which is understandable, if you have issues with not staying in power for a long time, which I understand, but why are we not looking at the positive of what the region has reached on? Yes, Burundi is in trouble, we understand, but we have had some progress, especially between Rwanda and the Congo. But what I get from the panel is that we are looking at Rwanda is, you know, the meanest country in the region, and that Congo is doing well, which is a really bad policy

you are putting there. It's an aggressive policy. If we keep saying these are good stuff happening in the Congo and bad stuff happening in Rwanda, and we know between Rwanda and the Congo these are happening, I don't see where we are going.

MR. O'HANLON: Well, I didn't hear that myself, but let's go to the panel please. Mr. Special Envoy, you can start.

MR. PERRIELLO: Sure. A couple of thoughts on that. First of all I think that people in the region would be interested to know that we talk only about the good things in Congo and only the bad things in Rwanda, sort of like when Tony suggested we've done nothing but sweet talk President Kabila. I'm sure he'll be pleased to hear that.

MR. GAMBINO: Publicly, publicly.

MR. PERRIELLO: As I began, on a very serious note though, we do want to keep a focus on the positive story here, and I think in Burundi the point I made was how quickly a good story, which Burundi in many ways was a positive story until recently, can turn back to a chapter we've read before. In DRC and Rwanda we have seen tremendous progress in terms of economic development, at least at a GDP level, and DRC in a much more actually social mobility direction in Rwanda as much has been discussed. In some ways we're talking about trying to solidify those gains. It's our belief that if those gains are tied entirely to one person or one family that they are not sustainable. Whereas where they are based, as President Obama has said, on strong institutions not strong men, then it's about building on those foundations.

And I think this does go to back to one comment that was made earlier. We do I think take from the Burundi example that we want to be engaged as early as possible. It's not just something you want to be looking at after things have gone south. And I think to their credit -- this was before my time -- many people in the government

were trying to work with and both as partners with the government of Burundi and also in pressure to keep open political space.

The other thing I just want quickly come back to that Professor McKie said is this issue that I think it's overstated a little bit, and it comes back to the extent to which Burundi is a warning sign, this idea that China and others are just coming in and replacing whatever European sanctions or others take away. You know, go ask the government of Burundi whether that's been a one for one, go ask and see whether China -- China is not -- you know, they are quite strategic, they're not interested in throwing good money after bad in terms of something that does not look like there is a sustainable way out. So I think that while it's always important to analyze these things, again I think what smart people in the region are seeing is this notion that destabilizing a country to stay in power is a good bet financially. I think it's important to look at the date.

And I'll just sort of end with this in terms of balance. It's true there are some people -- we have focused on some countries in part because that happens to be my job to look at certain countries in my docket, some of it is those who are currently facing these dilemmas versus those who changed rules long ago. But I would just caution a little bit against the idea that just because some people pursue a bad idea doesn't mean that other people should pursue the bad idea. If one person in your family is starting to eat really unhealthy stuff that doesn't mean you say hey, well I'm going to just start eating nothing but ice cream and put on 20 pounds too because they're doing it. The issue is what's actually in the most interest for that individual country. So they're always going to be questions, and they're legitimate ones, about whether we are absolutely even in every application. What I can tell you is that every country that I visit thinks that they are the only ones being targeted by the United States, which suggests that perhaps there is some balance in our policy in the sense that we're trying to appeal

across a wide range.

MR. O'HANLON: There's so much balance that I even feel slightly chastised for stealing my kid's Halloween candy all week. That last comment about a food -- but anyway, Kristin, over to you.

MS. McKIE: I'll just do a one sentence reiteration of what was just said in terms of the good progress. And I think all three countries in the region have made good progress, and I think we did try to hit on that a bit. And the fact is that when we're dealing with these term limit extensions I think a good rhetoric to take is that we want to see that good progress continuing. That there has been really good progress, you know, we want to see this have the best chance of moving forward. And I think that's hopefully a bit of a response.

MR. O'HANLON: Tony.

MR. GAMBINO: Well, I appreciate the comments and the question. And great to hear and see Nee after all these years. Appreciate what you had to say.

I thought I heard in the opening comments by Special Envoy Perriello actually some very positive things about Rwanda. And I thought that his opening statement was quite balanced in referring explicitly to come of the clear advances that I think any objective observer has to see in Rwanda since the genocide, but then balancing that with as we've focused, this tough issue, if a constitutional change goes into effect that that in effect gives one man another 17 years in power, yeah, I think I agree with President Obama, I agree with Special Envoy Perriello, that's a problem, that's a problem. That's what we've been trying to focus on rather than a broader critique of Rwandan society. That's a great discussion that goes well beyond what we're trying to do here.

But perhaps in terms of how -- maybe I'll just speak about myself -- how I

sound, I do want to sound the alarm, I do. Let me just do a quick tour of most of this region. We've heard about Burundi. We might look at 17 more years of power in Rwanda. That is not a recipe for success in Rwanda in my opinion. Nee brought up Uganda with President Museveni. He fought the U.S. and won on term limits a long time ago, and he's around and that's not a good thing for Uganda. Let's keep going. South Sudan, which we were celebrating for its independence, is now in a horrible civil war. Let's keep going. Central African Republic, not looking too good and trying to find a way to create some functioning government in an incredibly weak state under extraordinarily difficult circumstances. Congo-Brazzaville, Sassou-Nguesso has been in power for decades and decades, and has just cynically found a way that he's basically stay -- he wants to stay in office until he dies, it's pretty clear. That's not a good thing for Congo-Brazzaville. Then we talked a lot about the Democratic Republic of Congo, and if anybody thought that I was focusing on the good in the Congo -- okay, I'd like to hear how that happened. (Laughter) We have a whole series of problems in this region, and unfortunately if a few of these things goes worse -- you know, I hope that all the things turn positive, I'd love to see that happen, but we've seen what happens in the Great Lakes region. We've seen it in Burundi, we've seen in it all the countries I mentioned. And the human cost of what happens when the world responds too late, as we did in Burundi decades ago and as we're doing now, as we did in Rwanda decades ago, too late, as I worry that we'll do in Congo. The human cost of the millions of people who have died is right there for all of us to remember and think about. And if one finds that alarmist, I don't apologize. I want everyone to hear that message and think about it and decide what you think it means.

MR. O'HANLON: One more thought, or a comment from me before we go to a second round in just a second. On the scope of this particular event blame me to

the extent to that maybe Uganda was left out, but also let me use that as an opportunity to thank those who have brought up other countries, all three of the panelists, but also to remind you that we're beginning now this Africa Security initiative at Brookings also trying to work with our Africa Growth initiative partners. And over the course of the last couple of years we've covered a number of other countries. We will probably have an event in December with General Rodriguez from Africa Command talking about more continent-wide issues.

Kristin and I were talking earlier about doing some kind of future event perhaps in the spring, once the snow has melted at St. Lawrence and they can get out of there again, on rule of law and also environmental issues in Africa. And so we've got a number of things, and your comments help motivate that.

So why don't I go now to the young woman in the red hair about eight rows back, and then to the gentleman right in front of her after that.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. My name is Nori Castine, I'm an analyst focusing on the DRC. And I just want to thank the panelists and thank Brookings for organizing this event.

My question is really directed toward Special Envoy Perriello. I wondering if you could -- well, we've discussed the possibility of sanctions or possibly travel bans for some of the leadership. I know that's been mentioned by State Department officials with regard to Burundi. And notwithstanding, you know, the political tension that -- or discomfort that might be created by discussing sanctions or the possibility that China might undercut some of their effects, I think that a lot of these leaders have significant property and family abroad in Europe and the U.S. and Canada -- in the case of the DRC particularly in Belgium. And I think they could have an effect on shaping behavior. And I'm just wondering if you could characterize some of the

hesitation or if there is any resistance on the part of the Obama administration or the State Department why wouldn't that be a good idea other than not wanting to dictate policy?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Thank you. Let's take one more question before we go to the panel.

MR. DROSS: Thank you. My name is Mafusta Dross. I work on Sub Saharan Africa for 15 years at the World Bank. My question is why should Africa use a democratic model of Washington or of Europe? Shouldn't democracy be home grown?

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: Great. You want to start?

MR. GAMBINO: Let me take those in reverse order because I pretty strongly reject the second question, though I respect it. I think this idea that this is western democracy is hokum. This is a Congolese constitution; it was supported overwhelmingly by the Congolese people. The Congolese people overwhelmingly support the mandate limits. They have overwhelmingly opposed the attempts to change it, and there are certain elements of the constitution that are Congolese or African in nature, but I think this notion that it's a model from the outside has just not been my experience on the ground in Africa at all. And I think the idea that Africans don't want human rights and open political space, again I totally respect your experience with it, but that has not been mine and continues to not be mine.

Again, if President Nkurunziza could have pulled off the vote in parliament you'd be in a different situation. Those weren't Americans or Europeans voting in that parliamentary election. And I think this goes a little bit to the sense of also overstating how much of a decision -- if a country goes one direction or another it's just a

matter that U.S. policy wasn't strong enough. Ultimately, the people most responsible for these decisions are the people in the country themselves and the leaders. President Nkurunziza made a decision to take his country to the brink. Other leaders made a decision to attempt a coup. These were incredibly incendiary steps that took a country that had a brighter future and put it in a bad place.

On the other question, you know, I'm not going to get into too much of the internal policy debates as you can imagine, but we have certainly publicly welcomed and supported the EU sanctions, both targeted economic sanctions and visas. We have pursued some of that. We're continuing to look at all of our options in this case in a rapidly developing dynamic. And I think it's clear that the U.S. believes under the right circumstances that targeted sanctions are both important to show a consequence and can be something that helps drive people to peace talks and to a political solution. The Europeans are also pursuing the Article 96 decision, which is more of a government policy issue. And so we're looking at all that stuff and I think, you know, we're trying to find the right set of carrots and sticks to get people to Kampala and to talks.

MR. O'HANLON: Either one of you want to comment on either of those?

MR. GAMBINO: Just a very brief point supporting what the Special Envoy said about democratic models. Many of us -- I'm certainly in regular touch with a wide group of Congolese in the Congo and not just in Kinshasa, in various places. There are a number of Congolese who I know in this room today, all of them to a person strongly want the kind of outcomes that I've been trying to talk about. I feel very strongly that I'm an outsider, I'm not a Congolese. It is not for me to impose or to -- but I listen to what I hear from Congolese voices. And what I hear is that this is what they want. And so I am trying to support that. And I think while the delicacy between what the Special Envoy and what I'm saying is of course I accept that the United States alone can't change

the course in these countries, but I guess I'm saying two things. One, the United States still matters, and it matters a lot in all the countries that we're talking about for various reasons. But the second one is President Obama threw a pretty big marker on the table in that speech in July. It wasn't that long ago. And so just a few months later look what's happening in the region. We're not getting a kind of wow, I heard you, we're getting a kind of wow, I didn't hear you and I'm going to go in a different direction. And we need a win on this. And I think Congo can be a real win in terms of saying we can support the Congolese people, show that United States policy can really give muscle to what President Obama said in Addis in July, and then help get that crucial peaceful transition of power that would mean so much for the Congo politically, economically, and socially.

MR. O'HANLON: I think we have time for one more round of questions, maybe two. We'll see how we do. Gentleman here in the third row and the woman in the pink. Take those two.

QUESTIONER: Good morning. My name is (inaudible) from Congo-Brazzaville. Following your presentation, sir, I was a little bit flabbergasted that you left Congo-Brazzaville out. The last time I checked Congo-Brazzaville is part of the Great Lake. And if there is an example of an abuse of a constitution it's in Congo-Brazzaville, when the president has been there, Sassou-Nguesso, since 1979. He was president when Jimmy Carter was president, he was president when Reagan was president, he was president when Bush the father was president, he was president Clinton was president, except there was a five year interruption. So then Mr. Sassou-Nguesso came in 1997 and since then he has been president. And now he just initiated a referendum to change the constitution. So, sir, I'm very surprised that you left Congo-Brazzaville out because this is an example.

And, sir, on the right, I absolutely agree with you, one thing we have to

remember that these people in position of power in Africa, they are bullies, they are dictators. Sir, you say that this president loves the country. Mr. Kabila does not love his country. I will finish the question -- if he loved his country he will leave office after his term limit. Mr. Sassou-Nguesso, after 32 years in power does not love his people. Look at how the country is managed. But if you think that by saying that we're going to talk with them and with the people, look, you talk about sovereignty, sovereignty -- these people only understand one language. They are bullies; you need to put the stick on the table. And until you speak to them like that, it's not going to happen. People are going to die and we're going to continue dying. And having this meeting here in Washington, D.C. when our people are dying in Africa. And you can make a difference in those situations because those countries are the way they are today because of the U.S. policy in the past. Lumumba was assassinated.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, that's enough.

QUESTIONER: I mean I can go on.

MR. O'HANLON: Sir, we don't have much time.

QUESTIONER: Thank you very much.

MR. O'HANLON: We don't have much time. (Inaudible) and then we'll have a final round of -- yes, right there -- and then we'll have a final round and wrap up.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. And I'll be brief because I know Mr. Perriello has to go. And I side with my brother from Congo-Brazzaville because I'm from Congo-Kinshasa. And he said they are bullies, but I call them, they are cartel, just like the drug cartels, all those leaders.

My question is very specific. Last time when you were in the DRC you kind of lobby everybody regarding dialogue that you call later a forum where all the politicians have to get together and talk about what's going to happen in the 2016

election. And it looks like on the ground people are going toward that sort of initiative, but today I learned that the United States is only offering best advice possible and not going to enforce any sanction or anything because they want to be partner and not the one dictating what's happening.

So my question is during that forum who is going to emphasize, who is going to make sure that they implement whatever they're going to decide because we've been through consultation and 600 policies have been put together and none of them have been implemented.

Thank you.

MR. O'HANLON: So with apologies to everybody else who had hands up I'm going to have make those the last questions. And now we'll just go down the line here for final comments.

MR. PERRIELLO: So first, thank you for the passionate and informed response. The not mentioning Congo-Brazzaville is in part just the nature of what we set as the --

MR. O'HANLON: It's on me.

MR. PERRIELLO: -- parameters, but also that my purview happens to not cover Congo-Brazzaville as much. But as the U.S. government we absolutely take that position and so it's just not as much of my particular day to day thing. But again on the position of us having a lot to answer for on the continent and what got us here, I absolutely agree with that. I also know that that can't be an excuse to not have things get better going forward. So we have a lot to answer for, but not everything is because of what we have done either. And I think that's just constructive.

On the last point, you know, the word dialogue has become very charged in DRC. I think what everybody generally agrees is that there is going to have to be

some coming together to reach agreement, and it is probably sum zero, sum game in that decision between things that President Kabila wants and things that a fairly united opposition wants. We believe to something that Tony mentioned earlier, that there is no reason the voter registration process can't begin even before that, because everyone including President Kabila has agreed it needs to happen, it has the largest time lag, it's a significant logistical lift. So, you know, in addition to reaching agreement on a number of these questions like the aligning of the electoral calendar is the question of whether there are some things that can start to proceed even independently of that.

The opposition I think to its credit is quite strategic and unified as is President Kabila and his team. And so some time, whether it's in the next couple of weeks as I think many would like, or the next couple of months, there is going to be a point in which some decisions are going to have to be made and how we get there I think again will probably be more determined by the Congolese people than by ourselves, but we want to be there in supporting it. So in saying, you know, it's less support for a dialogue in any particular forum or certainly one -- as I've said to leaders in the government and in the opposition, you know, if I were a republican in Congress and President Obama said I want to call a forum but I'm going to dictate the terms, then there's no way I would want to walk into that. And if I was Obama I wouldn't walk into something that the republicans were organizing because, you know, I'm the president for goodness sake and, you know, et cetera. So there is going to have to be some issue, whether it's international mediation or facilitation, or what have you.

So we can get into all the details another time, but I think what's clear is that has to come sooner rather than later in order to ensure that the constitution is protected.

MR. O'HANLON: Kristin.

MR. PERRIELLO: I'm going to have to slide out.

MR. O'HANLON: We'll let you go. Thank you.

MR. PERRIELLO: But thank you very much to all of you.

MR. O'HANLON: And we're going to serenade you with applause on the way out. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. O'HANLON: Save a little bit for these two in a minute, but we'll let them speak first. So, please.

MS. McKIE: Just a really quick additional thought on the concept of is democracy the African model. It strikes me that you only hear from the ruling governments trying to stay in power that democracy is not the African model. And it seems like they're the only ones that use that rhetoric. And I would agree with Tony that, you know, from the regular people -- if you look at the Afrobarometer survey responses, overwhelmingly people are supporting term limits. But not only that, you know, freedoms and rights and things like that. So I think the evidence is there that, you know, these are things that the population does yearn for and it's not just a western model.

MR. O'HANLON: My friend.

MR. GAMBINO: Just a little bit about the question about a dialogue, but in comment I'm not going to say anything about a dialogue because I think that the blockages can be largely resolved in the absence of a dialogue. As I said, I think President Kabila, it is now time that he states clearly and publicly that he will turn over power to his duly elected successor because he can't run again via the constitution. He will turn it over on time in December of 2016. That one statement would do more to change the dynamic in the Congo than anything else. You don't need a dialogue for it. He could say it today.

In terms of the voter registry issue that the Special Envoy just brought up

before he had to leave, he is right, and it's certainly urgent that that be undertaken. That's one of the early efforts. They were supposed to start work on this at the beginning of this calendar year, and that's among the things that I was referring to when I said they've done nothing. We're supposed to have all year this year working on getting a good voter registry. Nothing has been done on it and it needs to be started now. But it hasn't been done because there hasn't been political will and support from President Kabila and the people around him to do so. There is money for it from the international community. There is interest in it on the part of the political opposition, civil society, the Congolese people in general. Again, the blockage is coming from President Kabila and a key group of people -- I named some of them around him, who if you look at their actions over the last year have done nothing but try to block the process, and that's what we have to find a way to get through. And unfortunately I think that we have to threaten sanctions to make it because I actually agree with the point -- I wouldn't perhaps make it quite as strenuously as I just made, but the leaders in the Congo and these other countries understand strength and they understand seriousness of purpose. We've seen lots of speeches by American presidents over many years saying all sorts of things about what we'd like to see in Africa. If the things that had been said had all been enacted we would be looking at a completely different world today.

And so people know, as was made in an earlier statement, that when those statements are made and nothing happens afterwards, of course the leaders see that. And of course they say well sure, President Obama gave a fine speech in Addis in July, but what does it mean on the ground? And so far it hasn't meant much Rwanda, it didn't mean anything in Congo-Brazzaville, and it's up for grabs what it's going to mean in the Democratic Republic of Congo. And that's what we all have to think about and see what can be done to get the kinds of outcomes that I hope we all would like to see.

MR. O'HANLON: I'm going to say just one last thing in closing, and thanking you all as well, and most of all the panelists, but I would like to see as a security analyst, as a defense analyst, a greater American role in DRC, in helping improve the Congolese army. It's a topic Tony has written about before himself and studied in great detail. But we can't do I don't believe under the current government. The current government has had some limited successes, but also has some big flaws. Realistically speaking we're going to need the same kind of political transition that Nigeria has just had. And so I envision a Congo that can finally take it to the next level of progress, maybe with a greater amount of American help from the next American president. But to make that even possible we're going to have to have a successful election process and I think a different and improved leader. Whatever Kabila's successes, they are not adequate to justify that level of much greater American role. And I for one have advocated things like deploying a couple of thousand U.S. troops to be part of the UN mission with the purpose of training the Congolese army to be able to do some of the things that it's currently still relying on the UN peacekeeping force to carry out. But that dialogue is going to require as a prerequisite the kind of political progress and successful elections that Tony has been talking about all day.

If you'll forgive me for making that one comment. And let me now thank all of you for being here and thank these two especially. (Applause)

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