THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
FALK AUDITORIUM

FIVE RISING DEMOCRACIES AND THE FATE OF THE INTERNATIONAL LIBERAL ORDER

Washington, D.C.
Thursday, February 18, 2016

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. INDYK: Good evening, everybody. I'm Martin Indyk, the executive vice president of Brookings, and delighted to have an opportunity to welcome you here this evening for the second in our new series of The Brookings Book Club. As some of you may know from being at the first one of these Book Club events, which was Stephen Hess' book on the history of presidential politics, what we do is get the author of one of our latest Brookings books and put him in conversation with somebody who will challenge him, and nobody better to do that tonight than Jim Traub.

The book that we're going to discuss is Ted Piccone's "Five Rising Democracies and the Fate of the International Liberal Order" (Brookings Institution Press, 2016). You'll be able to buy discounted copies during the reception. Actually there's food outside afterwards for you, as well. As you buy the book, you can have something to eat and drink. And Ted Piccone, the author, will sign copies for you, as well, so there's an added benefit. But the real benefit tonight is the discussion that we're going to have.

Ted's been working on this research project for over four years. I can attest to that because he was working on it when he and I worked together when I directed the foreign policy program and he was partnering with me as the deputy director. He then took over for me when I went off for a little sojourn on peace-making in the State Department and was the acting director and research vice president of the Foreign Policy program. But he managed to press on with this book in which he examines in detail the way in which five countries have raised their democracies. The countries are India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, and Indonesia. He says this is IBSATI. I don't think anybody's ever heard of that before, but India, Brazil, South Africa, Turkey, and Indonesia.

He's done fieldwork in all of these countries and has put them together in this really fascinating and important book about the way in which rising democracies deal with their challenges and what it means for the fate of the international liberal order. The fate of the international liberal order is something which has been preoccupying us at Brookings over the last few years as the challenges to that order grow, not just in the Middle East, where the order is collapsing rapidly, but in Eastern Europe and in South China Sea and other parts of the world, as well.

This book is part of a series of studies that the Foreign Policy Program at Brookings is

pursuing as part of their Order From Chaos Project, which looks at the variety of challenges to the international order. There's a blog, which if you haven't seen you should read, which is called Order From Chaos, amazingly, in which our scholars are in regular dialogue about these challenges.

And this book that Ted has written in the second in a series that we'll be publishing in the Order From Chaos Project. The first was Mike O'Hanlon's "The Future of Land Warfare" (Brookings Institution Press, 2015). Jeff Bader in our Thornton China Center has just published a paper on "How Xi Jinping Sees the World." And the next book in this series is "Aspirational Power: How Brazil Tries to Influence the International Order and Why It So Often Fails", written by the head of our Latin America Initiative, Harold Trinkunas -- I see Harold joined us this evening -- and David Mares. And that'll be out in June.

So, I need now to introduce Ted a little more formally and then Jim Traub and then we'll get to the actual conversation. I've already given you most of Ted's bio, but I wanted to emphasize that he's written another important book, "Catalysts for Change: How the United Nations' Independent Experts Promote Human Rights," which was published by Brookings in 2012. And this is part of the work that Ted has done over many years as he's focused on human rights issues and not just on promoting democracy.

Jim Traub is a journalist and scholar specializing in international affairs. He is a columnist and contributor to the website foreignpolicy.com. Before that he worked as a staff writer for The New Yorker from 1993 to 1998 and is a contributing writer to the New York Times Magazine from then until 2011. He writes extensively on national politics, urban affairs, and education, as well.

Among his recent books are The Freedom Agenda, which focuses on the American policy of democracy promotion, which is why we have him here to talk about Ted's book tonight; "The Best Intentions," which focuses on the United Nations under Kofi Annan; and "Militant Spirit," which is his biography of John Quincy Adams. That's to be published in March by Basic Books. And we will be hosting an event similar to this in June when Bob Kagan and Jim Traub will face off in discussing the foreign policy of John Quincy Adams.

So, without further ado, please welcome Ted Piccone and Jim Traub. (Applause)

MR. PICCONE: Thank you, Martin. I'm going to take the time at the podium to present

some of the key highlights of the book and then invite Jim up for the conversation. But I first want to say a special thank you to Martin, who always emphasized to us how important it was that we write books and really inspired me to stay on track with this one, despite a few bumps along the road.

So I'm going to try to walk you rather quickly through these slides and we'll get to the conversation and hope that you'll join us in the conversation.

So this topic is trying to address the question of shifting global power balances and will they help or hinder the worldwide demand for human rights and democracy. And I think the answer will depend -- hopefully, I've got this right, okay -- on the role of these five pivotal democracies as both examples and supporters of liberal ideas and practices. Let's keep in mind that polls from every region of the world show very high public support for democracy, and that includes the Arab world. But surveys also show dissatisfaction with how it's going.

It's also worth noting, and it's certainly very current in today's environment, that democracy and rights and the rule of law are facing a real recession and there is constant challenge and threats and backsliding going on both in established and emerging democracies. But nonetheless, I'm going to step back and look at the overall trends over the last 30 years and it leaves me with a rather optimistic point of view. So while democracy isn't perfect and moves forwards and backwards, in general the trajectory is toward progress.

And I would just point out one statistic. In 1989, about 2 billion people lived in 69 electoral democracies, where there is a contest from free and fair elections and citizens have a voice. In 2015, that number doubled to over 4 billion people in 125 electoral democracies. So this slide just shows you these 5 countries represent 25 percent of the world's population. And then, in addition, you have another 120 electoral democracies, 31 percent. So a majority of the people in the world live in electoral democracies.

And that's one of the reasons why I picked these five. These are big, important countries and they all have remarkable stories to tell about their own transformations from illiberal governance to more open and accountable systems. They're highly diverse and multi-ethnic societies, which I think underscores the universality of liberal norms and human rights, that these are not just Western concepts.

They've also made impressive but certainly incomplete gains in responding to popular

demands for change. And they also offer examples of the compatibility of socioeconomic progress and democracy in contrast to an example like China, where you do have tremendous socioeconomic progress, but little to show in the area of democracy and human rights. And all five of these countries want a greater say in the international system, but on their own terms.

Now, I put up these pictures just to kind of illustrate a couple of key figures in these transitions, both positive and not so positive. And it reminds us of the dramatic changes that have happened in a relatively short period of time. You know, this picture of Dilma Rousseff of Brazil is before a military tribunal when she was in the armed opposition and served time in prison and tortured, and she's now the elected president of Brazil. Her poll ratings are not very good, but she did get reelected. And I think that's an important example of how a process of inclusion brings people into the political system and the competition happens within democratic means instead of through the point of a gun. A pretty basic point, but it's worth remembering. And, of course, no better example than Nelson Mandela to remind us of the important changes that have happened in South Africa and the example that he provides.

Of course, in India, Gandhi, the paragon of nonviolence is up there, but I really point to a different time in 1991, when a whole slew of economic reforms that were taken that liberalized and opened India's economy to the rest of the world and you've seen steady improvements in economic growth and human development as a result.

Of course, I do want to say a word about Turkey. If I had chosen today these five countries, probably I would not have chosen Turkey, so let's get that on the table right away. Turkey has really gone through a dramatic backsliding in terms of democracy and human rights, press freedom, there's a long academic freedom. Yes, they're in a very tough neighborhood, but I think Erdoğan has proven himself to be more in the model of Atatürk than not, and that is a disappointing result of what had been a promising trajectory, say, 5, 10 years ago where their aspirations for European Union accession had really set them apart on a different path.

Let me say a word about how we got started with this. In this room we kicked off a conference with the National Endowment for Democracy. We brought scholars from each of these countries to talk about these issues, field research in all countries, and collected a lot of data to analyze.

The question that I was trying to resolve was how did these countries look before and after their turning points toward liberalization? And then I wanted to see, well, what impact did that have on their foreign policy?

So what I'm going to do is first address their transitions from closed to more open societies, and then I'll turn to the foreign policy dimensions of their status as emerging powers, and then finally consider some recommendations for how we can find better cooperation among North and South democracies.

In each of these cases, I think this is an obvious point, after liberalization you see substantial progress in terms of political rights and freedoms. And this chart just shows Freedom House scores, the lower, the better. So as the bar graph comes down, they've made improvements. But it's a mixed picture.

We have civilian control of the military as missions shift away from internal to external security. Increased freedoms for individuals, for women, for the press, for minority groups, and civil society. But more recently, we see significant and worrisome stagnation and backsliding, which this chart shows. The World Bank collects data from around the world on issues of democratic governance, rule of law, control of corruption, and this is an aggregation of those points and you see this steady stagnation or decline. But nonetheless, the trend is clear: substantial progress is being made.

These are not the shining stars in the democratic universe and they're not the worst performers either. They're middle tier. And, you know, I think that their trajectory matters because of their role in the world and their own aspirations for soft power and its examples for others.

On economic growth terms, another indicator of progress, you see significant economic growth and stability after their liberalization milestones. So certainly some periods of volatility, but in general the volatility of economic growth decreases, so instead of the boom-and-bust of previous periods, it evens out and inflation decreases, as well, across the board. GDP per capita rises, but, importantly, unemployment and inequality generally rise in these cases. But in responses these democratic governments expanded social benefits and jobs programs and lifted millions of people out of poverty.

So let me turn now to what all this means in terms of human development, which is critical to the question of whether democracies can deliver benefits and goods and development for their

people. And here you see, this is an aggregation of data that the U.N. collects from each of these countries and I've pointed out their transition points. So while progress had begun before their transitions, it continued even during unstable periods of democratic transition. And across the board you se significant drops in poverty, an increase in life expectancy, declines in infant and maternal mortality, literacy rates are up. There are more students in school at higher levels, including women and girls. And there's greater access to better drinking water, which is a key factor in any healthy society. So this is a rather encouraging story when you compare these periods before and after liberalization.

All of this is happening within the context of globalization and all five countries expanded their role in the international economy. They promoted exports, they welcomed foreign direct investment. And you see a shift in these trade patterns from north to south, especially with China, and I can get back to that; a dramatic increase in Internet access and mobile phones; high remittances from around the world, especially India, which is number one in the world. So an insertion into the globalized world, which reinforces this sense of liberalization and opening up. They also became donors and creditors after periods in which they were recipients of foreign aid.

So, in essence, the evidence I think is overwhelming, that liberalization has delivered significant development gains. They've performed above the global average in GDP growth rates and in progress toward the Millennium Development Goals. And they've earned some significant soft power as attractive examples of democracy and development.

So the next question is how will they use this soft power? And will recent trends, particularly in Turkey, but also what's happening in Brazil and South Africa, will this clip their wings on the global stage?

So let me say a word, then turning to the international liberal order, what is it? In essence, it's the constellation of international institutions, norms, and practices that regulate state sovereignty and facilitate international cooperation and norm-setting to solve common problems facing humanity. And it's everything from the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 18 human rights treaties we have at the international level, let alone the regional level, various courts and commissions. We have peacekeeping operations present throughout the world that their countries are increasingly participating in. We have new doctrines coming out of the U.N. Security

Council and the U.N. General Assembly, like responsibility to protect civilians. And this is resulting in a variety of actions of different types to protect populations from genocide and crimes against humanity.

You have the International Criminal Court. And right now we have the former president of Côte d'Ivoire facing trial in The Hague for crimes committed during the violence in that country when elections were in dispute. Climate change, the Paris conference, the vast architecture of humanitarian assistance which, of course, is now front and center in Syria and the surrounding countries, we have the Sustainable Development Goals. I can go on and on. There are a complex array of institutions that constitute the international liberal order.

So when it comes to how these countries relate to the liberal order you see both convergence and divergence. These countries have benefited from the liberal order and globalization and, of course, their own democratic transitions. And they're quite proud of their success as democracies and they rhetorically support the expansion of democracy around the world for others. But they are not bought in to the Western-led international human rights order. In particular, they oppose coercive methods -- sanctions, the use of force, notions of regime change, the color revolutions -- and they're skeptical about the quality of democracy in more liberal states.

They are, in essence, swing states in which sovereignty trumps the notions that we're familiar with of democratic peace, where we have married our values and our interests in our national security strategy in which we clearly say that the promotion and enlargement of democracy is in our national interest because democracies are less likely to go to war with one another, less likely to spawn terrorism, less likely to spawn famine and other kinds of crises in failed states. So democracy is in our national security interest. This is not a common concept in these countries.

There are histories of colonialism, of apartheid, of military dictatorships that skew against cooperating with the West because they remember that it was the West that supported those regimes. And now that they're in power, they have some skepticism about partnering with us. And they certainly don't want to invite international scrutiny of their own behavior.

We also have the experience of Iraq, where regime change at the point of a gun was touted as democracy promotion and it didn't go so well. And the same, I would say, for Libya and the responsibility to protect, which really resulted in some chaos that they really objected to the way NATO

used force in that case.

So, in effect, they accept the international norms, but not the means to defend them, I would say a form of liberal realism. And in the end, it's all about strategic autonomy, that they believe in the idea that we can have a million friends and zero enemies in the words of the president of Indonesia or in the words of Erdoğan of Turkey, zero problems with neighbors, which hasn't gone so well for them.

They also have regional aspirations. They want to play an outsized role in their own regions and they are playing that role to some extent, but they're not necessarily accepted in that way. The picture here is where the name IBSATI comes from is a collective called IBSA -- India, Brazil, and South Africa -- which you don't hear about very much. It's really been eclipsed by BRICS. Of course, with Russia and China in the BRICS, it's not so much about a values-oriented foreign policy. IBSA is. IBSA clearly talks about as a value the promotion of democracy and human rights, but it really hasn't gained much traction. But if you added some additional players, certainly Indonesia, maybe Mexico, South Korea, and others, you might get a new voice that would make a difference.

Let me say a word about another phenomenon that affects my view of how things are changing in these societies, which is the role of civil society, both at the national and at the transnational level. You might be familiar with the various campaigns: a right to education in the case of Malala, the fight against terrorism against Boko Haram, the phenomenon of Joseph Kony and child soldiers in Central African Republic. These really had a dramatic impact in moving these issues to the front of the international agenda.

But they also are happening at the national level, whereas what I call democratization of foreign policy, whereas societies open up debates on different issues, foreign policy is not immune from those debates. So you have the media, you have think tanks and activists that are having more of a voice in shaping foreign policy. And in the book I talk about various examples where this has made a difference, from South Africa where the leading trade union mobilized action to prevent the shipment of Chinese arms to Zimbabwe; or they're lawyers who won a court judgment to get South Africa to detain President al-Bashir of Sudan for an International Criminal Court warrant. It didn't succeed, but they certainly put a lot of pressure on the government to do that.

You see it in Indonesia, where activists partnered with activists in Burma to pressure the

government to get Indonesia off the fence and do more to pressure Myanmar to reform. In an interesting kind of good cop, bad cop, where the West was much affiliated with sanctions and Indonesia through ASEAN took a softer approach, and I think together that had an impact.

You see it in Brazil, where various NGOs have mobilized public opinion, working with activists from other parts of the world to change Brazil's position on human rights in Iran or North Korea.

So, in effect, democracies offer these points of influence and leverage for both domestic and foreign actors. And this is one reason why I'm optimistic that as this trend continues, there'll be more opportunities to push governments in a stronger direction.

Now, let me say a word about looking ahead given the various differences between North and South, where there might be convergence. First of all, we need to practice what we preach. And I think here is why we're feeling a little under the weather when it comes to this issue because right now, the United States and Europe are not looking very good as political or economic examples for the rest of the world. And I think it is a bit of a crisis of confidence, and for good reason. So that is something we need to reconsider as we look at our own behavior at home as well as abroad.

We also need to better understand where these countries are coming from, as I pointed out before, their own histories. We have to consider how we might negotiate a bigger voice for them in global governance, but that remains a big question about how to do that.

There are regional mechanisms that could be used to encourage these trends as long as they're within the international universal values. You have cross-regional coalitions of democracies that can provide ways to support other democracies as they go through their own transitions. I think it's critical and I think President Obama has made it a priority, much more to support civil society and the media and their role in scrutinizing foreign policy. And, of course, a big surprise for me was the lack of a voice by legislatures on foreign policy and much more can be done on that front.

And then just turning to some specific areas where we could all work together better. And these were areas where I thought had collateral benefit to cross the democracy agenda. I mean, you can't have a civil society that's repressed. They can't play their role unless they're given the space to do so

And related to that, the accessed information and freedom of the Internet is kind of a life-

blood issue. If you're going to be a watchdog on foreign policy, you need the information freely available.

Another big issue that I came across in my research was when other countries think about human rights, thy think about economic and social rights. That's not necessarily the case in this country and we need to have a much more honest conversation about the universality of human rights being political and economic and social. And in our country we've not been very good about that, but these societies are dealing with significant levels of poverty that they think first about food and water and health.

Of course, we all know from lots of studies and research that education, particularly for girls and women, has very positive benefits across multiple indicators of societal health. And then the areas of corruption and the role of business, you know, as transnational corporations rise in influence, the massive corruption that is really, I think, breaking through as an issue. Of course, in Brazil and Indonesia, in Guatemala, in other countries this is a mobilizing factor that is getting people engaged in politics, taking to the streets and demanding a response by governments, by independent prosecutors, and courts And I think that's something that all countries are facing and needs to be a priority.

And then a final kind of bonus point, the Sustainable Development Goals that all of our governments have accepted is really a great opportunity to marry up democracy and development.

So finally, I think you get the point, that these countries can be active supporters of liberal norms, but on their own terms. I think we'll always face skepticism and outright opposition from elites in various countries to counterbalance the West, and that's with or without Russia and China. And I think strategic autonomy will continue to be a key drivers and much more needs to be done to reinforce this democratic peace theory.

We as a country need to revisit the costs and benefits of our policies of ends versus means. And I think democratization of these issues will continue, which gives us lots of opportunities for influence.

And with that, I look forward to a conversation with Jim and with all of you. Thanks. (Applause)

MR. TRAUB: Well, thanks, Ted. That was really comprehensive and interesting and just gave us a lot to think about. And I want to reassure everyone, or maybe the word is "warn," that we're

going to blow past our 6:30 time because if we don't either I'm not going to get a chance to ask Ted any questions or you're not going to get a chance to ask Ted any questions, and we don't want to do that. So I assume we'll go over a little bit.

So I want to ask you first how confidence we should feel about the path that their countries are on. Because, obviously, you mentioned the example of Turkey. And I was struck in looking at your charts that the Freedom House, the chart of political liberalization, was the flat one whereas the human development chart was the positive one. And so that made me think, oh, maybe the economic liberalization thing is much more self-reinforcing and kind of meets less resistance whereas sustaining genuine democratic liberties, especially in impoverished countries, is just harder. And, therefore, one should be less confident that these things are going to continue in a positive way. So you feel confident that when you come back in five years or something, things are going to be looking as good or better as now?

MR. PICCONE: My general impression is that there's a virtuous circle here of liberalization reforms, economic and political, that reinforce one another. But at the same time as economic growth expands and you have more buy-in to the economic situation, you have more stakeholders and more people who want to express their interest, which leads to more competition, which leads to more challenges to the elites. And the elites have a lot of political as well as economic power, and so they end up using the political tools that they have to try to control that change because they are facing real challenges to traditional networks of patronage that are greased through corruption, legal or illegal. And this is where there's a time lag, I think.

You also see across the board this initial improvement in the political and civil rights and then a tapering off. But as our own history suggests, you know, democracy, as I said before, is not a linear process. There are lots of forward and backward movements, as we know here in this country. But over time, the trend is toward greater progress, so I'm still optimistic that those societies will continue on those track.

Again, a related point, though, is leadership. I mean, in these cases you had some really important dynamic change agents at the top: Nelson Mandela, Yudhoyono in Indonesia, who most of you may not have heard of but, in fact, is a critical, pivotal figure. And, at the same time, as I pointed out, in

Turkey, someone who has turned out to be an autocrat by all accounts, and I think that makes all the difference.

MR. TRAUB: Well, that also, I think, sort of shows one of the limitations of modernization theory, which assumes that everything happens for structural reasons. You're saying, no, actually the accident of history, who was thrown up as the leader matters a lot.

Now, I was struck in reading your book that there was really no one path towards this outcome. That is, India was a country that became a democracy from the very outset even though it was extremely poor and came to economic liberalization later whereas some of the other ones were countries that did the more classic modernization thing. You're an autocrat country, you become more middle class, and then you have political liberalization.

Did this study give you kind of any insight into how it is countries travel this path?

MR. PICCONE: You know, each country has its own unique set of experiences and I pointed to one common theme, which is leadership. I think another is the infrastructure that leads to healthy democracies, so it's everything from the press and civil society, as I pointed out, to various business groups and others that begin to compete in the marketplace and identify with the idea of change and are beginning to have a voice. And that's kind of a common theme across the board.

Another common theme is one that tells me that the international actors do not have as much influence as sometimes we think they do. And sometimes we have to be a little more modest about our own goals in supporting democratic change. It's got to be driven from the inside, and we need to reconsider how we do that.

MR. TRAUB: I assume that that's what they would say to you. If you went to South Block in India or something and said why are you guys promoting democracy more, they would recite back to you what you just said, which is it turns out outside democracy promotion has a less significant impact than we think it does.

MR. PICCONE: And they also say, oh, you know, we don't know what kind of results would happen if we promote democracy in the Arab world, for example. We're very nervous about that. But at the same time --

MR. TRAUB: The current events of the last four or five years might give them some

reason to say that.

MR. PICCONE: Would suggest that. But, you know, it's always that very cautious the devil you know versus what you don't know. And we see it in our own very mixed record on democracy and human rights. You know, we're not for it until we see enough change on the ground to make sure it's a winning formula that will serve our interests. And we have a long history of intervening in ways that interfere with democracy.

And this is another key point to make here. You know, there's no such thing as neutrality on these issues. You know, if you're not taking a position, you are taking a position and that position is for the status quo. And the status quo is, in many of these cases, authoritarian. And so in a case like India or other countries, I think that they underestimate what they can do to create an enabling environment in which democratization is rewarded as a good. And I think that's where if you create that international environment and then you back it up with incentives, with the kind of foreign assistance that is more carrot than stick, you might be better results.

MR. TRAUB: But, you know, it's obviously very frustrating for people in the West who are trying to preach this to people in the -- to these quite admirable democracies in the emerging world. I was struck that you pointed out in your book that on economic issues each of these five countries broke with the non-aligned movement official ideology and said, no, globalization, it's good. Whereas that ideology on political matters, you know, sovereignty must be sacrosanct and so forth, it seems to have a much more binding power.

MR. PICCONE: I agree. I mean, I think this is what remains a driving force for these foreign policies, and I think it's not unique to them. I mean, the idea of strategic autonomy, that we want to be able to have maximum flexibility in our relations with everyone and we don't want to have to make choices between our relations with China and our relations with you, that's a pretty understandable rational phenomenon. And I think part of the message back is you actually can do both. You can maintain good relations with China, but you also need to consider your role in supporting activists in Myanmar.

And, in fact, you know, India played a very interesting role in Myanmar and they changed their position. They started with a very hardline approach with us on the sanctions front and then within a

year or two they said this isn't where we want to be. This isn't working for us. And they said, no, we want to engage the military regime in Myanmar. But, at the same time, they did a lot to support the activists on the ground. They gave shelter to Aung San Sui Kyi for years in India. They supported the different civil society groups. And other time they positioned themselves to actually have influence versus not.

You know, I spend a lot of time on Cuba, and there's a similar phenomenon here where our policy of an embargo has really only isolated us, and we have very little influence in Cuba.

MR. TRAUB: That's a very interesting kind of paradigm because the implication of that would be, in a way, the more then United States says this is the sine qua non and you've got to join us on this Security Council resolution and you've got to vote for sanctions in Iran and so forth, the more we may put those countries in a corner where they're going to say we're not going to give way to this Western demand. We're going to stand up for the rights of other beleaguered countries. So how do you handle that problem?

MR. PICCONE: I think you need to, as I said, reconsider the way we do things, but also encourage them to work with us and take more of a leadership role in finding alternative paths. So we all recognize that we're dealing with failed states or really threatening situations that do need some kind of international attention. Well, let's find some kind of diplomatic interventions short of use of force and why don't you work with us on that? Because you say you don't want use of force. Okay, well, let's ramp up the alternative, diplomatic objections. And I don't see enough of that coming from these countries.

MR. TRAUB: But wait. So let's talk a little bit about where the threshold is where this kind of sovereigntist thing kicks in when you deal with them. So use of force, we're never going to do Libya again, that was a huge mistake. But do you feel like there's like a middle ground of coercive measures -- sanctions and so forth -- not force, where you might be able to overcome the sovereigntist impulse, whether it's Iran, Libya, whatever these cases are that the world faces?

MR. PICCONE: I think there is some common ground there. I think if it's a comprehensive embargo like we have on Cuba it's a non-starter. But we've already here and elsewhere moved to much more targeted sanctions. We have huge problems with, for example, money laundering and the corruption money that's flowing around the world. And there is progress and cooperation on that front.

I think where issues overlap between their economic interest and some of these rule of law issues you get win-win solutions, including the use of at least law enforcement. And I'm thinking about piracy and freedom of navigation are areas that these countries care deeply about. And being examples of reaching diplomatic resolutions among themselves where they have their own disputes using the International Court system. You know, these are all various ways in which they can do more to lead the way.

MR. TRAUB: But if we look right now, if you look, for example, at the behavior of, say, South Africa or India or Brazil in regional organizations, and their willingness to do in regional organizations the stuff that you have to do at times in order to prevent horrible things from happening, should we say right now the record's pretty bleak?

MR. PICCONE: I think in the case of South Africa, one of the clear priorities for them is conflict resolution. And then they bring in the democracy and human rights agenda within the banner of conflict resolution, but they recognize that, first and foremost, they need to engage with some very difficult regimes in order to get to conflict resolution. They're very proud of the South African model of being able to sit together eventually and work out their differences.

MR. TRAUB: Well, how much good did that do in Zimbabwe, where they basically refused to put any pressure at all on Zimbabwe?

MR. PICCONE: So Zimbabwe is a puzzle to me. It's not clear to me why they persisted so long in giving Mugabe a lot of room even when the country was, Zimbabwe, exporting migrants, political and economic migrants. It was an obvious failed situation due to the political leadership of the country. And there, at the end of the day, it was about Pan-African solidarity. It was about the long memory of Mugabe's support for anti-apartheid ANC forces throughout Southern Africa. And there is a sense of loyalty and solidarity that they just couldn't let go of that relationship.

MR. TRAUB: Okay. So let's say then, you said you want a place at the table and we're going to find a better place at the table because South Africa is a country that merits its dignity, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Do you have reason to think that that quid pro quo would draw a country like South Africa or a country like India deeper into this liberal international order or they may kind of pocket those gains and just continue to say we have deep sympathy as anti-colonial powers with our neighbors,

however they behave, inside their own country?

MR. PICCONE: I mean, it might require generational change because, as I said, these binds of loyalty have persisted longer than I would think. And I think there are some real doubts about whether these countries coming in to, say, the Security Council have really bought enough into the liberal order to become defenders of it. And sometimes they talk a good game, but then they don't follow through. And other times, they are flat-out opposed. And so it leave us, many in the West, skeptical about, you know, are they ready for prime time, as one foreign minister of Mexico put it, in foreign affairs?

And I think that remains for me to take away a lingering question, you know, some surprised. I think Indonesia has been an interesting, soft, but persistent voice in Southeast Asia in the right direction.

India, you know, India's one of the top contributors to a fund at the U.N. called the U.N. Democracy Fund. And this fund supports civil society groups around the world, grass-roots groups doing really good, important work. That's not the kind of thing you would associate with India. So they are willing to do some things.

MR. TRAUB: But it's thoroughly consensual. They do it because they see it as a consensual thing. They say if it's adversarial in any way we won't do it.

MR. PICCONE: Oh, no, there are cases and that was a big dispute, you know, was it a requirement to get the permission of the government before these grants were allowed? And the answer was no.

MR. TRAUB: Ah, that's interesting.

MR. PICCONE: It was not a requirement.

MR. TRAUB: Okay, that's interesting.

MR. PICCONE: And now, I think India favored the requirement and they lost that one.

MR. TRAUB: I see.

MR. PICCONE: So India's very cautious. But nonetheless, they continued to give money into this fund.

MR. TRAUB: Right.

MR. PICCONE: So I think there's these kinds of things happening below the radar that

point in the direction of a steady building of confidence as part of this.

MR. TRAUB: So maybe in a way it's wrong then to look at the hardest cases, like the responsibility to protect. That if you look at those cases, you're going to say it's going to take 100 years to get somewhere. But maybe if you look at less hard cases you'll say, well, actually, step by step, slowly by slowly, there is more positive than negative movement towards acceptance of these norms.

MR. PICCONE: So the responsibility to protect issue, you know, I've noticed how a number of Security Council resolutions, before and after Libya, do incorporate responsibility to protect civilians, and these countries have supported that. They continue to support the concept of responsibility to protect, but they have major qualms about how it's exercised. And are we doing enough to prevent use of force and regulating it once it's used? And this is the Brazilian leadership on a concept called responsibility while protecting that focuses more on once force is used, who do we do it properly?

MR. TRAUB: And those are legitimate concerns? That's not a kind of dodge as a way of saying, well, gee, we really support this norm. It's too bad it never gets carried out the way it should be.

MR. PICCONE: I think there are certainly legitimate issues to raise there. I think the Libya case was a really unfortunate case and we're feeling the consequences in Syria. You know, the Syrian people are suffering tremendously because we can't get to any diplomatic consensus on how do we intervene in this case? And people point to Libya as, you know, a way that the West abused the R2P concept to force regime change and get rid of Qaddafi when that was not the original intent.

Now, sometimes it's really hard to separate those things out. If you're out to protect civilians, but it's the leader of the country that's responsible for the worst crimes, is that the only way to stop the violence? I think that's a legitimate issue to concern ourselves with. But it really played out politically on the international scene badly.

MR. TRAUB: Yes, okay. Alright. I think that should be the end of the Jim and Ted portion of this. Now it's the all of you and Ted portion. So do we have a microphone going around or what's our system here?

MR. PICCONE: Yes.

MR. TRAUB: Apparently, yes, there is and we have one there, too. So raise your hand and I'll be happy to call on -- yes. I don't know if people are going to the microphone. No, they're leaving.

(Laughter)

So, yes, sir, right there. Perhaps you can bring a microphone to that gentleman.

SPEAKER: Yes, thank you very much. I find your thesis very interesting. I wonder if you could talk a little bit about the -- you know, you mentioned that three of your five countries are part of the BRICS. I wonder if you could talk about how the other two BRICS, the ones that aren't democracies, China and Russia, how they might affect the movement of these countries, particularly if they continue to challenge the liberal order the way they are and continue becoming more and more aggressive. How do you see these countries responding to that?

MR. PICCONE: Yes, that's a great question. I think, you know, clearly the BRICS concept has glue and momentum because it's in the economic interests of these countries to do and facilitate more cooperation. I think that is basically working for them. But it's no question that Russia and China are mobilizing on the international scene to push back against the pro-democracy trend.

In part, it's a matter of regime survival. They know that there are demands from below for greater freedoms in their own societies, so they're, first of all, tamping down, repressing civil society at home. But they also find it useful to extend that concept beyond their own borders and into the international arena, and we should be very concerned about that. But I think it's mostly about protecting their own regimes as opposed to trying to export their models to other countries.

I don't think we're in a Cold War repeat. I think it's about, you know, what's best for Russia is to clamp down on the pressure they get from Europeans on things that they considered nontraditional values, and they're putting money behind it. And I think there is a qualitative difference in the last several years about their role in pushing against the liberal norms.

At the same time, I see other trends moving in the other direction. I mean, I think, first of all, the overall scrutiny of these countries' records is clear and it's hurting their reputations. I mean, you have to remember what leverage do democracy and rights promoters have? A lot of times it's just reputational concerns that these countries have and we have to use that, and that's why scrutiny and watchdogging is so important. We need to call them out on what they're doing and they do react I think sometimes to that kind of pressure.

But I don't quite see the exaggerated, you know, this is an authoritarian resurgence that

is somehow going to undercut the overall international liberal order. I think it's a challenge, but I think it's one that in the end will lose out.

MR. TRAUB: Yes, all the way in the back there.

MR. COBERT: This is Stanley Cobert. In his farewell address, President George Washington advised the American people to cherish public credit, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burden which we ourselves ought to bear. That has been forgotten, it seems to me. Indeed, in all the democracies you see extraordinarily high debt-to-GDP ratios. How will this be paid for? If people are not willing to raise the taxes to pay for the benefits they want, which is what Washington was getting at here, what is the future of democracy?

MR. PICCONE: Well, I think that's up for each society to figure out through democratic means how they want to balance the public revenues and the provision of public goods. And you see in these societies that I've studied an interesting phenomenon of generally good macroeconomic management, where their debt-to-GDP levels are actually much lower. It's changing lately, especially in Brazil, but in general they've been pretty strict about managing their public resources.

I think in the case of Brazil, they're now coming to realize that they can't maintain such a generous welfare state in their current economic system. So these things are really matters for each country to decide and, ideally, to decide within a democratic context so that various stakeholders have a voice in how those goods are distributed.

MR. TRAUB: All the way in the back there, kind of in the middle. Yes, you, correct.

SPEAKER: So I'm not aware of whether or not you studied Benin in West Africa, but it's a democracy and they have elections coming up on March 6th, I believe. And one of the leading candidates is a man who was born in Paris, educated in London and in Paris, and he has familial ties to Benin. But there's a lot of concern among the people there that he doesn't represent them. And I was just reminded of that by your point that people in a lot of these countries support democracy, but they really cherish their sovereignty.

So, I'm sorry, I don't know if you've written on Benin or not, but wondering if you might offer a comment on that.

MR. PICCONE: I'm not familiar with what's happening in Benin other than to note that in

an earlier phase of when you looked at Africa and the transitions to democracy there, Benin was one of the earlier hopeful stories and now there are more in Africa to point to. But I don't know the latest of (inaudible).

MR. TRAUB: I think it's impressive that you even knew that much about Benin. That was pretty good. Yes?

SPEAKER: Thank you for your remarks. It's a fairly short question. I was wondering to what extent do you see these countries', these five countries', responses to terrorism and acts of terrorism as a feature or an indication of their transition? And two recent examples that come to mind, obviously, is the difference between Turkey and Indonesia.

MR. PICCONE: I think, you know, in some countries, like Brazil, terrorism has not been an important issue, to be honest. Of course, Indonesia and Turkey and with the latest attacks in Turkey it's front and center.

I think it can be -- you know, terrorism is one of these issues where it can be manipulated to go after your enemies. I think Turkey, we're seeing that clearly right now in the longstanding feud with the Kurdish population, the PKK, is playing out in that direction even though just not so long ago there was a peace process underway that was quite encouraging. And that was very much about the electoral politics in Turkey and Erdoğan's drive to reclaim leadership as president of the country after he was set back in the elections. And he played the nationalist card successfully and I think you're going to continue to see that. We were talking about this beforehand.

Now, in general we need to really come to terms with how democracies respond to terrorism. And this is what we're debating in our country every day, just the week over the Apple iPhone access. And I think the more that we address it within the context of rule of law and a concern for privacy, the better and healthier our societies will be in the long term. If we react by shutting things down and repressing, I think you're -- you know, take, for example, a slightly different case in Egypt, the way they've addressed their own political problems at home has been to repress the Muslim Brotherhood. And many people, experts in our building certainly, feel that that's only seeding more terrorism and we'll see worse problems down the line.

MR. TRAUB: You know, by the way, one thing that occurred to me in exactly that regard

is when you think about India's response to the Taj attack, it was the response of a mature democracy. That is a different kind of state, once it was clear that Pakistan was in important ways behind that attack, would have used it as a casus belli. It could have had a catastrophic effect. And there wasn't an overwhelming call in India to attack Pakistan. The prime minister of India, Manmohan Singh, never even made that a possibility. Obviously it damaged relations, but it was a remarkably calm response when it could have been a very, very violent response.

MR. PICCONE: Yes, I mean, the India-Pakistani relations is a very interesting one. It has a long history and it would take a long time, but one thing that they've reinforced with me as I talked to them was that they support democracy in Pakistan. They believe that democracy will lead to great civilian control of the intelligence services and these other more radical voices in society that are supporting these kinds of attacks. So they kind of get the democratic peace theory. And, you know, it's a long history to get to some forward movement, but they're trying.

MR. TRAUB: All right. Yes?

MS. KIKOLER: Thank you. I'm Naomi Kikoler with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. I was curious what your advice would be to the modern human rights movement and human rights organizations about how to engage the rising five. Because with the past five years, many international human rights organizations have rushed to open offices, for example, in each of those countries. And when they were on the council in terms of IBSA, there's a lot of emphasis on how to engage them on human rights crises around the world. I'm curious from your findings what recommendations you would make. Are these countries more responsive to their own domestic constituencies, to pressure from external watchdog organizations as you mentioned to foreign governments? How do we use the leverage and what is the leverage that we have or do we need to rethink human rights advocacy today?

MR. PICCONE: Yes. Well, you know, in the past it's always been about international groups coming in and scrutinizing them and criticizing them and they've always had a very bad reaction to that. Now that you have more of these domestic groups that are having a stake in watchdogging their foreign policy you've got a different dynamic, and some of them are reacting badly, including in India, where the government is really trying to clamp down on NGO activism and foreign funding and whatnot.

But I think it's going to be too hard for them to stop.

And I think, of course, Parliament has an important role to play. The media is very active in these societies and that ensures a certain level of attention to how they're behaving abroad that I find encouraging.

So I think it's kind of all of the above. It's a combination of supporting the domestic groups in their own work, creating more of an intellectual infrastructure to support the arguments. Because many human rights groups in these countries are so preoccupied with their own domestic situation, they don't have time to think about foreign policy issues and what's happening elsewhere. So we need to really build up capacity in these countries to care about what's happening in other parts of the world.

And then we also need to educate and train diplomats and other elites on why it matters to their national interests. And over time I think you'll build up an infrastructure that will help tip the balance.

Sometimes it's brute politics. In the case of India, in Sri Lanka, the Tamil minority really mobilized and pushed India to change its vote at the Human Rights Council on Sri Lanka. Now, that seems like a really minor issue to us, but to the Tamils they said we will leave the coalition government unless you change your vote in Geneva, and they changed their vote. So, you know, sometimes it's ethnic groups mobilizing and caring about what's happening in other parts of the world.

MR. TRAUB: Yes, back there.

SPEAKER: So you mentioned you would like to see the BRICS countries have more of a leadership role in global affairs.

MR. PICCONE: Well, these five, not BRICS necessarily.

SPEAKER: Okay, these five. But wouldn't you say that in the last couple of years, in particular you can see several examples of that happening, and U.S. and perhaps the traditional Western powers not actually letting those countries do what they wanted to do? An example of that was actually the Iran nuclear deal when Turkey and Brazil negotiated the swap of the nuclear stockpile. And even though the same exact deal had been offered to Iran beforehand and Ahmadinejad was president, he was crazy, he rejected it. But when Turkey and Brazil offered the same thing, Iran actually agreed, but

then that deal wasn't accepted by the U.S. and they went for the sanctions. And other examples include, for example, the military intervention in Iraq and so on.

MR. PICCONE: Yes. No, I think they are upset with the way in which we completely dismissed their efforts on Iran and I think there were mixed signals that came from Washington. And, you know, it coincided with certain aspirations, for example, on the part of President Lula of Brazil to really play a leadership role as they saw a seat on the U.N. Security Council. There was a confluence of events. Then they were dismissed and that left a very bad taste in their mouths.

And in the case of Libya, I would say it was very much a point of contention for South Africa because South Africa had organized an African Union delegation to try to negotiate a peaceful path out of the conflict in Libya, and then NATO just, you know, came in and put all that aside. So that, again, feeds their argument we're not giving diplomacy a chance.

Now, in the case of Iran more recently, you know, this was a key argument that President Obama made, we need to give diplomacy a chance, and we may have averted conflict. So I think if we are smarter about how we do it, we can bring these countries along. And I think that was a good point of consensus with these countries on the more recent iteration of the Iran negotiations.

MR. TRAUB: So we may have time for one more question, then we'll adjourn for wine and cheese, if there is one more question. And if there's not, we'll adjourn. Oh, yes, there is one more question.

MR. CALL: Thank you. Hi, I'm Chuck Call. Hi, Ted. Congrats. This builds on the -- I liked the answer to the last question you gave. And as you know, I'm coordinating a project on rising powers and peace-building that includes four of these five powers.

And that leads to my question, which is a little bit of a discomfort as I listened to you. Are you maybe exaggerating the role of the democratic character of these regimes and their impact and foreign policies in terms of our democratizing the global order, which may be driven a little bit more by their strategic interests, particularly in the regions that they operate? And so maybe you can comment on the interface between the sort of democratic issues of their character as well as their conflict resolution. You mentioned South Africa being very interested in conflict resolution in ways that may or may not reflect its democratic character.

My impression from our project is that in Indonesia its democratic character becomes very important in its dialogues and conversations in Southeast Asia, more than I would have expected, but that's not necessarily the case, I think, with Brazil, certainly Turkey not so much these days. And so maybe you can comment on that.

And a related question is I think you've hinted around it, the limits of the platforms for reshaping the global order, particularly because of the veto of the P5, right, in the Security Council? And so absent a reform of the Security Council, it seems to me that IBSA and other platforms may have petered out a little bit in the last few years after their big push in the early 2000s. How do you envision sort of the future platforms for them exercising power on the global order? Thanks.

MR. PICCONE: Great questions, Chuck. Thanks. I mean, I think the first question goes to the heart of what this is all about. To what extent does your character as a democracy have any influence on your foreign policy behavior? And if my colleague, Bobby Herman, is still here -- he's not -- Bobby Herman and I did some research in which we looked at trends over 10 years. As countries democratized did it have any impact? And the takeaway was that for the stronger your democratic transition, the more likely you were to care about democracy in other countries. Eastern Europe is an obvious example in this case, but certainly in Latin America that was the trend, as well. And the weaker your democratic process, the less likely you were to do it.

So I wanted to update that thesis on these five countries and what I found was a much more mixed picture, that the overhang of their years of colonialism, et cetera, their solidarity ties with the nonaligned movement, and their own decision to be friends with all, their relations with China and Russia. All of this skewed toward neutrality of some kind and not taking sides. So I think it's going to be a much longer process of change, which is why I focus on kind of infrastructure and these other issues.

In terms of platforms for reform in international institutions, frankly, I'm not sure where it's going. I mean, this is why we're so focused here on "Order From Chaos" because it does look pretty chaotic right now. I think the overriding concern for terrorism in key parts of the world will drive much of this agenda. And I think it does require -- or, say, the climate change agenda, there are certain global challenges that do force these countries to step up.

And, you know, we saw it in the case of Brazil on the climate change issue and becoming

more of a high ambitious country or in the role they played on Internet governance, the debate over how do we manage governance of the Internet. And they really changed their views on this from a much more state-centric to a more multi-stakeholder and open Internet, which was largely a process of their business community and their civil society pushing the government to change its position. So this is where I see the possibility for change.

I think the Security Council reform agenda has lost a lot of momentum and I'm not sure if that's going to get picked up any time soon while so many countries are grappling with so many problems at home.

MR. TRAUB: All right. Well, Ted, that was a rich meal. Thank you so much. And now you'll have the postprandial wine and cheese.

MR. PICCONE: Thank you, Jim. (Applause)

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