

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION
WEBINAR

THE STATE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION
AND MULTILATERALISM:
A CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR LINDA THOMAS-GREENFIELD,
REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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PARTICIPANTS:

Opening Remarks:

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United Nations

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. COULIBALY: Good afternoon, everyone. Thank you for joining us for today's conversation on the State of International Cooperation and Multilateralism. I am Brahim Coulibaly, the Vice President of the Global Economy and Development Program at Brookings. And it's a privilege really and a great honor to welcome the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield.

By way of introduction, she is the 31st U.S. Ambassador to the UN. She was nominated by President Biden in January of last year and confirmed the following month by the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support and sworn in on February 24th of last year. Ambassador Thomas Greenfield is one of the most distinguished and experienced U.S. diplomats with over 35 years in the Foreign Service.

But prior to the United Nations, she held senior positions at the Department of State, including serving as Assistant Secretary of African Affairs from 2013 to 2017. And her distinguished foreign service career includes ambassadorship to Liberia and postings in Switzerland, Pakistan, Kenya, Gambia, Nigeria, and Jamaica. And after retiring from the State Department, she led the Africa practice at the Albright Stonebridge Group, and was distinguished fellow in African Studies at the Institute for the Diplomacy at Georgetown University.

She is the recipient of several awards, including the Hubert Humphrey Public Leadership Award, the Bishop John T. Walker Distinguished Humanitarian Service Award, and the Warren Christopher Award for Outstanding Achievement in Global Affairs.

Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield is often referred to as the people's ambassador, and is well-known for her trademark gunboat diplomacy, in reference to her

ability to break down barriers and connect with her counterparts at a human level first by inviting them over to cook together and taste her great Louisiana cuisine.

Madam Ambassador, thank you for joining us. We know that you have an extremely busy agenda, particularly with the crisis in Ukraine. And we really appreciate you taking the time to be with us today.

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFIELD: Well, thank you very much. Thank you for the kind introduction. And thank you for inviting me and giving me the opportunity here. Brookings does extraordinary work on global economic development issues. And I have engaged with you in the past and I'm delighted to be part of this discussion today.

MR. COULIBALY: Thank you. Before we start, I'd like to take a moment to pay our respects to one of your predecessors at the United Nations, and the first woman Secretary of State, Ambassador Madeleine Albright. She was also a partner of yours at the Albright Stonebridge Group. And if my memory serves me correctly, the last time I saw her was when I came to see you at your office before the pandemic.

She was certainly a courageous trailblazer, a champion of democracy and human rights and a strong believer, I would say, in multilateralism and international cooperation. And as you have correctly pointed out, she has definitely left a permanent mark on the United Nations and underworld. And her legacy, without a doubt, endure.

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFIELD: Her legacy is seen every day in the United Nations on the day she passed. We were considering a resolution on Ukraine, and every single Ambassador friends and foe got up and commented about her extraordinary career and the impact she had on their lives. It was really a great moment for us to hear her hear about her legacy, although it was extraordinarily sad that she was no longer with us.

MR. COULIBALY: Yeah. And the world will certainly remain a much better place for because of her service.

So, Madam Ambassador, you mentioned Ukraine. So, perhaps, we can start there with the Ukraine crisis and what you might see as some of the implications for the future of international cooperation. I think the one -- Ukraine is being viewed perhaps as the process. We may have come to a global conflict since World War II, and many view it as a turning point that could mark the beginning of a new World War.

So, first, how is the approach to the resolution of the war in Ukraine playing out at the UN? What guides are countries casting their votes for or against Russia, and even those who are abstaining? And then second, you know, what do you see as the main implication for the World War? Is this divide telling us anything about the configuration of any event or New World Order?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Let me start by saying, first and foremost, that the United States worked diligently prior to the start of this conflict to help find a diplomatic solution to avoid this unconscionable war that the Russians have taken against the Ukrainian people. Those efforts included President Biden reaching out directly to President Putin, meeting with him directly in the months and weeks ahead of this.

There were several meetings and discussions between Secretary Blinken and his counterpart, Foreign Minister Lavrov. We had discussions here in the United Nations to avoid what we are experiencing right now. Those efforts failed. And what Russia has succeeded in doing -- they failed in bringing down Ukraine, but they've succeeded in uniting the international community. They have succeeded and in unifying and embolden and giving courage to the Ukrainian people to fight back. And they have succeeded in uniting NATO.

And the international community has stood strongly and isolating Russia here at the United Nations. We've had two votes -- in fact, three votes in the General Assembly, one condemning Russia, in which we got 141 members to support. The second calling for humanitarian assistance for the Ukrainian people, we got 140 votes for that. And just recently, last week, we succeeded in suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council through the General Assembly. So, they are isolated here at the United Nations.

And while they do have a veto, their veto has not been effective in vetoing our voices and vetoing the condemnation, in vetoing the unity of the international community in calling Russia out. You mentioned that there are some countries who abstained, I can't explain the reasoning behind other countries' decisions about their votes. We've heard different explanations being given to us. Countries think that abstaining is neutrality. It's not neutrality.

We know that Russia has started an unconscionable war. They have committed war crimes. They have committed human rights violations. You can't be neutral in the face of those kinds of events. We know other countries have been threatened by the Russians, that if countries voted against them or abstain, they would take actions against those countries economically and at the United Nations. So, countries made the decision, unfortunately, to abstain in the face of intimidation.

But all said, we have been successful in isolating Russia here at the United Nations. And they've heard -- clearly, they've heard loudly from the international community that we condemn their unconscionable war against the Ukrainian people.

MR. COULIBALY: Thank you, Madam. I think your -- the leadership in the efforts to suspend Russia indeed from the Human Rights Council did not go do not go unnoticed. Where it hasn't, nonetheless, stopped Russia. And the question might be, what else is there in the United Nations toolkit to be able to pressure Russia and force them to

reverse course, especially that they are -- they have veto powers in the Security Council?
And is the UN running out of options at this point?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: We -- the UN and the multilateral system is still the best tool that we have to put pressure on the Russians. And we have not run out of options. We continue to ramp up our efforts. We continue to build our coalition of the willing against the Russians. The United States has increased our sanctions against the Russians. We have continued to put pressure on the Russians. And we have built a strong coalition of support for the Ukrainians here at the United Nations.

So, again, the Russians are feeling isolated. They're not attending meetings at high levels. They're using disinformation that is not believed. In the United Nations, they still continue to call this a military -- a temporary military action. And we've seen what their military action can lead to. It can lead to the destruction of a country.

We're also raising the voices of Ukrainians. I traveled to Moldova and Romania two weeks ago and had the opportunity to sit with refugees who had fled the carnage in Ukraine. To hear their sense of terror, their worry about their family members, and those voices will continue to be raised. And then secondly, I had the opportunity to see what the United Nations is doing on the ground to support those people who have been impacted by this war, both those who have crossed the border into neighboring countries, but the more than six million who are still living inside of Ukraine, who've been forced from their homes.

More than 10 million people have been forced. Totally, 4.3 million have crossed the borders into neighboring countries. And we're working with those neighbors, working with the United Nations systems, the humanitarian organizations to provide support to Ukrainians who are in need of that support.

MR. COULIBALY: Right. And I think you mentioned this, you know, solidarity. And I think it's really been impressive how the world came together, not just governments but also civil society, and even the private sector doing everything they can to deter Russia.

But at the same time, there are questions around the commitment of some countries to democracy and to the rule-based order when they vote against what was supposed to help reverse course. We'll certainly continue to see how this unfolds.

But if I can now take a step back from the crisis in Ukraine and discuss the state of U.S. relations with traditional partners at the UN. I believe that the previous administration had turned its back, to some extent, on multilateralism and deprioritized international cooperation. I think this reversal confused many of our traditional partners whose support, I think you would agree, is essential for us leadership.

But the good news is the Biden Administration began to reverse course from the first day in office. And for your part, you've also been proactive in repairing U.S. relation that the UN. So, how would you judge the current state of those relations? And to paraphrase President Biden, is America back at the UN?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Well, certainly, given the fact that I am running on a treadmill 24/7, we are back. And I will tell you that when I arrived in New York on the 25th of February, just a few hours after I was confirmed for this position, I really did hit the ground sprinting, as I described in my first remarks. Because within two days of -- no, four days of arriving here, I became President of the Security Council on March 1st.

And I think there were some doubts about whether we were truly back. We rolled up our sleeves, we really got to work in terms of rebuilding our relationships, rebuilding our alliances, reengaging in the multilateral system. You know, that we immediately noted

that we were rejoining the WHO. We announced rejoining the Human Rights Commission. We started it to work on the rejoining the Paris Agreement. So, we really did move forward, almost like a bulldozer, to get back into the multilateral system.

So, there's no doubt now that we're back. Our leadership has been asserted in all of these foras. We have taken the leadership rein and, for example, addressed the -- addressing the COVID pandemic. We have delivered -- the President noted that we can't address this pandemic alone by just dealing with the consequences in our own country. We have to address this in a global way. And we've led the global pandemic response.

We've delivered, at this point, more than 500 million doses of COVID vaccine. I have made sure wherever I travel that I highlight those efforts, including receiving and delivering doses, watching doses be administered to help frontline healthcare workers, watching doses being delivered to ordinary people. So, we -- we've really reinvigorated our long-term alliances and our partnerships, and we've created new opportunities for cooperation.

I've been on the road traveling. Since -- in the little over one year that I've been here, I've traveled to Ecuador, to Haiti, to Thailand, to Japan, to Nigeria, and Mali, Gabon. And it goes on and on. I mentioned Moldova and Romania just this past week. And all of that is part of our effort to again reengage.

I have tried, over the course of one year, to meet with every permanent representative here in New York. I've hit 117 as of today. And I'm disappointed because my plan had been to meet with all 193 in my first year. I realized that I can't be in two places at once. As I noted to you, I am being missed right now at the Security Council, as the meeting on Ethiopia is being discussed. But I do try to be in two places at one time, because I know

how important our presence is on the multilateral stage and how strong our voice is when we when we speak and in multilateral foras.

MR. COULIBALY: Yes. And most definitely, when you were taken off, nobody could have predicted the Ukraine crisis. So, priorities come insert themselves within priorities. So, I think achieving 117 is very impressive in this context.

But in terms of then the U.S. leadership, I think you would agree that it's about traditional partners, but also about nontraditional partners. And if the U.S. is going to lead effectively on the global stage, then how do we engage with the nontraditional partners, especially the ones that are influential in their own rights on the global stage?

And among the nontraditional partners, none is perhaps more influential than China. And some observers are concerned that we could end up in a bipolar world order, with U.S. and China leading two distinct blocks, similar to the Cold War era. So, competition is inevitable, but cooperation is also necessary to address some global challenges.

So, how are you navigating this complex relationship with China? And where do you differ the most with your Chinese counterpart?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, our relationship with China is probably the most complex, the most complicated, and the most consequential relationship that we have here in New York, but also around the globe. And the President has been clear that we're going to compete with China. And we -- but we have a profound stake in ensuring that the values and the institutions that the United States believes in, the institutions that we helped create and that we've invested in, continue to deliver.

So, we're not always as -- clearly, not always in sync with that what the Chinese as we approach them here on the international stage. But they are a permanent member of the UN Security Council, so we deal with them on a daily basis. I deal with them

consistently as a member of the P5. And as members of the P5, including Russia, we have a responsibility to uphold the foundational principles of the United Nations, of the Charter, and to encourage others to do the same. And this is why we have been so strong in pushing against Russia, a P5 member with responsibilities who has broken its commitment to the United Nations by invading another country.

So, we've put pressure on China to join us in condemning the Russians. We put pressure on China to joining us in holding the DPRK accountable for the recent -- the test of ICBMs that they have done over the course of the past few months. And we've put pressure on China to work with us in areas where we do have commonality, to work with us on delivering a humanitarian assistance, to work with us on climate change.

But that said, we continue to hold them accountable for their own human rights violations. We don't shy away from raising those concerns. And we've made clear that what we see happening in Xinjiang, related to the Uyghur, is a crime against humanity. It's genocide. We we've called it out for what it is, and we're committed to -- and the Administration is committed to consistently calling the Chinese out on this issue.

They clearly don't like that. They've made the unfortunate decision of aligning themselves with the Russians on Ukraine. But I don't think it's a comfortable place for them, because they have indicated that they do believe in the Charter. They do believe in the sovereignty of a nation. They do believe in the integrity of borders. And if they believe in those three things -- the Charter, sovereignty, and integrity of borders -- they cannot be comfortable supporting Russia's unconscionable attack on the Ukrainian people.

MR. COULIBALY: Yeah, that's a very powerful and compelling point. Then speaking on how the UN itself functions here, if you can switch a bit to the U.S. -- the UN reform agenda. So, I think there's broad agreement that since the UN was created after World War II, it has served a very useful function. However, it's increasingly evident too that

it could use some more reforms to respond more effectively to the challenges of the 21st Century.

I think you echoed some of these sentiments during your confirmation hearing, when you stated that we must have the courage to insist on the reforms that make the UN more efficient and effective.

So, having now observed how the UN operates from within over the past year or so, what do you see as the highest priority areas for reforming the UN system that can make it more efficient and effective?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, this is a complicated bureaucracy. It's a huge bureaucracy. That's not just how we operate in the Security Council, on the General Assembly, but you have all the specialized agencies that are operating out there as well.

And our approach to the UN has been very deliberate. It's been strategic. We've tried to be inclusive in terms of extending the UN system to those countries and people who have been historically marginalized, and to include racial and ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, those marginalized do this due to sexual orientation. We lead in the UN, and we push reforms in the UN that recognize the basic rights of people. That this is not about just member state rights, but it's about the rights of people.

So, we've worked to push up reforms in terms of advancing gender equality and the full and meaningful participation of women within the UN system. We're working to tackle some of the global challenges that require member states to actually be part of the UN system.

And then as you know, there's a whole slew of reform efforts that are out there, including one most recently that we support, that has been led by Liechtenstein, that

requires -- will require this resolution pass that the permanent members of the Security Council come to the General Assembly and explain why they used their veto. And we support that. And so, we --

MR. COULIBALY: Okay. So, more accountability, basically.

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Yes. So, we're working -- we're ready to explain when we use our veto, and we want others to explain when they use their veto as well. And we need to, within the UN system, you know, ensure the integrity and effectiveness of the of the UN itself. We're working to snap out sexual abuse, exploitation. We're pushing the UN to become more efficient. And we're working with other countries to support those efforts as well.

There's lots of discussion, when you talk about UN reform, of Security Council reform as well, and what that will mean in terms of adding new elected members, as well as adding new permanent members of the Security Council. We've been clear that we are prepared to engage in those discussions and see -- and absolutely see where they lead us.

MR. COULIBALY: And here at Brookings, we know we've been obviously doing some work looking at this and brought together scholars from global north and global south, to collectively brainstorm about how the UN system can be reformed and what a reformed UN system could look like. And we have some ideas and proposal we've put into a collection of essays that's available --

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Well, I'd love to see those, please share them with me.

MR. COULIBALY: Yes, most definitely. And same with the reformatting, the Secretary General has also -- had mentioned the upcoming summit of the future, to agree on a common agenda and a package of reforms for the international system. But we

know that previous efforts or attempts to reform the UN system have faced significant obstacles.

What can we expect from the upcoming summit? But I have to say that this was announced -- that was before the Russia-Ukraine, maybe the dynamics have now changed. But are you optimistic that if it does go through with the reform plan for next year, that this time could be different and we could see a more meaningful reform of the institution including, as you flagged, the UN Security Council itself?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, we stand ready to partner with the Secretary General and broadly with the United Nations and member states and civil society and other stakeholders on many of the elements of the Secretary General's common agenda report. And particularly, in areas of climate change, on human rights, on public health, on sustainable development goals, and on UN reform.

So, I think this is still a work in progress. And we'll look forward to seeing where it leads. But just to be clear, it's that we will partner with the United Nations on, partner with the Secretary General to work on making this organization that we all contributed to building, to make it more efficient, to make it more effective, to make it deliver on what people expect it to deliver on.

And particularly as it relates to the Security Council, that our job is to save the world from the scourge of war. We should be promoting peace and security. And we have to make sure that that is front and center of what we do and what the Secretary General does in his efforts to push forward his own agenda.

MR. COULIBALY: Yeah. And here at Brookings too, we're predisposed to share with all parties involved in the reform process the results from our research. And I think we mentioned the UN specifically, but I think -- I believe other multilateral institutions -- the IMF, World Bank, WTO -- could all use some reforms to be better fit to address the

challenges of the 21st Century. But certainly, the UN showing the way can certainly inspire the other institution to undertake those meaningful reforms.

If I can now talk about the Sustainable Development Goals, which now it's been -- now seven year since the countries around the world have come together to establish the UN Sustainable Development Goals. I think it was in 2015 with a target date of 2030. Progress has been slow, and many countries are considered to be off track. And COVID has likely even set some countries back. And the Ukraine crisis, I suspect, is not going to help either.

So, as we approach this midpoint of the target, how do you assess the progress on those SDG agenda globally, but also in the U.S.? Because it's not just about developing countries, I think SDGs are very much relevant for the U.S. And what additional efforts and steps do you think are needed to accelerate the progress?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, it's -- I mean, we've made clear from the start that we're committed to accelerating the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, you know. And there's some that are a higher priority for us than others.

I'll start with SDG 4 four, where it focuses on quality education. Ten U.S. agencies, including USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, partnered globally with countries to improve education systems at all levels. We've provided over a billion to support governments and civil society. But the COVID crisis satisfactory significantly on that goal. Suddenly it's not just about providing books and teachers, it's providing technology, which, you know, was clearly something we should have been doing.

But we had to speed up, you know, providing the technology so kids could learn from home. It was easier here to do it in the United States and in the developed world than to do it in the developing world. So, the developing world has fallen behind significantly

on this development goal because of because of the pandemic. And I think we're going to see that they're falling behind on other goals as well.

SDG 5, Advancing Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, our view on that is simple. Women's political participation promotes strong democracy. It supports peace. I talked about that today, I was in the Council on a Yemen discussion and talked about the importance of having Yemeni women engaged in the peace talks and in the newly formed government.

We see that even in Ukraine, where the vast majority of the refugees that we see flying across the border from Ukraine are women. So, women have to play a significant role. And of course, across Africa, we see the importance that women have played in peace and security. And I always take the opportunity, when we're talking about women's engagement in peace and security, to commend President Johnson Sirleaf in the efforts that she made in Liberia, to bring about peace and security after that country had gone through more than 14 years of civil war.

Climate change, we have to address the protection of our natural resources, our ecosystems. That's a top priority for the United States. We strongly supported the UN environment assemblies launch of negotiations for global agreement to combat ocean plastic pollution. That happened just recently. And closer to home, we've endorsed the goal of conserving at least 30% of land and water by 2030.

So, we're making progress for sure, as are others, on trying to address these goals. But we have to be realistic that the contingencies of today's crises set us back every single time. None could have projected Ukraine, none of us could have projected the pandemic. And we're beginning to see more and more the impact of climate change increasingly having an impact on our ability to actually achieve these goals in the timeframe that we have.

But we've not we've not pushed them back. We've not deprioritized them. We're committed to accelerating the achievements of the SDGs

MR. COULIBALY: Yeah. And certainly, you know, a stronger U.S. leadership and voice on the issue would be really important in pushing the agenda forward. And here in Brookings, we do quite a lot of work, including with the leadership of the UN, also on those sustainable development goals.

And we even have launched center in late 2020, which kind of really signaled our own institutional commitment to this agenda, including on the U.S. leadership on the agenda as well. So, it would certainly be a better place in 2030 if all countries are able to declare victory in terms of reaching their targets.

So, I have one more question, and then we can turn to some Q&A, audience questions. So, I think when -- this is about your priorities when you took office versus -- and also what the priorities are going forward. I think when you took office, the world was, and is still, really facing significant challenges, ranging from looming climate crisis, global pandemic, recession, and the string of conflicts and humanitarian crisis: Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Ethiopia, among others.

In the face of these numerous challenges, and new ones that actually spring up to, how do you prioritize?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: I think I heard you -- you used a phrase "the priorities within the parties." And that's really basically what we've had to do. And I used to hear President Sirleaf talk about the priorities of the priorities. And you don't always get to define what your priorities are. But if I could define a priority, it is always to be ready and flexible to address whatever priority we have in front of us.

And to do that, you have to do what we've done over the course of this year, rebuild our alliances. Engage with everyone in the UN so that you understand their priorities

and they understand our priority, so that we're not calling on them the day we need them. We've developed those relationships. We've done the gunboat diplomacy that is needed to engage with people so that when we need their support, they they're there for us. And when they need our support, we are there for them as well.

I think among many of the priorities here for us, we live with our values and human rights as our core. We cannot ever ignore the importance of human rights. And every single one of these crises that we have engaged in over the course of the one year that I've been here, from Ethiopia, to Yemen, to Sudan, to Libya, you name it, it is -- it's about the impact on ordinary people.

And I tried, to the extent that I can, to engage with ordinary people so that I can bring their voices to the Security Council, when I speak at the Security Council.

And then Brahima, the other issue that I think is really important and I think you and others on the audience will appreciate, we have made it part of our priority to ensure that NGOs and civil society have a voice at the United Nations. So, we push regularly and constantly for civil society voices to speak. When we spoke yesterday about the issues of sexual violence against women, we had three extraordinary women come before the council to speak, two speaking from the context of Syria and one from Ethiopia.

And those voices matter. They matter more than our voices matter. So, that is a priority for the U.S., as we deal with the myriad of crises, having civil society there, having human rights at the center of our policy, and bringing our partners and alliances together to partner on issues of common interest to the globe.

MR. COULIBALY: Thank you. And I can't emphasize enough the importance of what you just mentioned on the way that UN has been able to bring in civil society organizations into the discourse. I think it's very crucial. And it will be great for that to remain a very important part, even in the future, of multilateral system as we envision it.

So, with that, I can turn to some of the questions that we've received. And the first one is from Sarah Craven. She's from the UN Population Fund? And her question is, how do we ensure that the unique needs of women and girls, particularly protection from sexual violence, are prioritized in a humanitarian crisis?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Sara, thank you so much for that question. And I will recommend that you go back on UN net and listen at our discussion yesterday in the Security Council. Because every single member state indicated how important it is that we prioritize women and girls in every activity that the United Nations is doing, wherever they are in the world. And that we hold countries and we hold the UN agencies and even the NGOs that we fund accountable for ensuring that they are focused on the needs of women and girls.

It is unconscionable today that we're still dealing with the issues of sexual exploitation of women and girls. Peacekeeping forces are even within the humanitarian community. It is unconscionable that today we're still dealing with rape as a tool of war.

I shared with the with the group that in the 1990s, I was working with Somali refugees who had escaped Somalia and were in the refugee camps in Dadaab. And Somali women were -- we were dealing with issues of women who were victims of violence. And we had a whole program, Women's Victims of Violence, and how do we address rape as a tool of war in the 1990s. It didn't start then, it didn't. And it hasn't ended now.

Because just yesterday, we're talking about Ukrainian women who have been the victims of rape in this unconscionable war that the Russians carrying out against the Ukrainian people. We heard an Ethiopian civil society voice, an advocate, talk about in Ethiopia women who were victims of rape in that war. So, it still continues today. And we have to be prepared to address it wherever we see it, and we have to call it out.

And we have to call out countries. The countries, partially out of embarrassment or whatever, they deny it. They can't deny it. What they have to do is hold their people accountable for engaging in these actions. And we have to hold countries accountable for holding their people accountable for these actions. And we have to give voice to the women who've been victims of this issue.

You can tell, Brahima, that this is an issue that is truly something that's important to me. We have to give these women their voices and not let them be victimized twice by not allowing them to hold their perpetrators accountable.

MR. COULIBALY: Thank you for that. And the next question is from Allah Alani (phonetic), who's a Director with the Menazel (phonetic), said, "Why is U.S. condemning Russia and imposing strong sanctions because of Ukraine while turning a blind eye on Israel, despite occupation of Palestinian land and the atrocities committed against Palestinians?"

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: We condemn atrocities wherever they happen. But we also strongly support Israel's right to exist and the unfair targeting of Israel within the United Nations and across the world. The Biden Administration has been clear that we support a two-state solution, and we have encouraged that here at the United Nations and in our conversations both with Israel and with the Palestinians.

And since I've been here, I've traveled to Israel and I also traveled to the West Bank, and I've met with both sides on this issue. And clearly, we need to find a solution that provides peace and security for the Israeli people, but also safety and security for the Palestinian people within their own borders.

So, this is something that we have been clear on throughout. But again, here at the United Nations, we have been absolutely categorically supportive of Israel's right to exist. And we have fought against the unfair targeting of Israel within the United Nations.

MR. COULIBALY: Okay. And the final question comes from Steve Brandt. He's a Principal at Trintab Management System. He says, "Based on President Zelenskyy declaring the world's peace organization is obsolete in his speech to the U.S. Congress, do you support a design of a new peace process that eliminates the root cause of why we fight, and offer us a vision of the world behind war to motivate the societal transformation?"

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, President Zelenskyy just didn't say that in front of the Congress, he said it to the Security Council when he spoke to the Security Council. And I certainly appreciated and understand his frustration. His country is being attacked, people are being killed, cities are being demolished, hospitals with children are being attacked. And he asked a question that none of us could have denied him. And that is, why has the UN not done more to stop this?

We have done -- from the start, we have made every effort to isolate the Russians, to put pressure on the Russians, and to help the Russians find a diplomatic solution to have avoided this this war. We have supported Ukrainy, the Ukrainian government, throughout this, both in terms of funding -- I just heard, as I was coming into this meeting, that we've announced another -- nearly a billion dollars of support for Ukraine.

But the United Nations has to remain strong in calling out Russia and holding Russia accountable. It was not an easy task suspending Russia from the Human Rights Council. So, the United Nations and the member states have supported Ukraine, and we will continue to support Ukraine and do everything possible to bring this war to an end.

We are supporting the Ukrainian prosecutors' efforts to gain evidence to bring against the Russians for war crimes. And we've called it war crimes, and we will do everything possible to hold the Russians accountable.

MR. COULIBALY: Thank you, Madam Ambassador. And we're getting close to the end our time, so we could let you resume the busy agenda you have at the UN. Do you have any parting thoughts you'd like to share with the audience?

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: You know, the United Nations is the best tool that we have multilaterally to address issues of peace and security around the globe. It is not perfect. Reforms are needed. Changes need to be made. But we can still work as an institution to hold countries accountable, to support those countries that are in need -- as we've done with Ukraine -- and to support people, the people around the world who look to the United Nations. And sometimes they're just looking to hear that we have not forgotten them. And that is something that we do on a regular basis.

So, we're committed to helping this organization to improve, to helping -- to build this capacity to address peace and security issues, as they are presented to us on a regular basis. And none of us can guess where the next crisis will be. We're dealing with the crisis of it up to date and the crisis of yesterday. We don't know what the crisis of tomorrow will be. But we will keep working to try to be prepared to address those crises as they are presented to us.

So, thank you so much for inviting me and giving me this opportunity. And I look forward to continuing to represent the interests of the United States but also the interests of the world, to find peaceful solutions to an all these crisis situations that we're dealing with today.

MR. COULIBALY: No, thank you so much. And we are also very grateful for your leadership and service to the country and to the world at this very critical moment. So, thank you again, Ambassador. And we appreciate you even taking time out and skipping a UN Security Council meeting to be with us. We really appreciate it. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR THOMAS-GREENFILED: Thank you very much. And appreciate you as well.

MR. COULIBALY: I think, yeah, that they have automatically muted us. Yes, yeah.

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

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