

CATO INSTITUTE

POLICY FORUM

A ROBUST UNITED NATIONS IN THE 21ST CENTURY:

BENEFIT, DANGER, OR FANTASY?

Wednesday, September 6, 2000

Moderator:

Ted Galen Carpenter

With:

Stefan Halper, Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State;
William Durch, Senior Associate, Henry L. Stimson Center; and
Alan Tonelson, Senior Fellow,
U.S. Business and Industry Council

The Cato Institute
F.A. Hayek Auditorium
Washington, D.C.

P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. CARPENTER: Good afternoon and welcome to our policy forum, "A Robust United Nations in the 21st Century: Benefit, Danger, or Fantasy."

I am Ted Galen Carpenter, Vice President for Defense and Foreign Policy studies here at the Cato Institute. The United Nations has opened its millennium summit and in the buildup to that summit, we have seen a plethora of proposals to strengthen the organization, everything from creating a taxing power on international financial transactions to establishing a standby U.N. army for far more robust peacekeeping and indeed peace-making enterprises, revitalizing the trustee system to allow the U.N. to take failed States under its institutional wing and basically create international protectorates.

We have seen other proposals such as the permanent international criminal court to bring those accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity to justice. That, of course, raises a number of questions, including whether any of these proposals, much less all of them, are feasible. And, even if they are feasible, whether they would be in the best interests of the United States of America. Would the United States really want to be an active member of an organization with the kinds of powers that are being proposed?

We have a distinguished panel this afternoon to address these and an assortment of other issues. Our first speaker is Alan Tonelson, who is a Research Fellow with the U.S. Business and Industry Council Educational Foundation, where he focuses on U.S. economic, technology and national security policy. He has a new book coming out in just a few weeks, "The Race to the Bottom." That will be published by West View Press in November.

Previously, Alan was a Fellow at the Economic Strategy Institute and an Associate Editor at "Foreign Policy." He is the co-editor of "Power-nomics: Economics and Strategy After the Cold War" and the author of "Made in China: America's Failed Trade Policies Toward the People's Republic." His articles on international economic policy and foreign policy have appeared in a variety of major publications, including "Foreign Affairs," "Foreign Policy," "The National Interest," The New York Times, the Washington Post, and "Atlantic Monthly."

Mr. Tonelson received his B.A. in History with highest honors from Princeton University. Please join me in welcoming Alan Tonelson.

(Applause.)

ALAN TONELSON, SENIOR FELLOW,
U.S. BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY COUNCIL

DR. TONELSON: Thank you very much, Ted. I still find myself challenged by the possibility of raising the actual podium as opposed to the microphone. Let's see what happens. Oh, my goodness, look at that. Gee, welcome to the 21st century.

I would like to thank you all for coming and I would like to thank Cato for once again holding a very timely and, I hope, useful foreign policy forum.

The America foreign policy community, you know, that cluster of current officials, former officials, think tank types, journalists, academics, has-beens, former has-beens, wannabe's, has become very good at debating major issues in a strategic vacuum. Think of many of the foreign policy controversies of the last few decades: Should we be as a nation interventionist or non-interventionist? Should we be multilateral or unilateral or maybe even, I guess, bilateral or trilateral or quadrilateral?

Is military force losing its utility or not? None of the principals in these controversies has ever favored the American people with a detailed, comprehensive description of the larger purposes and aims of U.S. foreign policy. Even a high profile debate in the Reagan years, for those of you out there who are old enough to remember them, between Secretary of State George Shultz and Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger over when to use military force was stunningly devoid of any discussions of the geopolitical or economic priorities that have

to shape the decision to use force. It was a debate about means that completely ignored ends.

Today we witness the opening of the U.N.'s millennium summit, a summit whose very theme is the U.N.'s role in the 21st century. At first glance, however, this millennium summit seems all too likely to globalize the American tendency to debate foreign policy in a strategic vacuum. But the run-up to the millennium summit and the longer lasting discussions of the U.N.'s role in the post-Cold World -- because after all it was the end of the Cold War that really energized not only the national, but global debate, over what should the U.N. do now that the paralysis of great power relations had been removed -- this long-lasting debate has displayed another, but I think related and, equally important problem.

And this is the reluctance, it seems, of U.N. supporters, U.N. reformers, including American Presidents, U.N. Secretary-Generals, members of Congress and that larger foreign policy community that I just described a few moments ago, their reluctance to tell the American people exactly what they mean when they press for a stronger and more effective U.N., a phrase that you come across frequently in their reports and various other writings and statements.

In other words, what is the goal? What is the goal that we should be, to be sure, gradually and responsibly and

pragmatically working toward? What do they mean when they say a "stronger and effective U.N.?" To do what exactly?

Now, I fully understand the uses of ambiguity in politics and also diplomacy in many instances, especially when such grand and complex ideas like global governance are being considered. But in the last analysis, foreign policy has to consist of more than ambiguity. The U.N. supporters have been pushing for a stronger world organizations for 50 years now. The Cold War has been over for more than ten years.

Some of the ideas that have been bandied about, however generally, might be fantastic ideas. My main purpose here is not to judge them on their content, but to call attention to the need to flesh out this content. I, more often than not, can't figure out what that content is. So I find it very difficult to see how we can have a useful debate about U.N. reform or strengthening the U.N. or what the organization's role generally should be if I don't know what the advocates for change want.

I think we are entitled to more specifics than we have received so far. And the need for more specifics is made all the more urgent by U.N. supporters' standard disclaimer that we are not talking about world government. Relax, it's not on the agenda. We know better. And also by the continuing practice of offering proposals that, nonetheless, seem to incorporate many of the essentials of what world government schemes would have to

involve if we are serious about this. Maybe we are not, I don't know. I just don't know.

Specificity is also urgent because there is a remarkable amount of activity currently underway in what we might call the nonprofit global governance industry. Much of this activity has pointedly included senior U.S. government officials, who rarely throw cold water on the ideas raised in these venues.

It would be rather easy to conclude that many of the most prominent U.N. supporters in the U.S. Government, or those recently departed from the U.S. Government, are playing something of a double game here in this "what should the role of the U.N. be debate?"

For example, the Commission on Global Governance, a private group of 28 prominent former international leaders, makes clear on its Web site that, and I'll quote, "We make it clear that we are not proposing even movement toward world government," and it is italicized, so it's got to be true.

In his new report, prepared for this millennium summit, U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, claims that, quote, nothing is less desirable, unquote, than standard, quote, images of world government, of centralized bureaucratic behemoths, trampling on the rights of people and states.

And yet, when the admittedly vague proposals for strengthening the U.N. are discussed at greater length, although

not necessarily greater specificity -- you can have length without specificity, it seems, at least in this field -- the disclaimers start to look a little hollow. For example, President Clinton, an awfully good politician, knows better than to push terribly specific U.N. improvement blueprints, much less more ambitious global government schemes. Although he did, of course, spearhead America's entry into the World Trade Organization, arguably along with the International Monetary Fund, the most powerful international organization ever created, an organization that has great authority over American laws and American regulations. That is a whole other debate, of course.

But in a little noticed speech in Canada last October, he spoke favorably of becoming "more of a Federalist world," as the U.N. becomes more active in peace making or peacekeeping. And although Federalism obviously entails much decentralization of political power, by definition this decentralization takes place within a central context, within a context of supreme authority. Somebody has got it. Various things become delegated to various kinds of sub-national entities, but there remains a central power, a supreme authority.

Internationally speaking, that is a sobering thought. The Commission on Global Governance has, I think, quite usefully emphasized the importance of not trying to achieve at the global level goals that still can't be achieved at national levels. I

think that is a very useful point that they have made; one that I wish U.N. reform types would pay more attention to, in fact.

But in the same report, this Commission speaks of the need for a global forum that can "provide leadership in economic, social, and environmental fields." Well, that is kind of a vague phrase, to be sure, but "provide leadership," it seems pretty active to me. It seems like you are talking about something with a fair degree of oomph behind it and also a fair degree of autonomy.

You also see phrases in this report like "creating an economic security council to give political leadership and promote consensus on international economic issues." Yet, at the same time, we just heard, they said, "We can't try to address problems on the global level that even states can't resolve." I detect some inconsistency there.

The Secretary-General, for his part, while on record as opposing highly centralized world government schemes and emphasizing that the U.N. must work with States and indeed seek to strengthen them, has also written that, "States need to develop a deeper awareness of their dual role in our global world." He has added, and this is where it gets interesting, that this dual role implies that "decision-making structures, through which governance is exercised internationally and on an ongoing basis, must reflect the broad reality of our times."

Again, that seems to be quite active. It seems to involve some authority somewhere that is rather autonomous and rather powerful. A final passage worth quoting from the Secretary-General's report, and it is contained in Paragraph 355, which means you do really have to read these things all the way through: "In many areas we cannot do our job because disagreements among member states preclude the consensus needed for effective action."

I am reading that and I think, gee, on the one hand, he is talking about an organization that must already rest on and reflect the interests of the individual member states and yet here we have a quite explicit complaint: you know, these member States and their inability to get together, they keep cramping my style. I can't do what I would like to do. I can't do what the Secretariat should be doing, what I think the Secretary ought to be doing.

Again, that is a funny definition of reflecting the interest. And then, he goes on to say, "Moreover, the highly intrusive and excessively detailed mode of oversight that member states exercise over program activities makes it very difficult for us to maximize efficiency and effectiveness."

So, on the one hand, we are here to serve member States. On the other hand, you know, this inspection stuff is

really again cramping our style. Get out of our faces. Let us do our job, whoever we are and whatever that job is.

Again, I don't think it is being excessively deconstructionist to ask what do they mean by these words. These words in these reports are always there for very specific reasons. If they are not expressly clear right away, it is fair to ask, what are they trying to suggest or to convey?

And the most important answer, I think, or I should say the most valid answer that anybody can come up with at this stage is, "I don't know." I don't know. But that is troubling.

Now, also participating in the debate over the U.N.'s role in world affairs are groups of more ardent and, in fact, notably more candid supporters of a strengthened U.N. and strengthened international institutions per se; not that they are above what looks an awful lot like dissembling themselves.

There was a wonderful ad run in the Washington Times. I don't know why they ran it in the Washington Times. It was by the World Federalists. I don't know what kind of an audience they thought they might reach. The typeface is so small that I will have to break out my reading glasses. It is like a half a point type.

"On the one hand," and it is an ad written by former Congressman John Anderson, who is the President of the World Federalist Association. He is calling for "a strengthened United

Nations to take the lead in international relations." "Take the lead," that sounds, again, like something with a lot of oomph behind it and its own ideas of what that oomph ought to accomplish.

He also quotes Walter Cronkite, saying, "We need a system of enforceable world law, a democratic federal world government, to deal with world problems." Again, that sounds like a pretty specific, pretty powerful organization to me. Yet, at the same time, he says, "We need a system that will complement the work of individual nations."

Well, that is kind of pulling back a little bit. But again, which point should I believe? Which point should I take more seriously? They are obviously clashing points.

But even more important than these obvious tensions between various planks and their platforms is a complete failure of these more ardent world government types, but it is also shared by the more mainstream or more "respectable" world government, U.N. supporter types. It is a complete failure to come to grips in any useful pragmatic way with the really tough questions that global governments would raise.

I would single out two in particular. One, where does the locus of sovereignty lie? You can hire any number of political scientists and bureaucrats to try to parse out sovereignty and try to share it and split it. Ultimately,

sovereignty is indivisible. You either have it or you don't. There are no "if," "ands" or "buts" about it.

Where does the locus of sovereignty lie in all of these schemes? It is never clear. But if it remains with nation-states, as many of these proposals insist that it would, then U.N. supporters are left with the same kinds of problems that they keep complaining about, especially in the security and peacekeeping fields; i.e., you can't mobilize troops quickly enough. You wind up waiting six or eight months after this or that atrocity occurs, and that is not acceptable. So we have to mobilize them faster.

But if the nation-states can continue to hem and haw and in fact resort to their own constitutional processes, to figure out, do we want to get involved in this or that Security Council authorized operation or not, you are left with the same problem. You are waiting six months. The problem may be over with already.

Second, without a powerful, truly autonomous international organization, how can consensus and cooperation be fostered where none exists right now? More important, how can it be done without conventional diplomacy, which ultimately involves the use of power of some kind, not necessarily military power, maybe economic power, but power of some kind, something that nation-states have always done?

So, do we really want something big and centralized replacing the group of things that are relatively small, of course not the U.S., but, generally speaking, relatively small and very, very decentralized? Again, I am not sure, but I don't think they are sure either. I think this brings us to maybe the most important conclusion that could be drawn about this U.N. reform or "what should the role of the U.N. in the 21st century be" debate that is occurring in New York right now.

And that is, despite all of the world leaders assembled, all of the limousines, all of the hotel rooms occupied, all of the restaurant reservations made, all of the traffic held up, we still lack the basic prerequisites of a U.N. reform debate. Because either the U.N. reformers don't really know what they want after all these reams of paper are examined, or they won't tell us.

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Alan. That gets us off to a fairly provocative start.

Our second speaker is Stefan Halper. He is a Senior Managing Partner at Halper, Roosevelt and Brown, Incorporated, a local consulting firm. He is also the Chairman of the American Journalism Foundation, which does tremendous work in sending U.S.

journalists overseas to broaden their knowledge of other countries.

He is also the host and Executive Editor of This Week from Washington, a weekly radio program syndicated by Radio America and heard on some 150 stations across the United States.

During the Reagan Administration, Dr. Halper was Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, working at the Bureau of Political, Military Affairs at the U.S. State Department. From 1971 to 1977, he worked at the White House with President Richard Nixon and President Gerald Ford.

Dr. Halper's columns on foreign affairs and national security policy have been published widely, appearing in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Los Angeles Times, Weekly Standard, National Review, and many other newspapers and magazines.

He also has a British connection. He received his Ph.D. from Oxford University at, I believe, roughly the same time as our Commander-in-Chief.

Stef Halper.

(Applause.)

STEFAN HALPER,

FORMER DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE

DR. HALPER: Actually, that is right, Ted. We were in the same class. But we will leave that alone for now.

Let me thank the Cato Institute, particularly Ted Carpenter and Gary Dempsey, for inviting me to think again about a favorite topic, the United Nations and where it is going.

As we speak, New York is gridlocked with the largest gathering of heads of state ever. That gridlock could well stand as a metaphor for the U.N. itself: so much hope, so much disappointment.

Every member and head of state will be there with his own agenda, playing to audiences back home and around the world. They are likely to adopt Secretary Kofi Annan's proposals for a revitalized U.N. in the century ahead that will, "do everything we can to end war and poverty, support globalization, halt the spread of AIDS, and increase economic development." More on that in a moment.

It is particularly timely to examine an institution that has been around longer than most of us have been. The U.N. has grown from a body of largely European and Western Hemisphere nations, almost classically Western in outlook, to one counting more than 185 members, stretching from the lone superpower, the United States, to Pacific Atoll States like Nauru, admitted to the U.N. last summer, population 11,845, and each with exactly one vote in the General Assembly.

The U.N., most historians would agree, has largely served the interests of the United States, at least in the first several decades. Many find this uncomfortable. I do not. The point remains that the U.N., until the 1960's, was a reasonably reliable instrument of U.S. foreign policy. Under its umbrella the war against North Korean aggression was waged; Soviet outrages in East Germany, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia were condemned; the international financial was buoyed by the IMF, allowing countries to recover rapidly from balance of payments crises; the world's hot spots were monitored, in the Middle East, Kashmir and elsewhere; and, even later, the U.N. presence in places like Cyprus and El Salvador have kept the peace or helped monitor an end to bloody conflicts.

Now, we should ask what the U.N. should do in the century unfolding before us, and particularly what the U.N. is capable of doing that falls within our interests.

To achieve the goal set up by the Secretary-General begs a simple question: Is the organization able, managerially, financially and politically, to function effectively? A candid answer to that question requires a look at how the U.N. has managed its own operations over the years.

If there were a report card on that, I am afraid the answer would be "needs improvement, lots of it." Consider this: the U.N. bureaucracy remains today largely unaccountable, despite

efforts to clean up its act. Example: It was only in 1994 and under heavy pressure from Congress that the U.N. appointed its first inspector general, a feature modern bureaucracies around the world have had for decades.

What that first Inspector General, Carl Poskie, did was not entirely reassuring. In his first report he found outright fraud and corruption. In Somalia, for example, \$369,000 was paid for fuel distribution that never happened. The contractor simply pocketed the money. And there are many more examples. Yet, the Inspector General's inquiries on these and other matters fell short. Madeleine Albright, no apologist, had hoped the new I.G. would be a junkyard dog. Instead we got, she said, "A junkyard puppy."

That was six years ago. Are we better off now? According to a 1999 GAO study, the answer is "not really." For example, the U.N. Secretariat's swollen staff and their inflated salaries has not changed, despite a U.N. claim of 1,000 positions that were eliminated. In fact, these 1,000 positions were already vacant. They were simply taken off the rolls.

Too often structural reform was simply shifting around titles. Two departments, in fact, were renamed. Two others were merged with no staff reductions.

Meanwhile, the more energetic I.G.'s office uncovered more and larger examples of fraud and waste. In Angola, for

example, more than \$15 million in unneeded goods and services for the Angolan peacekeeping mission, which was itself an abject failure, were ordered while established financial rules and regulations and procedures were simply ignored.

Of course, the U.N. I.G. continues to serve at the pleasure of the Secretary General, a rule that can only inhibit a thorough housekeeping going forward. The list goes on, but the fundamental point is the U.N. still has substantial problems in managing itself. So, how does it manage the affairs of others? Not very well, if you look at the peacekeeping efforts.

Besides the abject failure in Angola, we can add Bosnia, Burundi, the Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and, most recently, Sierra Leone, in which poorly trained U.N. units found themselves captured by a ragtag band of cut-throats, who could only be saved by the timely intervention of British troops.

Let me as an aside make one comment on Somalia. It has not been much in the news lately, but what has come out is illustrative. At the end of last month, Somalia's experience as "a territory without government" came to an end with a new President, its first in ten years. Yet, it remains questionable whether Mr. Hassan will ever rule or even reign. The warlords have yet to be heard from.

Even this modest achievement was not the result of U.N. nation-building, but the result of a conference held and

organized by the leader of Djibouti. The humiliations from Somalia, and now Sierra Leone, should have been a red-light warning. But in the manner of the U.N., the lessons are only seeping in.

But the peacekeeping failures go deeper than its military ineptitude. Amidst proposals for reform, which are badly needed, is buried the question of what the U.S. role should be. Some would have U.S. forces committed to conflicts that have little to do with our national interests. Under a velvet cloak of internationalism is a stark surrender of U.S. sovereignty, of choice, spanning budgetary questions, how our tax dollars are spent, how our sons and daughters are deployed, who will command them, and where in fact the deployments will be.

The report on the Panel on U.N. Peace Operations, for example, envisions the possible sacrifice of American lives in conflicts and disputes that have little or no relationship to U.S. national security. That issue, of course, is the pivot on which an important part of the national security debate turns in this country. And, I might add, a very substantial majority of the American people oppose such deployments.

Whether the failure to generate support for far-flung missions in the U.S. or Russia or China is a lack of realism about what peacekeeping at its best can accomplish, I am not

sure. My point is that there is limited support in the U.S., China, Russia, and other places.

The peacekeeping can stop or perhaps limit damage done to lives and property. It cannot by itself rebuild a society or create something that has never existed. After more than a half century of technical advice and well-paid advisors, their theories and programs, we don't yet understand the technology required to build civil societies.

Once an election is held, for example -- and even the record on that is spotty -- how do you establish an independent judiciary in a political culture with alien traditions or a commercial code in places with no market experience in societies as distinct from each other as the former Soviet Republics or Paraguay?

One size does not fit all. Cultures and the conditions and arrangements surrounding authority and legitimacy vary greatly from place to place, a truth the U.N.'s rigid bureaucracy seems unable to grasp. It has often assumed wrongly that somewhere out there are nation-building magicians, Benthamite social engineers with the tools to do the job. But they don't, and it's not wise to pretend that they do.

Failure at peacekeeping has become almost routine at the U.N., but what about other international responsibilities like preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction? Here

the failure in Iraq is clear enough. Richard Butler's book amply demonstrates the inability of the United Nations and its agencies to pursue its task in the face of determined resistance.

Central to these management and operational difficulties is the U.N. membership itself. Member governments are unable to surmount their domestic political realities and curb their aspirations, often extreme, and very different from ours. And that will be true a century from now.

The present-day U.N. Security Council, for example, is a oligarchy of permanent representatives. But, like medieval Poland, it is a divided oligarchy. It was during and after the Cold War. These members now and then will use their veto when it comes to their national interests as they define them.

Russia will not let the U.N. intervene in Chechnya, which Moscow sees as a sovereign territory to do with as it sees fit.

China has said no, and it will always say no, to the U.N. when the question of Tibet arises. Witness the PRC's refusal to allow the Dalai Lama to address a U.N. Conference on Religion, even though the Dalai Lama was not resident on Chinese soil.

Australia, outraged by a U.N. report on its aboriginal problem, has now limited the number of visas provided to U.N. inspectors.

Robert Kaplan, in his book, "The Coming Anarchy," had it right in commenting on what he said about a divided Security Council during the Cold War. That conflict "was actually about something, rather than a value-neutral affair in which both sides were unfortunately divided."

Indeed, because the Cold War was a totemic struggle of enlightened values versus despotic ones, divisions such as those in the Security Council were far more preferable than any compromising unanimity. And Kaplan adds, "The U.N. bureaucracy, along with others who seek a peaceful world, worship consensus. But that consensus can be a handmaiden of evil, since the ability to confront evil means the willingness to act boldly and ruthlessly and without consensus."

Unfortunately, that good advice from a journalist acquainted with the rough side of the real world is missed in Kofi Annan's well-intentioned diplomatic attempts at consensus, apparently at all costs.

In light of that, what can the U.N. do realistically? The tasks are five-fold and ambitious enough for an army of internationalists.

First, assistance programs, health/education relief. By now it is clear that disease is also globalized, as New York residents worry about the West Nile virus. The U.N. can do more to provide basic public health in regions suffering from a lack

of potable water and preventative medicine along with basic nutrition, not to mention the further spread of AIDS. Often simple measures can vastly approve human well-being and productivity. The real question is how to target and how to deliver these services. The same thing is true for relief operations, especially in the wake of disasters.

Second, monitoring elections and peace agreements, which often are bound up in the same process. These tasks are considerably more doable than peace-making or the new elastic clause, peace-building. Well-trained monitors have acted successfully as a deterrent to war.

Third, and this requires patience and persistence, we don't know how to transform political societies. That is true. But we can work at individual problems. For example, we can give advice on legal systems, help professionalize police and civil servants. We can assist in small- and medium-sized business developments and with social services.

Fourth, management reform, bloated staffs, redundant and conflicting programs, excessive budgets, all too apparent.

Finally, the U.N. must not proceed on the assumption that its mandate permits interference with sovereign states. To do so is to invite unyielding opposition from the very sources of political and fiscal support critical to success. And I include Russia and China here.

Finally, Kofi Annan's vision of the future, a more effective U.N., is welcome and in many ways laudable. But any vision has to be clear eyed and sensitive to both domestic political realities and questions of sovereignty.

Progress can be achieved, history shows us that. But history also shows how slow, halting and difficult that progress can be.

I thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you, Stef.

Our final speaker is William Durch, who is a Senior Associate at the Henry L. Stimson Center and serves as Project Director for the United Nations Panel on Peace Operations, which recently released a comprehensive study on the U.N.'s engagement in peacekeeping missions.

Dr. Durch also teaches courses on international organizations at Johns Hopkins University's Paul Nitze School for Advanced International Studies, and he teaches courses on peacekeeping at Georgetown University.

He is the editor and co-author of "The Evolution of U.N. Peacekeeping: Case Studies and Comparative Analysis," St. Martins was the publisher of that in 1993; and "U.N. Peacekeeping, American Policy and the Uncivil Wars of the 1990's," also St. Martins in 1996.

Dr. Durch holds a doctorate in Political Science from MIT and is a graduate of Georgetown University School of Foreign Service.

Please help me welcome William Durch.

(Applause.)

WILLIAM DURCH, SENIOR ASSOCIATE

HENRY L. STIMSON CENTER

DR. DURCH: Thank you, Ted. It is a pleasure to be here, although I feel a little bit like the internationalist snack at the Cato smorgasbord. But we will see how things go.

Cato makes you work for lunch, so that if you do a bad job, there's no soup for you.

I have some brief remarks, and then I think I will respond to some of Ted's comments and some of the other things that we have heard, taking advantage of being the tail-end Charlie here.

The United Nations as an institution is really a series of institutions that spin out from the Charter and the Breton Woods Agreement, so there are lots of different peace parts to the system. The parts that we hear most about are the security structures, the Security Council, and so forth. But there are a lot of others that serve many functions that I think probably

most of the people on the panel will probably agree with. There is a rules and standard-setting function for coordinating of cross-border activities amongst governments, legitimating joint problem-solving activities, addressing the needs of refugees, addressing international peace and security issues and promoting basic human rights, individual rights, and not corporate rights entirely or even primarily.

The rule on standard setting goes back 150 years, with the Universal Postal Union, so that you put a stamp on your letter here and somebody accepts it at the other end, a basic functional requirement for international communications. That has been continued through the Civil Aviation Organization for air and navigation standards and safety standards, the International Telecommunications Union that helps to allocate satellite frequencies for international communications, and things like the dialup standard on your modem that you use to call up the Internet.

Problem solving, the World Health Organization, coordinating the eradication of small pox or polio or measles; the needs of refugees, the High Commissioner for Refugees, seeing to the needs of 12 million stateless folks who have been displaced by war or persecution.

Peace and security is probably where we are going to focus the most. For example, where the Security Council

legitimizes coalition action, as against Iraq. Under Article 51 of the Charter, we certainly could have taken that action at Kuwait's request, collective and individual self-defense, but the Security Council resolution broadened that legitimacy to greater acceptance by the rest of the globe. That is handy.

The Council authorizes international operations to implement peace accords in war-torn states, which serves certainly the industrial states as well as the region's interest in peace, stability and economic growth and development. Whether an individual case is doable, whether particular tasks are doable is a different question, and we will come back to that shortly.

In terms of human rights, starting with the 1948 Declaration, moving through the Convention on Civil and Political Rights in the mid-1960's that the U.S. recently ratified -- it has chosen not to ratify the companion agreement on Economic and Social Rights -- and that is certainly the U.S. prerogative.

Turning to some of Ted's comments and in fact the enunciating paragraph for this meeting and going down some of these points, "forming a standby U.N. army, recent suggestions." I presume that refers to the report that I was director for, but it is a misreading of what the panel report suggested, which says only that forces committed by states to peacekeeping should be commensurate with the task at hand, that states should cooperate with each other to improve levels of readiness and

interoperability of forces that they would commit to those operations -- so that you don't get a mess like Sierra Leone if the operation is challenged by some criminal outfit that refuses to live up to the promises that they have made in a peace accord. And of course states remain free to say "no," if the U.N. asks them to join an operation.

Subordinating national sovereignty to humanitarian concerns, Alan had some comments on this, as well. Basically, any time a country signs a treaty -- and it is not just with the U.N., it is with any other state -- there is a boundary on sovereignty. And that boundary is established because there has been a decision made by somebody, somewhere, at some level, that you are going to be better off as a country with the treaty than without it. Otherwise, you don't sign it.

So, there is a tradeoff always to be made between absolute, say, autarchic control of everything that goes on within your borders and the amount of cooperation that is necessary to grease the wheels of commerce, make globalization work, and to deal with common problems that extend beyond your borders.

Not interested in creating institutions of global governance. This kind of melds Ted's comments and Alan's. And it really is the case that, I think, U.N. folks are not interested in creating institutions of government. They do see

themselves as the public servants of the member states. And having had my head stuck inside the Secretariat bureaucracy for six months, I can tell you that that attitude is alive and well and, to some extent, inhibits creativity because they are looking to their international masters for guidance, and perhaps too much.

There have been 150 years' worth of institutions of global governance. Some of the things I rattled off: the Telecommunications Union, the Postal Union, the Civil Aviation folks, functional applications, international agreed standards, procedures, rules that you agree to because it makes the world work a little easier than if you had to negotiate each aircraft landing simultaneously, separately, all around the world, and worried about what language the pilot was speaking at the same time.

Governance, where states, in other words, meet to work out jointly agreed and voluntarily supported, stressing "voluntary," supported rules with respect to issues of common interest or to address problems that they are unable to resolve alone. Global governance in different functional issue areas, not government, really is a growing necessity as economic globalization sweeps the planet. Public institutions of governance are way behind private globalization, certainly by

comparison with levels of regulation you face within a sovereign state in terms of economic management.

Indeed, it is ironic that a good fraction of the efforts at governance recently have been aimed at opening up markets, opening up polities at promoting individual rights that would, to my mind, promote the kind of civil society-building that Cato Institute would favor. So I don't consider that trend necessarily a bad thing.

Just moving on a little bit to some of Alan's remarks about the foreign policy community, for example, and debating issues in a strategic vacuum. I think that is probably true. We don't have enough debate on the general and ultimate objectives of U.S. foreign policy.

But what I can say standing here before you is that the United States is the top dog in a large international kennel. And we are engaged, economically, politically with the rest of the world, whether we like it or not. There is really not much of an option. And my argument would be that we are better off because we are engaged.

And at the level of engagement, where the military is, how much presence, doing what, that is all a matter of debate. We could experiment with these things and kind of withdraw them all and see what happens. I would argue that the position is correct that the American presence, physical presence, military,

visible presence and engagement in places like Europe, places like East Asia, that have been very fractious in the 20th century, helps to maintain stability that is good for us, at a certain cost, of course, to our military budget.

What do foreign policy elites want in a stronger U.N., to do what? Interestingly, the report of the panel that I was director for was quite specific in its recommendations. You can see them on the Web site, either the Stimson Web site or the U.N. Web site.

Alan's exegesis on the Commission on Global Governance, those nice liberal folks that got together for a few years and came up with a lot of utopian ideas; you know, people that smart couldn't be so dumb as to not have more power behind them. I think Alan is worried there is something dark and powerful behind that Commission, or similar panels, because nothing that ambitious sounding could possibly be as weak as it looks.

Well, the Soviets could not understand how the Western economies could run on the basis of markets and invisible international and national regulation that kept them going. There had to be somebody running it. And I think many of them probably believed that until their system with the visible hand running it fell apart.

The world of globalization is a networked world, not a hierarchical world. And the hierarchies of government have to

catch up to that. And they are catching up slowly. The U.N. system is an even more hierarchical institution. Even if it wanted to, these institutions are not fit for the kind of span of control you would try to exercise if you wanted to be a world government.

The point is, however, that a networked world, a world of individual enterprise, a world of individual rights and freedoms, a world of many states competing with each other and cooperating when they need to, still need standards. A network needs standards. The Internet doesn't work unless everyone is using the Internet protocol to communicate. You still need to agree on how you are going to do these kinds of interactions. So you still need to get together and decide these sorts of things. It doesn't happen automatically. It is not entirely self-organizing.

I agree with much of Stefan Halper's comments about the U.N. and the need to reform and the problems of failure in peacekeeping. Not all operations were complete failures. I am not really prepared to do a dot-by-dot list of success, partial success, and failure. Suffice to say that the panel that I was asked to direct the writing for emerged out of this sense of disaster in peace operations.

In the mid-nineties, the kind of harrowing operations that Stefan was talking about in Somalia and Angola and Bosnia

were ended and the member states turned away from the U.N. Nothing was done to fix the problems. And then, about a year ago, suddenly they turned back. They needed somebody to run Kosovo. They needed somebody to help East Timor transition from 25 years of domination by the Indonesian Government that nobody recognized, but that was so flat on their back they couldn't bootstrap themselves into independence. And that has been a rocky road.

The U.N. was not prepared, nor did they expect to have to do these operations. In fact, they are afraid they are going to be given these kinds of operations again. They don't want them. They really don't. It is more responsibility than they want and that they feel comfortable handling.

So, what we have done with the panel's report is to try to adapt to a world in which the Security Council, on which the United States always has a veto -- the Security Council is not --

[End Side A. Begin Side B.]

DR. DURCH: -- you know, U.S. armed forces out to conduct a peacekeeping operation or to invade some country or whatever, that the United States hasn't already signed on the dotted line and said this is a good thing to do, and notified the Congress, and provided money to support it. We are in control of this thing. We are in control of it. There is no way they can

act without us or one of the other five permanent members of the Council agreeing or failing to agree.

In terms of the consequences of the U.N. being a handmaiden of evil, I absolutely agree. But you will also notice, if you go back and look at Kofi Annan's speeches from a year ago, all this stuff about humanitarian intervention that has caused a big kerfluffal with the developing world in particular has been addressing just that issue, that you cannot be neutral in the face of evil.

The panel also faces this squarely in our recommendations, that when you go out to implement a peace, if someone attempts to undercut or walk away from their obligations like the rough in Sierra Leone, you can't just let them walk over you. In fact, it's worse having the operation out there and let that happen than not having an international operation at all.

So, think very carefully about whether you do these things, given the resources and the rules of engagement to enable them to do them effectively, and then undertake them, but not before.

Finally, Stefan closed with mentioning juxtaposing the "can't be the handmaiden of evil on the one hand and you can't interfere with sovereignty on the other." Well, you can't interfere with evil without interfering with somebody's sovereignty. And the question is: At what point does government

behavior become sufficiently egregious, as in the case of, let's say, Mr. Milosevic in various places in the Balkans, or the government and militias in Rwanda, where the outside community has not only an interest, but an obligation to conduct that kind of intervention on behalf of fighting evil?

Thank you.

(Applause.)

MR. CARPENTER: Bill, thank you very much.

We now have time for your questions and comments. I do ask that you keep your questions or comments brief and to the point. If you have a question that is directed at just one of the panel members, please indicate that. Wait for me to call on you and wait for the microphone to come around, because we all want to hear your question or comment. And please, if you would, identify yourself and your affiliation when you are called on.

MR. KRAUSE: Don Krause, Campaign for U.N. Reform.

For Dr. Halper. You mentioned that the substantial majority of Americans oppose such peacekeeping operations. I was wondering where you were getting that information from. Every single bit of polling that I have seen, from our friends up the street at the Program on International Policy Attitudes or other places, consistently show Americans supporting the U.S. doing its fair share within peacekeeping operations. So I was curious where you were getting that kind of perception from.

DR. HALPER: Gallup reports that 86 percent of Americans support the United Nations. I'm sorry, 60 to 70 percent of Americans support the United Nations. They add that 86 percent of the time, member nations vote with the United States in the General Assembly.

The support that you are pointing at is a general support that people have for what they believe the United Nations stands for. But in terms of individual deployments, Rwanda, Somalia and so on, if you look at the Gallup data, you will find that it is very different.

MS. O'NEILL: I am Katherine O'Neill and I am the Director of the United Nations office here in Washington.

I just would like to refer to Dr. Halper's comments on the excessive, bloated U.N. budget. So that all of the audience is very clear, the budget for the entire Secretariat is \$1.2 billion a year, and it has been that for seven years. It is lower now than it was in the beginning of the 1990's. The U.S. share of that is \$300 million. That is one-tenth of one percent of the Pentagon budget for this coming year.

Secondly, on the issue of peacekeeping, of the 27,000 military soldiers who are dispatched in peacekeeping around the world today, zero of them are United States soldiers. The United States does not participate in the military aspects with troops on the ground, and has not for some number of years, of U.N.

peacekeeping operations. Members of the United States society who currently are in peacekeeping are individual police officers from individual cities in the United States who have volunteered on an individual basis to leave their homes, their families, their wives, their children, and go and serve in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor.

Finally, the U.S. share for this peacekeeping, for which it does pay, is one-fourth of one percent of the Pentagon budget. And, sadly, this Congress has cut the President's request back by one-third. So that, of the money the member countries who are meeting today in New York owe the United Nations, two-thirds of all of the money owed to the U.N. is owed by the U.S.

So I just wanted to clarify for Dr. Halper some of the actual budget specifics of what he referred to as this excessively bloated budget.

MR. CARPENTER: Dr. Halper, do you want to respond?

DR. HALPER: I was taking my numbers from William Lord's article in "Foreign Affairs." I believe he is the Chairman of the U.N. Association. I think he points out that the budget is \$1.3 billion for the Secretary's Office, and that it has remained the same for four years, not seven, and that the issue, of course, is the degree to which inflation has reduced its purchasing power.

I don't have any comment on the people who are deployed around the world. I think the issue is whether the deployments are clearly within the American national interest. The amount of money that the Pentagon is or is not spending is really a separate question altogether.

MR. CARPENTER: Alan?

DR. TONELSON: I would just amplify that final point made by Stefan. And that is that the question is not whether the U.S. contribution to U.N. peacekeeping is one one-tenth of one percent of something. I would argue quite strongly that that Pentagon budget gives us -- and I am feeling kind of mathematically challenged here -- 100,000 times more security, more national security, which is my concern -- not global security; I am much less concerned with that -- that that U.S. Pentagon budget gives us 100,000 times more national security than any U.N. peacekeeping, if those are in fact the right numbers.

DR. DURCH: With reference to the "bloated bureaucracy" argument, the panel and I didn't take this on, except to say that, in the peacekeeping area where we are looking specifically, there are way too few people. So if the total resources are too much, certainly they are largely misallocated. And more of those resources ought to be allocated toward peace operations,

prevention of conflict, dealing with conflict, supporting peacekeeping.

And we had a few numbers within the report. There are 32 military officers within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to help guide, support, do rules of engagement for the 27,000 troops deployed in U.N. operations. There are nine police officers doing all the guidance support, recruitment, vetting of 8,600 cops in U.N. operations. And there are 16 civilian desk officers to monitor 16 or 17 operations.

Now, think about that. There is no backup. There is no depth. You can't take a vacation or get sick and have your post covered. Now, if you look at any national military or any national foreign office, you would six, ten, 12 times that many people doing those jobs. And that is one of the shortfalls that we pointed to. And it is part of what constrains the U.N.'s ability to support the operations effectively in the field.

MALE VOICE: I think Bill raises a very important point, the issue of misallocation of resources, not just the total quantity of resources. A number of years ago, then-Secretary-General Boutros-Boutros Ghali was asked how many people worked at the United Nations. His response was "about half."

(Laughter.)

MALE VOICE: I think that is indicative of some of the problems.

MALE VOICE: Can I add something to that, Ted?

MR. CARPENTER: Yes.

MALE VOICE: Another issue, of course, in the staff question, is the apparent inability of the Secretariat to reduce its staff, as it has indicated it is going to do, or promised to do. The shifting of headings, the combination of departments, the claim that 1,000 slots were eliminated when in fact they never were filled, all of that sort of magic gives the Congress reason for hesitation.

The final point is that the U.N. Association itself has pointed out its distress with the lack of a merit promotion system amongst U.N. staff, and the old boy network which seems to simply promote friends of friends.

MR. CARPENTER: Leon.

QUESTION: This is to Alan or to anyone else who wants to respond.

It seems to me that this notion that the U.N. has created this Frankenstein that is going to take over U.S. foreign policy, I don't buy it, really. I think if you go back to Dag Hammarskjold or Boutros-Boutros Ghali or Kofi Annan, the idea that they will control U.S. foreign policy doesn't make sense to me, especially since, for political purposes, the United States

fired Boutros-Boutros Ghali recently after he didn't really follow what we consider to be U.S. national interest.

It seems to me that if you look at since Korea to the Gulf War, the U.N. was utilized by American Presidents, in the struggle with Congress, to advance what they considered to be U.S. national interests. Or in other cases, such as in Indonesia and so on, it is being used as a substitute for U.S. intervention.

But in any case, the debate is really over U.S. foreign policy, not over the United Nations. That was a debate over the Gulf War, and actually the U.S. went to the U.N. before it received approval from Congress. So isn't this the horse and the carriage here or the egg and the chicken debate?

MR. TONELSON: Well, I think your are right in that the main debate should be over U.S. foreign policy. What my presentation was seeking to call attention to is the fact that, for reasons that I am not entirely clear about, there is a great deal of activity that is going on today, a great many organizations, and a great many world leaders, about 250 miles of us, who are talking about what should the U.N. do or what should the U.N. be. The presumption is that they are not satisfied in some important way. I assume that they don't make trips to New York City on a lark. I don't know, maybe they do. I certainly wouldn't.

But, again, there seems to be a feeling among many governments, among many specialists who study this -- not that their views really count for all that much -- but, again, among the member governments that something has got to be done. There certainly is a view in the U.N. Secretariat that something has got to be done.

All that I was trying to do was call attention to a problem that I see in that, reading what they write -- and I can't read their minds, I can only read what they write -- I am not convinced that they know what they want to do. But they are sure spending a lot of time talking about it. I find this an odd situation and I thought it was worth calling attention to.

MR. CARPENTER: Anyone else?

(No response.)

MR. CARPENTER: If not, Stanley Kober, in the back.

MR. KOBER: The question has to do with the fundamental purpose of the United Nations. We can talk about the Postal Union and so forth, and that is all very good. But, ultimately, the United Nations was designed, out of the experiences of the two World Wars, to deal with the problem of war and peace. And the expectation was the great powers would be able to get together. That expectation never fully materialized. They divided again. You couldn't get the agreement to deal with aggression.

But, in addition to that, I am just wondering if a part of the problem isn't a sense of exhaustion on the part of United States. With all this talk about resources and misallocations and so on, Americans are tired of all the wars and all the conflicts. And that is the reason you don't get some of the support. And that is not unreasonable. I mean, because there is the idea that you would have this overarching organization that could deter these conflicts, and the conflicts continue. They just go on. So there is something else at work, even beyond the inability of the great powers to get together.

There is a sense that the problem of war is more complex than when Woodrow Wilson came up with the idea of the League of Nations and when he thought, if something like this had existed, you wouldn't have had a World War.

MR. CARPENTER: Bill, would you like to take that first?

DR. DURCH: Well, I would agree that the U.N. was designed as a peace and security organization and it was designed to prevent World War III. And it turned out that the wolves were inside the fence and it never quite worked the way it was designed.

So what you got was a fall-back arrangement, which was peacekeeping, which sometimes had to be enacted outside the Security Council framework by the General Assembly. The first

operation in the Sinai, some of the resolutions for the Congo operation under the Uniting for Peace Resolution that was created when the Russians objected to U.N. support for the operation in Korea in the early fifties. So there are mechanisms for getting around that veto.

I don't know how exhausted the United States is. I don't know whether Americans are tired of all the wars. I think Americans are largely clueless about all of the wars and things that go on around the rest of the world except when they land in the headlines. And then they just kind of want it to go away and go to the next headline.

The question is, I think, as Alan and Stefan and some others have said, what kind of strategic outlook does the United States, does the President, have in terms of the proper U.S. role in foreign policy, strategic affairs, and how does the U.N. fit into that? And how do they articulate that to the public?

At the Stimson Center we have been puzzled about that for five or six years, since we were working on the peacekeeping studies in the early 1990's and noting congressional indifference. Congress is not notably tuned into foreign affairs, either. They are less traveled now than in past years.

And so there is a kind of disjuncture. And it is ironic. As globalization proceeds apace and we all linked together more and more at the economic and the individual bases,

and I can dial up a Web site in Singapore as easy as I can call across town, and the Congress really doesn't seem to get this and seems to be sliding in the other direction. It's a puzzle.

MR. CARPENTER: Stefan, do you have a comment?

MR. HALPER: I was just going to add to that. I agree with what was said. When you ask about the purpose of the U.N. -- and it was to deal with war and peace, and the great powers never did agree after World War II -- but is it exhaustion? I think not.

Is something else at work? Yes, there probably is. Tip O'Neill had it right when he said that, "All politics is local."

So what you have are disputes which turn into wars, and then crises, and are met at U.N. Plaza with questions of whether these crises are priorities, whether the members have the will to address them, and whether they have the resources. So it is not so much exhaustion. Simply, it is a series of managerial and technical decisions that relate to responding to the flow of human events.

QUESTION: Thank you. I just wanted to find out from the panel whether it is advocating a disavowal of the notion of collective security as it is espoused in the Charter of the United Nations by distinguishing the sense of focus on U.S.

national security at the expense of all else? Is that the idea or is there some other variant that I have missed?

MR. CARPENTER: All right. Are the panel members disavowing the concept of collective security?

MR. TONELSON: I certainly am. I don't think it has much to do with U.S. national security, as we showed in the Persian Gulf War, the first post-Cold War conflict. The U.N. had nothing to do with that whatever.

One of the most candid things that President Bush said about that war was, he was asked at one point, at one press conference, if he would have gone ahead without the U.N. Security Council authorization. He said, "Of course, I would have." And his tone of voice was, "We have oil here. This is important. Of course, I would."

As Bill said, it's handy to have, but the idea that you need this or that Presidents would let the need for Security Council authorization significantly influence their actions in a major national security crisis like this is absurd. And it should be absurd. And I am glad that he realized that it was absurd and that he didn't waste too much time on this. I think that notions of collective security, whether embodied in the U.N. Charter or not, are really completely irrelevant to U.S. national security.

And rather than taking the time and sort of accepting all of the international political heat that would go with explicitly renouncing it, I would just hope that U.S. Presidents would continue to recognize how very unimportant it really is.

MR. CARPENTER: Bill, do you want to respond?

DR. DURCH: Well, it's hard to have an all-or-nothing response to a question like that. I guess the short form would be no, I'm not advocating we disavow collective security. Collective security is a tough enterprise to implement effectively. And it stands apart from collective defense, which is something like NATO, where you have a specified enemy, the enemy is outside the fence and you are allied against it.

Collective security has a more difficult intellectual problem, let alone operational, which says your potential enemy is inside the fence. But you have all agreed to a set of standards and norms and behavior. And when there is a serious breach of those norms or standards, then you are liable to sanctions from the other members of the community. It works in fits and starts, but it is not that it fails completely. It is certainly not that it is completely irrelevant, because there are things that we would like to have help with around the globe in maintaining stability.

In fact, it would be nice to have more help than we've got, so that you could have then maybe a little reduced U.S.

presence and still have stable alternative regions. So it is one of those tools that it is not everything and it is not nothing. It is useful to you sometimes.

MR. CARPENTER: Stef, do you want to comment?

MR. HALPER: I would just add a tiny bit to that. Article 51, obviously, it is on the books. But action in this context is essentially a political decisions. It is a case-by-case issue. It depends on mobilizing support within the Security Council member countries to proceed.

Just look at the difference in the response to the Persian Gulf War, where it was a U.N. effort, and the effort in Kosovo, which ended up being a NATO exercise. And, by the way, just a point on NATO. It is not really collective defense anymore. In Kosovo, it was collective offense.

MR. CARPENTER: Another question?

MR. KOPAKAN: Bob Kopakan. My question is for Mr. Durch.

In your studies of the U.N. peacekeeping operations, have you been able to come up with a satisfactory resolution of the issue of unity of command and control? It seems to me that is one of the key unresolved issues in U.N. peacekeeping and peace-making.

MR. DURCH: Yes, it is a key question. It is the reason why the United Nations really can't do peace enforcement.

It presents you with a dilemma, when you get into a more difficult, let's say, internal conflict situation, where you get what we and Steve Steadman and others have called "spoilers" of peace accords. That is where some guy signs an accord, figuring on a tactical calculation, that they will be better off and they will win it all politically rather than militarily what they can't win on the battlefield. And you have to be able to resist that successfully.

So, as I describe it, it is somewhere between caving to two drunks on a bridge and opposing the Ethiopian Army if they decide to go back over the border. You have some level of resistance within the operation you have to have. That does require a certain amount of unity of something. And the closest that a U.N. operation is likely to get is unity of effort, not unity of command. Because every national command authority, the United States, France, U.K., you name it, India, all retain ultimate command authority back to their national capitals.

So what you need to do and what we are arguing for is that you have to have sort of a maximum working together or consultation in advance, in general, and with the specific case, that you all agree, here is the rules of engagement, here is the plan of action, and we are basically okay with this within some fan of options. But you are not going to get unity of command.

That means that U.N. forces are not going to do an opposed entry someplace. They are not going to do the Gulf War. And they shouldn't. That should be something that a coalition of the willing states or an alliance does. That is beyond the capacity of the organization, and it should remain so.

MR. CARPENTER: Alan?

DR. TONELSON: I think that Bill's remark has just really pointed out or really underscored one of the last points I made in my presentation. If you can't have unified command, that is because, obviously, as I said, sovereignty is not divisible in any meaningful sense. And it may be tempting to think, well, we can do peacekeeping, or whatever the current term of art is, in regions where it is relatively stable and the military challenges are not overwhelming.

But we have to remember that in these kinds of situations, in regions like this, the situation doesn't stay stable. That is why it is a failed state in the first place, and fighting could always break out and military action could always break out.

So you have your jerry-built command structure there, basically, GI's from 16 countries, each reporting to their own command structure. Suddenly a problem breaks out. For example, spoilers. Strangely enough, some of the folks who signed peace agreements aren't sincere -- unbelievable. When did that happen

before? I mean that is predictable; that is inevitable. The situation changes suddenly and you have this jerry-built command structure that is incapable of decisive action. What a formula for a massive screw-up.

MR. CARPENTER: We have time for just a couple more questions.

MR. HERSHEY: I am Bob Hershey. I am a management consultant. I have a question for Dr. Durch.

You cited the Internet as an example of coordinated standards that was working. And this is something that the U.N. isn't in at all. I wonder, for these other examples, such as Postal Unions and Aviation, if this could be done as well without any U.N. participation, just in ad hoc international groups, formed of participants.

MR. DURCH: There are some things that clearly can be done solely in the private sector. And elements of the Internet are a part of that. There are other elements of the Internet that require some sort of government agreement.

The International Standards Organization is a voluntary private-public organization that goes back 75 years, I think, for things like basic electronic standards and mechanical standards and other things that make a standardized industrial work place feasible and make it global. But there are other issues where government needs to make a policy decision and where government

has a role to play. In those cases where public authority is involved, then you need some forum whereby public authority can cooperate across long distance. And that is where the functional institutions of the U.N. come into play.

MR. CARPENTER: Alan, do you want to add something?

DR. TONELSON: A real fast point. There are clearly transnational problems where purely technical solutions are advisable. But that is a small number. And there are lots of various issue areas that are widely thought of as being very technical in nature such as, for example, economics, that are in fact highly political, and inevitably political. And the standards, or the rules of the road -- which are frequently needed; I would never argue that for a minute -- the rules of the road are going to reflect the national interests and values of some country or some group of countries.

And the thought that, in most of the really important cases, you convene some U.N. group or some group from some other international organization and you resolve this on a predominately technical basis are, I think, very, very unrealistic.

MR. CARPENTER: We have time for one last question.

MS. BLEVINS: Sue Blevins. My question is for Dr. Durch and also Ted Carpenter.

Dr. Durch, you mentioned that the Cato Institute would support individual rights, and I believe they do. But I was wondering if perhaps you would comment on how the U.N.'s definition of individual rights would differ from the Cato Institute's or a libertarian's definition of individual rights.

DR. DURCH: Well, the U.N. is made up of 189 countries. Some of them have more interest in economic, social rights, that kind of thing, where development is considered a right. And that is what I suppose you would call a policy tool for making, say, development funding a right as opposed to an option on the part of wealthier countries to do development.

Of course, wealthier countries resist this. And any development spending that is done is voluntary and up to them. So there is a difference between, I suppose, and this is more in the West, emphasis on civil and political rights from which it flows that you have other opportunities in the economic sphere, for example, if the political system is open, and a system that has member states whose interests are more in the area of "dirigism" in the economic and social sphere, as well.

But if you look at trends over time, the number of economies that are opening up, the number of polities that are becoming democracies, the curves are all pretty much in the right direction as far as the West's interests are concerned.

MR. CARPENTER: I will just make a very brief comment that, of course, those of us at the Cato Institute who have worked on these issues emphasize: rights flow from natural law and are designed to keep the individual secure from government, and that when you start hearing rhetoric about a right to a job or a right to Internet access or the right to welfare or the right to good housing, people who advocate that need a remedial course in social philosophy. These are not "rights" by any reasonable definition of the term.

We have time for just one more question and I hope it is a brief one because we are running out of time here.

QUESTION: I feel so sophomoric when I ask questions like this. If indeed the United Nations is a failed institution, an organization now looking for a cause to be, you know, like a fraternity looking for a reason, where would the world be if the United Nations simply ceased to function? What has it done that is of any use to us today, if everything that might be an accomplishment is something that business in its own self-interest would have naturally taken care of?

MR. CARPENTER: That is an excellent question. Would we really miss the United Nations if it disappeared? How much would we miss it if it disappeared?

Alan?

MR. TONELSON: I think it is useful to have a talk shop. It is useful to have a meeting hall, and it is useful to have conference facilities. They need to be serviced on an ongoing basis. It is useful to have certain agencies, possibly like the World Health Organization, that are engaged in international vaccination programs and things of that nature. Beyond that, I really don't see too much need or use for the present United Nations. Again, it is useful to have a central place where countries can meet and talk. Talking is usually helpful, not always, but usually helpful. But beyond that, that is where I have real problems.

MR. CARPENTER: Bill?

DR. DURCH: Well, the Charter of the U.N. sets out the sort of basic behavioral parameters that states who sign up to it are expected to adhere to: inviolability of borders and nonaggression and respect for human rights and so forth. It provides a mechanism for establish rules of the road. It provides a mechanism for authoritative legitimization of certain security behavior, whether it is tossing Iraq out of Kuwait and getting a broader consensus on that or it is trying to restore the peace in a country in Africa or in Asia or in Europe.

It provides a mechanism whereby countries can cooperate and not have to invent the kinds of cooperation they would like to have on a case-by-case basis. That is a very expensive thing

to do. So you have a kind of a standing framework. You can refer back to it. You can go from there. You can make it as small or as large as you like, or as cheap or as expensive as you like. The whole thing needs a lot of work. And certainly in the security area, the panel that I helped with this recent report is reasonably merciless in pounding the organization to say, look, either do this right or, implicitly, get out of the business. A lot of that fire is directed at the member states.

So, getting back to the fundamental questions that were raised initially by Alan, member states do, and we hope at the summit they will, although they are unlikely to, address some of these more fundamental questions: What do you want the organization to do? And how much? And how effective do you want it to be?

MR. CARPENTER: Stef, you have the final word. If there were a giant tidal wave in New York this afternoon, would we miss the United Nations?

DR. HALPER: The answer is we might. I think it is a very good question. I would just associate myself with Mr. Durch's comments on a framework, in the sense that one can utilize it if it is appropriate. The fact is there have been a range of assistance programs, health, education, relief programs, that have been promoted and sustained by the U.N. and its member

States that have been very helpful. They have done some good work in the area of AIDS.

More than that, they have assisted in attempting to train police forces. There have been some efforts at professionalizing civil services, and they have monitored the conclusion of disputes. So, in many respects, the organization has made a contribution to U.S. foreign policy objectives and to the stability of the international environment. Obviously, when it starts moving into questions of sovereignty, as we have explored here today, that is another issue altogether.

MR. CARPENTER: Thank you very much. We have to bring our formal proceedings to a close at this point. You are invited to a reception upstairs beginning immediately following the event today.

Would you please join me in giving a round of applause to our speakers?

(Applause. End of policy forum.)