



Beyond the Headlines

US-UN Relations: What to Expect?

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Speaker

TIMOTHY E. WIRTH

President of the United Nations Foundation
Former US Congressman and Senator

Moderator

WARREN HOGE

Vice President and Director of External Relations at IPI

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Mr. WARREN HOGE:

Welcome to IPI. I'm Warren Hoge, the Vice President and Director of External Relations at IPI. We're very pleased to welcome tonight Senator Tim Wirth. He is the President of the UN Foundation, a former Congressman, former Senator and he's a former Undersecretary of State. We've invited him here to discuss US-UN relations and what to expect. But first, I want to tell you a little bit about Tim. I have been a friend of his for more decades than I care to admit my adulthood encompasses. The United Nations Foundation is a public charity created in 1998 with Ted Turner's one billion dollar gift to support UN causes and activities. Tim Wirth has been its president from its inception and it's almost the only time he's managed to hold on to one job for so long. When I first met him, I was working in Washington and he was a White House fellow under President Lyndon Johnson. Predictably, a few years later he was out of that post and into another as Deputy Assistant Secretary for

Education in the Nixon administration. After that, as his resume that we circulated with the invitation shows, the jobs came fast and furious and frequent. He was elected to the US House of Representatives in 1974, representing the suburbs of Denver, and stayed for twelve years until running successfully for the US Senate from Colorado in 1986. In 1992, six years later, he chose not to run for re-election to the Senate, a decision he chronicled in a cover article in the *New York Times Magazine* that I commissioned when I was the editor of the magazine at that time. It was a forceful and detailed exposition on the almost day-to-day frustration with the ever increasing role of money in politics and how it often eclipsed consideration of public policy. The cover bore a gorgeous, full color portrait of Tim on a deep blue background with a lit up alabaster white capital dome behind. All in all, it was a stunning and alluring image. But the catchy title we put on the piece almost ended my friendship with Tim. We called it "*Diary of a Dropout.*" I wasn't sure where that left me with Tim, and particularly with his wonderful wife, Wren, until several years later when my family and I visited them in their ski house in Crested Butte, Colorado. I walked into the den and there, framed on the wall, was the toxic cover. So we remained friends.

About that time, Tim became national co-chair of the Clinton/Gore campaign and in 1993 he joined the State Department as the first ever Undersecretary for Global Affairs. That job recognized the fact that Tim had been talking about the environment long before it became fashionable to do so. And I know that because I was there all those years ago and I heard him. Now, few people can compete with a resume and a record of achievement as good as that. And in addition, as you can see, or as you will see, he is intimidatingly tall. But on one occasion, I won a direct standoff with him. It occurred one day when Tim, visiting from Washington, showed up unannounced at the door

of my office in the New York Times. As he began his usual snarky comments, I shouted out, "Shut up and turn around!" To my total delight, another visitor to the *Times* that day had appeared at the door right at that moment, right behind him. It was Bill Walton, the seven foot tall National Basketball Association star. I had never seen Tim Wirth strain to look up before.

Now onto our subject for tonight: US-UN relations, what to expect. In November, the United Nations Foundation and the Partnership for a Secure America made public an open letter from a bipartisan list of well-known Americans urging the incoming Obama administration to help lead a new era of international cooperation and it specifically pinpointed, as a way to do that, strengthening the US-UN relationship. The signatories, in addition to four former American ambassadors to the UN, included four former cabinet secretaries, eight former senators, three former national security advisors and two former governors. And by the way, another signer was Rita Hauser, the chair of the International Peace Institute. One of those former ambassadors, Thomas Pickering, was quoted in *The Washington Post* at that time as saying the request for an early commitment by President Obama to the UN was aimed at, quote, "taking the curse away that was introduced, in part, by the last administration with the Bolton appointment and, in part, by some of the attacks on the UN." The statement itself read, "The UN cannot succeed without strong US leadership and support. The next President has a unique opportunity to revitalize the US-UN relationship as a symbol of America's commitment to constructive international cooperation." And it said further that this would help keep America, quote, "safe and strong." Now, this reflected a very different attitude towards the relationship between the UN and the US than the mutually antagonistic one put forward by John Bolton, President Bush's UN Ambassador in

2005 and 2006. That attitude was best captured by the title of Ambassador Bolton's 2007 book, quote, "*Surrender Is Not an Option, Defending America at the United Nations and Abroad.*"

Now, Tim, as you know, the letter laid out nine steps the US ought to take. And let me begin by asking you about the first one, which was making an early statement to the UN expressing American commitment to international cooperation through the UN. Have you heard that statement yet? Second question of the same kind, is making the UN Ambassador a member of the Cabinet part of that statement? And does that make a difference, by the way? If a UN Ambassador is a member of the Cabinet does that give her, in this case, more power than otherwise?

MR. TIMOTHY WIRTH: Great. Well, let's back up from that question, if we can do that, and I, like a good politician, will not answer the reporter's question directly, but will get from here to there.

MR. HOGE: I've got twelve more.

MR. WIRTH: But let me start by thanking you all very much for coming. And Warren, thank you for asking me to come. It's particularly great; Warren said this was going to be a young audience and I'm very pleased with it. One of the best experiences that we had in the last ten years was at the time of the high level panel. And many of you remember the high level panel that Secretary General Annan put together to try to get great ideas for reform and change at the UN. And a parallel to that was set up by a number of young officers, young delegates, and young staff people at the UN called the low level panel. Some of you may remember that. And we had our board in town and had a number of – we've got this extraordinary board, which I'll mention, but we had these wonderful sessions with the low level panel - they were kind of filled with enthusiasm and good ideas and a kind of freshness

that the UN needs and deserves. So I was really pleased to come tonight and to hear that there was going to be a young group of people here and thank you all very much for coming. And Warren, thank you for asking me.

We at the UN Foundation, established by Ted Turner, as Warren pointed out, were established and our sole purpose is to do everything that we can to strengthen the UN. And that means to strengthen – particularly, that means to strengthen the US-UN relationship. Ted is a remarkable individual. I have a long and very interesting and colorful relationship with him, as I do with Warren. There are a lot of stories to tell, which we might not get into as we go along through the evening. But Ted has been very supportive of the UN and believed that the UN was absolutely critical to the fact that we didn't go to war with the Soviet Union, that there was an ability to set up a forum where people could work out their differences. And he became increasingly outraged when the US fell further and further behind in payments to the UN and the debt got to a billion dollars. Ted was making a huge amount of money - CNN was on the upswing and there was no competitor. Turner Broadcasting was just doing well and he had gone from a billion to three billion dollars in a matter of a few months. He is an extraordinarily idealistic and generous individual - so he figured that what he would do was pay off the debt himself to the UN and then sue the United States government for a billion dollars. It turned out that no individual can pay off the sovereign responsibilities of a government, so Ted said, well, I saved myself a billion dollars, but he said but that was still a pretty good idea. And so he then set up the UN Foundation and called me. I was at the State Department, and he asked me if I would come and run the Foundation for him. Ted is always an extraordinarily creative and interesting person to work with and so I said yes. And so we began the UN Foundation,

again with the mission of strengthening the UN and the relationship between the US and the UN.

While all of you know the UN is sometimes a very hard institution to help, you know, it is not an institution that's open to a lot of outside input. And this was a lot truer ten years ago, as many of you will remember, than it is today. We have, I think, been able to develop a lot of good relationships with the UN and with the Secretary General and a lot of agencies and we've been able to bridge a lot of problems with the US government over this period of time. Having John Bolton up here as the US Ambassador to the UN, of course, made this chore exceedingly difficult and, you know, we had to spend a lot of time sort of playing defense, for the last three years in particular and then largely over much of the last eight years. So it was a great relief to us – now we're getting to Warren's question – it was a great relief to us when, you know, with the election of the President, obviously the American people were saying that a focus on a multilateral cooperative foreign policy was absolutely essential. If you noticed during the President's inaugural speech, which was not designed to be a "get them out of their seats speech," it was not designed to be anything but a very serious presentation, the line that got the greatest applause and the greatest response from that huge audience was the one in which he talked about global cooperation. I don't know if you remember that, but it was very striking to me that somehow that struck a chord – we were there and, you know, it was incredible. Some of you were there and it was a very moving afternoon, obviously. But that that line, you know, I said, "Isn't that terrific?" You know, there's a mood out there in the country and the President's going to capture that mood - and the American public is very much antagonistic to the kind of go-it-alone approach which had characterized the, I think, great arrogance of US foreign policy for much of the previous eight years. When President Obama got

elected, I think that that was a real indication of the change that was going to occur.

We thought it was a very good idea earlier on to put together this bipartisan, very high level group of people to say to the President again that the UN is important. In politics, if you don't ask, you have an absolute chance of people not saying yes. So you've got to push all the time and you've got to continue to ask and you've got to continue to say, "we are here, over here, pay attention," because the demands on the President, the demands on the White House are huge. And so we put this group together chaired by Brent Scowcroft and Madeleine Albright, sort of icons of Republican and Democratic foreign policy. And one of the things that we said was would you make a significant statement early on, you know, about the UN and the importance of the UN? Now, why did that get into that letter? It seemed to me, reviewing the record, and Ed Luck will have probably a better history of this than I do, but there has never been a US president who's made a speech to the country from the UN. Ed, I don't know. I think American presidents have come up and lectured at the UN and spoken to the UN. But it's a wonderful opportunity and this has still not been realized. But one of the things we're trying to do is to convince the administration that having the President come here and speak to the United States from the UN would be a wonderful opportunity to speak about, you know, a whole set of values that were reflected in the President's election, in this last election. Are we there yet? No, I mean he has been focused domestically on, obviously, the stimulus package and getting that in place. Also, he's been focusing on the team that he is putting in place to deal with the very, very complicated Afghan problem and Iraq problem, and particularly the situation of Israel and Palestine. That's absorbing all his attention. But I was very struck by the appointment both of Susan Rice, who is somebody that many of us have known for a

long time, smart as she can be. You know, remarkably experienced for one so young, and very tough. She's really smart, charming and very tough for this job. And that he re-elevated the job to being a member of the Cabinet. Now, why is that so important? It is extremely important. What it does is it makes – there is the way the US government works, for those of you who aren't familiar – and I'm going to stop with this, Warren, because I can see you getting antsy.

MR. HOGGE:

No.

MR. WIRTH:

But the way the US government works, when it works well, is when the US government really operates the interagency process. It's a very sophisticated and a very, very important bureaucratic process, bureaucratic in the best sense, of how do you bring all these interests together? And in the interagency process, which really was allowed to erode in the last eight years, was totally dysfunctional by the end of the Bush administration. The fact that it's been re-introduced and recalibrated and has a new focus on it is great. By being a member of the Cabinet, Susan Rice is a principal and a principal means that you can be in any meeting at the highest level. And you are not at a deputy's level, you are not someplace else, you are at the principal level. So she can be, and there's an elbowing that goes on and who gets announced to what meetings, there's a lot of bureaucratic infighting that occurs, but to be a principal in the interagency process is extremely important and that's a major statement. People fight to be principals. You know, if you are an assistant to the President, you're a principal; if you're a deputy assistant to the President, you're not a principal. That is the level of about 30 people, 35 people in the government, overall, who are at that real governing level. So having Susan Rice as part of that, Warren, is an extremely important statement. Now, this is a long answer, but I wanted to give a little bit of history. But you

should know, you know, this is not just a symbolic piece, it's very important to the way that the government works.

MR. HOGE: That's why I asked you. You mentioned about paying down debt. I think the debt now is 2.5 billion, isn't it, at least just for peacekeeping?

MR. WIRTH: Well, probably not quite that high, but it depends on how you count it.

MR. HOGE: Well, that was one of the things that you said a new US administration ought to do.

MR. WIRTH: Yeah.

MR. HOGE: Is that conceivable, given the economic situation right now?

MR. WIRTH: I don't think it is. The US debt to the UN is probably well over a billion dollars now and creeping up on two. But how do you count that and where does it come from? It comes largely from peacekeeping dues where, just like the UN, the Security Council decides on a peacekeeping mission and then the funds, or the authorization for that goes to other committees, the same thing happens in the Congress that happens in the American government – that the administration will agree on a peacekeeping mission, but the OMB has to then provide the amount of money and the mark for the State Department for that mission and then it has to be authorized on the Hill and has to be appropriated. So it goes through a lot of hoops, just like the size of, you know, what's been going on here in the last few days about the most recent peacekeeping mission to Somalia. A certain amount was requested by DPKO and what came out of the UN looks quite different than what was requested going in. It's not dissimilar from what happens in the Congress. So

peacekeeping is a big chunk of it. There's another chunk of peacekeeping that are differences of opinion that will probably never get resolved. And these include: "What was the percentage of the peacekeeping budget that the US agreed to pay, what didn't they agree to pay?" There's probably about five hundred million dollars in that pot and that will never get – I don't think that will get resolved.

A third part is the so-called Stockman Amendment, which is why, when you look at a budget, it says that the US should pay its responsibilities on time, in full. On time is a reference to the so-called Stockman Amendment. That's when David Stockman was head of the Office of Management and Budget years ago. The Reagan administration was trying to save money, make the budget look smaller, so they postponed the payment to the UN from first thing in the year to last thing in the year so that they got that full year not to count it against the budget for domestic expenses – and that was for domestic political reasons. Well, the US is now a year behind in its payment and has never caught up again. And one of the things that, in her testimony, Susan Rice said that she was going to push, and it's part of the administration's policy, to catch up on the Stockman Amendment over a period of time. So that's a third part of the debt. A fourth part of the debt, unfortunately, and the most dangerous part of the debt, I think, is the fact that the US is now slipping a little bit behind in terms of its regular dues. And that has got to be put in the budget and that's the single most important thing that we have to catch up on. Now, will all those get caught up on? I mean, we're a part of a coalition of people pushing hard to make this happen. That's been one of our primary missions. Will they get the full thing done this year? No, not the two and a half billion. Can we catch up on regular dues? Yes. Can we change the Stockman Amendment over a period of time, perhaps three or four years? Yes. Will we catch up on

peacekeeping? It'll be hard to do, maybe. I think it's such a big number and getting to be a bigger and bigger number, I think that's going to gnaw for a while, so we'll make progress on that.

One of the nice things is that we've got two really great chairs. Howard Berman in the House is absolutely a terrific guy. The new Chairman of the House Foreign Relations Committee is just a first rate, very good, quiet, benign, inclusive chairman with an interesting and often bulky committee on the House side. And then there's John Kerry on the Senate side - who's pretty fierce about re-establishing the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. So we've got these two very talented people, very pro-UN people, in these extremely important positions. So that's going to help, so all of these pieces. You've got the right President in place and got the right leadership here at the UN and the right leadership on the Hill and now we hope all of that can come together and not get squeezed out by the challenges of the current economic situation, the stimulus package and all of the other pieces.

MR. HOGE:

And the two words "United Nations" don't produce an instant negative response?

MR. WIRTH:

No, not anymore. No. I think those days are over. Norm Coleman didn't get re-elected in Minnesota, one of the great sadnesses of - I mean, you know, they had this very close election in Minnesota and the Republican who lost by a handful of votes was sort of the most entrenched, visible opponent of the UN in the Senate and sort of made a career out of that, and that was difficult. You know, there are some nutcases who are still way out there who will never support the UN, but they're a minority. So you've got the left all the way to the center to the right that I think are generally supportive. So you're not going to

get an ideological response to the UN that makes a difference, now it's just going to be competition on the budget, I think.

MR. HOGE: Uh-huh. Security Council or United Nations reform. I said that to you on the phone a little while ago and I think you came back and you said we now call it "renewal." And I want to ask you why.

MR. WIRTH: No, I just said let's call it renewal, you know.

MR. HOGE: Why? What's the – what's the –

MR. WIRTH: It's about strengthening the UN.

MR. HOGE: And I also wanted to ask you specifically Security Council reform or Security Council renewal? The last time this went around seriously was in 2005. The US position was a false positive. They said we want Japan on and nobody else. That was a ridiculous position. It is of tremendous moment, as you know very well, to everybody in that building. Everybody agrees it is a necessary change and nobody can agree on how you do it because the regional rivalry thing gets in the way of the larger good. But what do you think the United States now will come up with a plan to give representation to countries like Brazil, India, Germany, Japan and then an African country, South Africa, Nigeria, Egypt. Do you think the US, this time, is going to try to take the lead in that?

MR. WIRTH: I think there are two questions. You know, one question: Is the US going to try to do this? And I think that certainly Secretary Clinton and Susan both understand, and I've heard them speak to this, that the legitimacy of the UN, you know, is severely compromised by the fact that the Security Council is not more representative and it ought to change. You know, and that's a

reform that has to be made. That's not renewal or – there are other issues of renewal and strength, and this is just very fundamental. So I think that that is, you know, a position that they would both conceptually and intellectually fill. I'm not a representative of the administration, but I know I've heard them both talk about this. The question then becomes: How do you go about doing it? And I think that the direct answer to your question is that the US shouldn't be the country kind of putting out what the outline's going to be. That's going to draw all kinds of fire from all kinds of different places. But what a good job can be done if they encourage the right kind of approach to this, get the debate going, get people to really understand that this has to be done. And that's what happened, I think, successfully, we came close to getting this done in '95, '96, '97, I don't know if you remember, it was before you were born. But anyway, Madeleine Albright was becoming Secretary at that point, but there was a very concerted effort then. She was up here as the US Ambassador and there was a concerted effort at that point to try to put together the pieces of a Security Council reform package. Ed, you remember that. And I think that was the closest that I've seen it come in a long time. I thought that that was an impressive effort, and it was not an effort in which the US said this is the way to do it, but rather introduced a set of processes and discussions and meetings and so on. Ed, you may want to comment on that. You know more about it than – more than anybody in the room probably, but I thought that was a really good shot and it's time to do it again.

MR. HOGE:

Tim, the issue dearest to your heart, I know, is climate change. All the planets seem to be in line properly now. Ban Ki-moon has declared from the very beginning this would be a priority for the United Nations. Susan Rice mentioned it in one of the four emphases when she came up here. It probably is the single biggest immediate change in the posture of this administration

versus the previous administration. How is that going to play out and will the UN be a central place where the climate change argument will take place? There's one last thing. Ban, as you probably know, has invited Obama to come up to New York next month. I don't know if that's too soon, but I just wondered if you'd heard anything about the response in Washington to that invitation. It is meant to be a meeting on climate change and he has pretty much said if Obama cannot come, we will not have a meeting.

MR. WIRTH: Well, I think they got – just on that, I think they got a little ahead of themselves on that information getting out somehow on what they wanted to do. You know, obviously, they want to have the President here and engaged in those discussions, but it was not the greatest thing that it got out.

MR. HOGE: You're not suggesting the UN is not telling its own story well, are you?

MR. WIRTH: I don't know what happened. But the climate issue is clearly the most interesting issue of our time. I think it just transcends absolutely everything else. I think about my grandchildren, you know, what will be this hovering, absolute, total catastrophe that we are bringing upon the earth is not only hazardous, in every way, of what it's going to do to us, but, you know, the morality of doing this is going to sink in as well as to who are we to think that we can do this and the total inequity and unfairness of what we're doing, you know, on just so many levels, from the hard science to the impact to the morality of this to the unfairness of this is gathering storm. And I think that people around the world are so much ahead of their elected representatives on this and ahead of governments. The governments are really isolated from this issue. You see this in the United States Congress in a pretty terrifying way. The perception, on average, I think, about the

climate question in the US Congress is they view the climate issue much as they might view the problem of bridges on the interstate highway system. You know, you just do a little tinkering over here and add some concrete over there and do these things and we're going to fix the problem. It is so fundamental and it's so enormous as to how we move to a low carbon economy. And we have a long way to go to persuade the Congress, I think, to take the kind of steps and action that have to be taken. Having said that, this administration, President Obama has appointed some absolutely first rate people in the hope that policy will catch up with the science. Now, John Holdren, who's the President's Science Advisor, is probably the most prominent and important US scientist on the issue of climate change. Jane Lubchenco, who is the head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is probably the most prominent ocean scientist - and the oceans are, you know, 70% of the earth's surface and an enormous sink for carbon and a very, very powerful force in climate change. So she's the head of the most important agency of the government operationally. And Steve Chu, Nobel Prize winning physicist, who is the head of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory, is the Secretary of Energy. So you have three world class, I mean truly world class, scientists who have also been engaged in public policy. These are not ivory tower individuals at all, they've been in discussions and have a great understanding about climate change.

The question is going to be how well, and this is the interagency process again, how well are they going to be able to orchestrate the needed policy view in the face of some probably strong internal forces within the administration who may not view it with the same urgency? The economics of the administration are run by Larry Summers, I mean, Timothy Geithner was on the front page of the newspaper, but the guy in charge is Larry

Summers, who has never been a friend of thinking about climate, at least he doesn't have a record of that. Maybe he's changed, it's not in his gut and he doesn't have an instinct for this. That's the economic team at the National Economic Council in the Department of Treasury. They are very important players on this. So if you look at the agencies, you know, there's a question there. The National Security Council is run by Jim Jones, you know, former four-star Marine who is a US Commandant in Europe, who is the head of the National Chamber of Commerce's Climate Task Force. Sort of gives you an indication of where he was coming from and what he knew about it was from the Chamber. How much of an instinct does he have for this? Don't know.

Secretary Clinton is terrific on the subject. She knows it. It's very impressive to watch her speak on the question. She – you know, you look at somebody in a position like that, usually they can get through two 3 x 5 cards, you know, they've got the notes right there and then you've got another question and they kind of get fuddled and move on, you know, like a good answer to the *New York Times*. But she can go really deep on this subject. She knows it very, very well, and she has appointed a very senior guy to be the lead negotiator on this, Todd Stern, who ran the White House Climate Office in the previous administration and is a very close friend of and protégé of John Podesta, who ran the transition and is probably the most important environmental voice in the country. So you have this combination of people and we'll see how this works out.

We are, you know, going to be – I had breakfast this morning with a number of foundations thinking about what kind of mechanism can we set up to keep the pressure on from the outside - to make sure that the Holdren, Lubchenco, Chu group in this important interagency process are the ones that win and

that the others aren't. What can we all do? It's all going to be a battle and the President, ultimately, will make up his mind. Now, what's that have to do with here? Everything. There will be no climate agreement internationally if the US doesn't step up to it and there will certainly be no US agreement unless the US and China get their act together and come to some cooperative agreement. So what the US does, both in terms of its own domestic policy and its relationship with China?

We'll have to see the rules that get set, the leadership of the Secretary General, the capacity to bring the member states together and get them to understand slowly but surely. I believe that we're making progress.

It has been interesting to watch the last two presidents of the GA. Both had, you know, full day programs on climate change that were very, very important. The current president wants to figure out, you know, how he can make a contribution to this and would it be an important thing to bring religious leaders together and their focus on their obligations to climate? This is a very interesting issue. That has to be done. So you know, the education of the member states, the engagement of the member states, their understanding that, you know, also that this could be an opportunity, the fact that this should not be and cannot be viewed as a, quote, "barrier to development," it's something that we'll all have to deal with. How do we deal with the questions of adaptation? There are some absolutely fascinating issues at the UN. We're deeply involved in those and again, that's a long answer but this issue deserves everybody's understanding and attention. And you know, if I were advising a young foreign service officer as to what to do, I'd say get involved with the climate change issue as fast as you can.

I was at a meeting of foundation people in California last week. We were talking about where should investments be made in young Ph.D. programs and I said to get young economists into the climate issue. It's so interesting to see this happening. A group of demographers came into my office early this week and they have done a new analysis to understand the correlations between population growth and climate. You know, this is absolutely fascinating, not a white man's burden issue at all. It is what would happen if you continue very aggressive programs of family planning and giving women choices about the size of their families and spacing of their children. If you did everything that was proposed in Cairo at the international conference on population, if you did all of those things, what would be the contribution? And two, the climate issue. Now, this was the first time I'd seen this data put together. It was absolutely intriguing to see how those pieces interrelate and interesting to see first class economists doing this kind of work. That had not been done before. So the issue is beginning to attract attention. Final note on this, you know, we've been given a little bit of a reprieve. If there's a silver lining in this economic catastrophe that we're facing, that silver lining is that, you know, carbon emissions around the world have slowed down and declined, economic growth has slowed down and declined and that gives us a little more time and a little bit of a buffer before the, you know, catastrophe gets to the point that it's out of control and we can't do anything about it.

MR. HOGE:

Tim, regarding two ways to measure the US attitude now, two quick questions: Should the United States or will the United States run for a seat on the Human Rights Council? And secondly, should the United States start pressing for ratification of treaties, and in particular the Rome statute on the international criminal court?

MR. WIRTH:

I would guess that the answer is yes on human rights. There is a broad coalition of which we are a part and, as one of the organizers put it – we should encourage the administration as much as we can to do so. What do I think will happen? I think, yes, the US will join and become an aggressive participant. There will be some bumps along the way, how the US and others handle the Durban question, you know, is really problematic, but that's going to have to get worked out along the way. But I think yes. On the others, I think the criminal court will not be first in line in terms of treaties. I think it's more likely that the law of the sea will be teed up as sort of a first under the new administration. What's the mood of the Senate in terms of treaty ratification? You know, that's not an easy one. It looks like an easy one, but it's not. It's got a lot of nasty roots to it. It's like, you know, you've got a rotten tooth. Most of you are too young to have one. But you've got rotten roots, you know, and there are some really nasty roots that come down from the law of the sea and hit some nerves and, you know, those have got to get drilled out and we've got to figure out how to do that and how willing is the Senate to spend time on this? I think that will probably be the first case, will be the first test and then, you know, there are a couple of other things that are probably easier to do than the criminal court. The President has some other things that he has to think about with the Pentagon, you know, that are more important, that are higher level, you know, particularly regarding the whole question of nuclear arms, which we can talk about. He's got, I think, other items that have a higher equity, you know, than the criminal court. At least that would be my guess at this point, in terms of the balances of what they ought to do.

MR. HOGE:

I want to let people start asking questions but I've just got a couple more quick ones. One of them is the subject of Darfur. I mention that because Susan Rice herself, even before getting the job, and then since having the job, has mentioned that as a focus

and has just mentioned, generally, peacekeeping being one of the four areas where the US ought to have impact. What can the US do either to make peacekeeping more effective or specifically in the case of Darfur that's not being done now?

MR. WIRTH:

Well, I think, first of all, Susan Rice's interest in this was reflected by her time at the UN so far in which she met, I think she is probably the first US Ambassador to have met with peacekeeping officers - not at the very top levels, but to go find out what's going on. So obviously, you know, this is very much on her mind and she wants to know this, she wants to learn this and wants to know what the options are, what options are available. She's learning not only sort of the hand waving part of Darfur, but what in fact you actually do about it. And I think she is very determined to do so. Part of this also is going to relate to what's going on between Secretary Clinton and the Defense Department. What kind of cooperation is going to proceed there and how rapidly will that happen? And one of the equities in all of that is clearly, you know, how much can DOD be drawn at all, if at all, into the Darfur situation? Now, I don't have any information other than what you have, other than watching the behavior of the current - the new leadership and it's pretty encouraging. You know, the US is not going to send the Marines in, there aren't any Marines to send in and they wouldn't do it anyway. But you know, short of that, what are the other steps that can be taken? Probably a series of things. And she's - I would guess that Susan Rice is measuring those right now.

MR. HOGE:

Just one final question before I open it up to the floor. You know very well the general division across the street is between the north and the south, the developed world, the developing world. The developing world probably has more representation in that building than in any other place in the world. The developing world tends to accuse the United States and western powers of

viewing the UN as a place to pursue strategies for terrorism and things like that. They want the US and western countries to think of it more as a development area. I was struck that Susan Rice mentioned millennium development goals as one of the four things she focused on. That certainly was not the emphasis in the Bush administration. Do you know what she's thinking about there, and do you think that this administration will have a better sense of that's the kind of thing that you can pursue here to try to bring the two halves of the world together?

MR. WIRTH:

Well, I don't have to tell all of you that the MGDs are a framework and a way in which to discuss development in quite specific ways. And I was delighted when she said that in her confirmation and that this is becoming a touchstone of the way in which the US is viewing its role here and is viewing its opportunities of leadership here. I think it's really great and I think that there's a lot of that brings up – each of those bring up a number of opportunities. You know, I think those will get prioritized. My guess is that looking at maternal morbidity and maternal health is going to be way at the top of the agenda. The first appointment that Mrs. Clinton made, outside of her deputies, was related to women and a focus on women that's going to be not an in-your-face sort of thing, but it's going to be a very careful diplomatic one.

One final item - I think there is also a very different kind of an opportunity here regarding the relationship between the United States, the developed world and the developing world at the UN framed by the climate change issue. Let me give you just two examples. The first is the relationship between the US and China. I mentioned earlier that we're not going to get any kind of a climate agreement without agreement between the US and China. Now, how do the US and China come to agreement? Not by beating up on the old issues, they don't come to agreement

that way. You start with some very specific confidence building measures between the two and you start with an agenda related to efficiency, an agenda that relates to what the rules are going to be of disclosure and money for adaptation. You start with joint research programs and you focus on renewable energy items. Things that the Chinese want to do and the US want to do and you put those together. And it would be great if named as US envoy to China somebody like John Thornton, who is the former head of Goldman Sachs International, who is an expert on China, has spent the last eight years of his life effectively on Chinese issues and understands this very, very well and is very close to a lot of the Chinese leadership. Whoever has that job is going to be very important.

But the point that I'm making is the climate change issue becomes a way into renewing this relationship and redoing this relationship - and good modern diplomacy will do that. Susan Rice has been very interested, again, in learning the climate issue. It's not something she has a lot of history with, but she understands the opportunity. Related is the - you know, we've spent an awful lot of time running around the G77 versus developed country issue and it's largely about as tiresome as anything. It reflects a very, very different kind of a world than we have today and the opportunity, I think, that exists to break into that on all fronts is very real. For example, you know, the most impacted, like it or not, the most impacted countries in the world are probably the small island states as a group. And how many of them are there in the United Nations? About 45. Do you know what have they done together? They have come together in a very aggressive coalition on climate change and they know that they are in real trouble and that, you know, this is a very, very significant different arrangement that is going to have to be negotiated between the impacted countries and the countries that did the impact. What is the adaptation funding going to be? How

is that help going to come? Where is the technology transfer going to be? There are a whole lot of really interesting questions where you don't get into the old stuff that has hung up this arrangement for – or this institution for a long time. Climate is a way to think anew about the institution. It is – use the word renew. It is a way, I think, of renewing a lot of relationships in the UN. I think the Secretary General has understood that.

Final point, you know, it's remarkable that Ban Ki-moon, I think, that Ban Ki-moon has grabbed the climate agenda the way that he has. You would never have expected that from his record, either from the history of what Korea has done or from his own history there, I mean this was – but he is a very smart and, I suspect, a very shrewd individual. He saw the climate issue, the importance of the climate issue and, you know, he has put his stamp first and foremost on the success of the UN in climate change now. And I think he sees some of these other opportunities that are there, now it's up to all of us to help get those to be realized.

MR. HOGE:

It's your turn to take a shot - there he is. Please, if you have a question, signal so with your hand and I'll get a microphone brought to you.

QUESTION:

Okay. Thanks, Senator. I'm a pollster. And I'd like to thank you for a very thoughtful and really eloquent expose. I can also see why you were a tremendous asset when it was time for a filibuster. Specifically, though, I'd like to ask this. Since I am a pollster, I'm very concerned with public opinion and so far, your discussion is very inside the beltway. What I'm wondering is what you think about the way US public opinion towards the UN is evolving and also, what you think American leaders need to do in order to influence it.

MR. HOGE:

You poll, though, don't you?

MR. WIRTH:

I didn't say I think that -- yeah, we poll on this a lot. I think I did open my comments by saying that American opinion, and you may not have been listening or may not have been here, that the response at the inauguration and the interest of Americans in having a very different kind of a foreign policy, I think, is picked up by every bit of public opinion information, and you have certainly seen that. So that's the background against which all of this occurs and that's terribly important. Do Americans get up in the morning thinking about the United Nations? No. I mean, is it something that is a very high priority? No, it never has been and it won't be. You know, for a whole lot of reasons, it's never going to be. But when Americans do focus on it, historically, it had it in the neighborhood of 60 to 65% approval, as you know, and that has been pretty consistent since 1950 since the first polling that was done. And we've collected all of that data and looked at it and it's been very consistent until the Iraq war. And at the time of the Iraq war American support for it, when you asked people about it, had taken such a brutal beating from the administration, you know, over the inspections and then over the accusations about what the UN did and didn't do and then the UN's role in the resolutions related to Iraq that American attitudes toward Iraq, that's all they -- or toward the UN dropped off the cliff, as you know, and it dropped down in the 40s, I think, at that point. Then it bumped along there and it came back up into the 50s, where it sits today. I would guess it's probably higher than that. But it'll be back up to around, you know, 55, 60%, people say. But do they feel very strongly about it? No. You know, is it high on their list of concerns? No. If you had a feeling thermometer, you know, how much do you care about the UN? Well, it wouldn't be very high on the feeling thermometer. But when you do care, when you think about it, it's all right, it needs to be strengthened, needs to be reformed, but, you know,

it's pretty good. People respond in particular to the humanitarian side of the UN. That's what they understand, that's where the strongest constituency for the UN is. Probably the evangelical community, probably focused on AIDS, probably in Africa. That's where the largest and most intense feelings about the UN and the American public would be found, I think.

STATEMENT:

It seems that our public opinion in the US is our background factor - not to be influenced, but rather to be accepted.

MR. WIRTH:

Well, if you have a good idea about how to get people more interested in the UN, that's fine. I think that the UN is part of that background noise in the United States. It's not first and foremost. You might want to say, oh, it's the first and foremost concern, but let's be honest - it's not. You know, it is there and it's our job, in thinking about this, to make sure that the stories that are told about the UN are as positive as possible and there are lots of different ways of trying to do that. We spend a lot of time and effort working on that. One of the things, for example, that we've tried to do - and it's been hard - is to find where are all the Americans that work in the UN and find out when they come on home on leave and - if they live in Alabama or they live in rural Colorado or their families are there, get them to come home and get interviewed by the local paper and interviewed by the local television station and, you know, tell their story about what they're doing. They're great stories. They're wonderful stories. You know, this is the way you do it is on a one by one basis. You're not out selling Coca-Cola. You know, you're out selling a very humane set of stories. And that's what people are interested in and that's what plays and I think that's what we have to do. To sell the big power politics thing and what goes on in the securities stuff and so on, I mean, you know, either of the chances of that are very slim. A lot of people read Warren Hoge, in *The New York Times*, but do you know how many people will

read *USA Today*? About five times as many, if they read a paper at all, and most of them don't.

MR. HOGE: Any other questions? Otherwise, we can – yeah. Please, in the corner here. Just wait for the microphone.

QUESTION: Thanks for your talk, Senator. Just you mentioned briefly the disarmament issue. Maybe if you could say a little more.

MR. WIRTH: Oh, that's great. Thank you for asking about it.

MR. WIRTH: If there is a single issue, you know, next to climate change, it's that. The two biggest issues that all of us face, I think are: Are we going to blow each other off the face of the globe somehow or are we going to fry? The two biggest issues are the nuclear issue and the climate change issue. I mean those are the two most important issues and President Obama has embraced the approach that has been driven by former Senator Sam Nunn, Henry Kissinger, George Schultz and Bill Perry. Certainly not a radical group of people and the four of them, you know, have said we have got to sharply reduce the number of weapons right away that are on hair trigger alert, which we have now. We've got to drop the arsenal down to below a thousand right away and we've got to go to zero. Now, that is a very radical approach to take. If you talk to the high priests of American defense policy, and Warren's talked to a lot of them and you've probably talked to a lot of them, you know, they got all the right stuff, you know, and so on. But you know, what do you have to do? Well, you have to have four weapons to target every pop stand on the Trans Siberian Railroad, you know. It's just ridiculous. But anyway, I should not editorialize. It's terribly important what the President has done and that is going to be driven here, it's going to be reflected here. There will be still some skirmishing probably that goes on between the summit DOD who don't believe that this is

a direction in which to go, but I think the President is going to prevail. I feel strongly about this and it is really important. Warren had asked me why do elections make a difference? On climate change dramatically, you see that already, but it's also the case in this other great big one, the nuclear weaponry, and it's terrific, you know. I think it's terribly important.

MR. HOGE: Okay. We'll go here first, then here and then we'll give Ed Luck the final word. So please.

QUESTION: Thank you, Senator. Looking at the two great challenges preventing us from frying or blowing each other up, one of the links is nuclear power and do you talk to young people, encouraging them to become experts in nuclear physics?

MR. WIRTH: Not particularly.

QUESTION: What about the role of nuclear power?

MR. WIRTH: We have to replace our nuclear capability, which provides about 20% of the electricity in the United States, for example, and that's important and it's going to be very hard to do. You know, we can talk in the abstract about nuclear power but still you've got a huge finance problem, much less the safety issues.

I guess we can talk about nuclear power and, you know, it's an important issue to talk about, but I think the relative contribution that it's going to make compared to everything else is pretty slim. By the way, you all are, you know, the world's number one victim of climate change right now. You see what weather patterns are doing in Australia and they're probably permanent. You know, the monsoon that came, you know, is not going to be there. A lot of people think it's a permanent shift in weather patterns, as you know, and you're seeing this in these terrible

fires in Australia. I think we're going to start to see the same sort of thing in my backyard in the American southwest, the same sort of a situation. That's climate change. A devastating side of that is the devastating climate change in Darfur. The number of refugees that are going to result from this, you know, tens of millions of refugees are going to be added to an already overexposed role. I mean, talk about food, those of you involved in a world food program - right in the bull's eye is Sub Sahara in Africa and the Indian subcontinent in terms of dramatic drop-offs of the ability to produce food for people, enough food for people to eat. I mean Australia reminds us that this issue is already upon us, it's upon us in a very serious way and it is escalating and we've got to move now.

QUESTION:

Tonight I have more of a comment. If I remember very well, there's an English writer, Lord Pressley, that says that unlike mathematics, engineering and precise sciences, human relations is like a tree. It grows and it can wither. In Africa, we go further by saying: pity the man that cuts down the tree and not the roots. The tree can grow back. When a man is mowed down, will he live again on this earth? I will say this, sir, I believe that nations play roles in history and responsibilities approach us like seniority knocking at our doors. When it knocks at your door, you cannot dodge it and say come back next time. You have to face the realities. With what is happening in the United States now and considering the effects of globalization and the climate change that you've spoken so eloquently about, do we begin to cheer up and say that change has come or shall we brace ourselves for another period of a trying time? Thank you very much.

MR. WIRTH:

Well, put in the context of the UN, you know, the tree grows back. We did a pretty good job in the United States of trying to cut down the tree in the last administration and, you know, it's

growing back. We have an obligation to now nurture, once again, all of the relationships around the UN as a terribly important institution and it's – what you're saying is a very nice way of putting it. Thank you.

QUESTION:

Tim, thank you. That was very, very helpful. You've given us some encouragement on repairing US-UN relations. We haven't heard that for a while, so thank you. But what about the larger question of American leadership within the UN? Other than specific issue areas where we might take a different policy, might be more supportive of the UN, do you see a resurgence of US leadership and do you see other member states willing to accept and welcome US leadership again? Because we hear a lot about well, good, the US is going to get behind us, the US is going to support us, but are they ready for the US really to assert leadership? And if they're not, at some point could this administration get to be a little bit frustrated with trying to achieve things in the organization and getting a certain amount of pushback?

MR. WIRTH:

That's a really interesting question and I think clearly Susan Rice, Ambassador Rice, clearly has in her mind that she wants to not only restart a lot of relationships here, but get the US back in a position. I think I've heard her say the UN works when the US really works with the UN and when the US plays the role of leadership that it has in the past. Now, I think you have to legitimately say can the US role of leadership be what it was in the past? I think probably the reality is that US should be out front but not in the pre-eminent position that it's in now because it doesn't have that kind of power any more, it's not going to have that power any more. You know, just in the last year and a half, the catastrophes of a lot of our military adventures around the world, I think have eroded, a significant amount of the capacity of the US to put a single US stamp on what might

happen here. So the ability of the US to work in a different way with the G77, to work in a different way with the Europeans, to work in a different way with, you know, everybody at the UN is going to demand a lot of different diplomacy and I think that's underway. Is it going to be like in the past, the paramount nature? No. I don't think the US is going to do that. Finally, will it be frustrating? Of course it'll be frustrating. Will the US get frustrated? Absolutely they'll get frustrated. But so you get that when you buy the car, right? I mean, you know, that's what you do when you get into politics, and this is politics. That's what you do when you get into the UN and that's what you do when you get into diplomacy. You know, it even happens when you get into journalism. You know how frustrated it's been? We've had – *The Times* run such crummy stories sometimes, you know, and they were often very good too, but what can we do? I mean, of course it's going to be frustrating but, you've got to keep working on it and when you get tired of working on it, then it's time to change an administration, get somebody new who wants to come in with a new shot of energy and take it on. That's why change is so terrific. You know, it makes a difference when you get new people in. I mean how old is Susan, 44 or 45 years old? I mean, you know, that's terrific. This is the next generation. You know, that's great. Anyway, really good set of questions and I hope I was able to filibuster appropriately, as the gentleman in the back suggested. Warren, thank you very much for asking me and thank you all very much for being here.

MR. HOGE:

I'm going to tell you, you know a lot more than you knew when I first met you 40 years ago. Thanks for coming in and sharing it with us.

MR. WIRTH:

Thank you all.

[Applause]