



BEYOND THE HEADLINES

FEATURING
RICHARD STENGEL

AUTHOR OF
MANDELA'S WAY: FIFTEEN LESSONS ON LIFE, LOVE, AND COURAGE

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Trygve Lie Center for Peace, Security & Development
International Peace Institute
777 United Nations Plaza, 12th Floor
(Corner of 1st Avenue and 44th Street)

Warren Hoge:

Well, good evening. I'm Warren Hoge, IPI's Vice President for External Relations, and I'm happy to welcome you here for this Beyond the Headlines event featuring Richard Stengel, author of *Mandela's Way: 15 Lessons on Life, Love and Courage*.

I want to note at the outset my delight in seeing so many Africans here, because we at IPI like to think that this is a place in the UN community where Africa takes a priority. As many of you know, IPI has a full-fledged Africa program, a formal working relationship with the African Union, and just in the two years that I've been here, we've provided the forum for numbers of African leaders, including four presidents.

And IPI takes an interest in Africa's future leaders too. And in that connection, I'm very happy to say that among you tonight are eight accomplished young African scholars of the African Junior Professionals Fellowship Program that IPI conducts in conjunction with King's College London. They're all here. I see them around the audience.

[APPLAUSE]

We're going to be talking about Africa's present and past. This is Africa's future.

Richard Stengel, or Rick Stengel, as he is known, is the editor of *Time* magazine. He's a frequent commentator on television, and an author of several other books, including one that was called *January's Son: One Day, Three Lives, a South African Town*.

In 1993 he collaborated with Nelson Mandela on the bestselling autobiography *Long Walk to Freedom*, and later served as co-producer of the 1996 Oscar-nominated documentary called *Mandela*.

Just this past week in the *Financial Times* reviewed three new volumes on Mandela and said that Rick's was the best of them. The paper said that, quote, "Stengel's *Mandela's Way: Lessons of Life* is the most insightful explanation yet of what has become known as the Mandela magic. Based on hundreds of hours of interviews, it shows that Stengel clearly adores his subject, yet manages to avoid the usual pitfall of Mandela watchers, of lurching into hagiography."

Now let me add to that fact, the fact that Rick is a lot brainer than the people we usually get in journalism. He graduated magna cum laude from Princeton, he was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford, and in a detail I did not know until I consulted his biography, played on the Princeton basketball team that won the National Invitational Tournament at Madison Square Garden in 1975.

I've been an acquaintance of Rick's for a long time. When I saw him tonight for the first time in many years, I said, "I just want to look, just stand there a second," 'cause I didn't remember him being that much taller than me. He's not, so he must have talent.

For almost three years, including the critical period when Mandela moved South Africa towards the first democratic elections in its history, Rick worked with him on the autobiography and traveled with him everywhere. Eating with him, watching him campaign, accompanying him in his characteristic four-hour early-morning walks, hearing him think out loud, Rick got to know all sides of this extraordinary person, and the friendship that emerged was mutual.

In the invitation we included Mandela's compliment to Rick as someone who really grasps the idea of *ubuntu*, the African concept of gaining humanity through the humanity of others.

As for the feeling Rick has for Mandela, he writes at the end of the book of the blessing Mandela bestowed upon his wife, Mary, who is from South Africa and who, happily, is here tonight. One day, Rick writes, before Mary and I were married, Mandela said to her, "I give you my blessing, because Richard is my son." Rick continues, "I love that he called me one of his sons, and I loved him, but I also know that I have millions upon millions of brothers and sisters."

Rick has distilled from this close association a book which is broken into 15 essential life lessons, all grounded in examples from Mandela's experience and thinking. The chapter, Know Your Enemy, talks about how Mandela set out to learn the Afrikaans language and studied everything from Afrikaans poetry to military strategy.

The chapter, Keep Your Enemy Close, notes that he put a key opponent, and someone he genuinely disliked, Zulu leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, into his first cabinet.

There is the chapter Lead from the Front, and another called Lead from the Back. A third, called Quitting is Leading Too, is illustrated by his decision in 1999 not to run for a second term as president, setting a great example that is too often ignored in Africa.

Along the way are fascinating small details. Mandela is a meticulous man who has long made up his own bed, sometimes shocking hotel housekeepers in the process. In prison, to keep in shape – now think about this – he would daily run in place for 45 minutes, and perform 200 sit-ups and 100 fingertip pushups.

He was in prison from age 44 to age 71, and on returning to the outside world in 1990, after those 27 years in prison, Rick writes that at his first press conference, when he saw the furry sound booms of the TV correspondents honing in on him, he ducked, because they looked to him like weapons.

And finally, in a comment that has resonance at this time in this country, Rick writes that Mandela's sharpest criticism of others is that they are too emotional or passionate or sensitive. One thing Mandela learned in prison, Rick says, is that the one thing you most have to control is yourself.

Rick, as I read that, and your description of how Mandela admires people who are balanced, measured and controlled, it occurred to me that he might not share the current critical view that President Obama is too detached, or that Obama's cool professorial demeanor means he is disengaged. I can ask you about that later.

Richard Stengel: Okay.

Warren Hoge: *Mandela's Way*, finally, is an engrossing book about an indisputably great man, leader and teacher. It is for sale at the front door, and Rick, I know will be happy to sign copies at the end of this evening.

Rick, I'm really glad that you're here to talk to us about the book and about the man who inspired it and who, by the way, turned 92 years old last Sunday. The floor is yours.

[APPLAUSE]

Richard Stengel: Thank you. Warren, thank you very much. I just also want to say a word about you Warren. I mean IPI is fantastically lucky to have Warren Hoge, who is one of the great foreign correspondents in this country, that we've actually ever produced and the only ...

[APPLAUSE]

Warren Hoge: This is not what they came to hear.

Richard Stengel: The only downside of your job is that we don't get to read you anymore, but we had a lot of time for that. It's really lovely to be here and that was a lovely introduction, and of course, by the way, one of the advantages I usually have when I talk about Nelson Mandela is I usually know more about him than anybody else in the room. But I see Fink Haysom back there, who some of you know, so I have to be on my best behavior because Fink, actually, who we first met, you probably don't even remember, when I first came down to South Africa to write that book *January's Son* in the 1980s, Fink worked incredibly closely with President Mandela in his office as his attorney, sort of chief of staff, and so, actually, you can correct me if I get anything wrong.

But the genesis of the book was the fact that as a result of that early book, *January's Son*, I had this incredible opportunity to work with Nelson Mandela on

his autobiography, and a wise professor of mine once gave me some advice, which I think is useful in any endeavor in life, which is, take notes.

And so what I realized, once we started working together, was that I had a unique historical opportunity. South Africa was at a knife point where the country could have gone either way, and as Fink knows, Mandela actually thought the country was poised on the brink of civil war. And so, at the same time he was, he'd accepted a boatload of money to write his memoirs, and this young American fellow came over to work with him, and it was not exactly the first thing on his to-do list. But what I realized, as we worked together and as he was talking about his life, that I was in a, I had a historical opportunity that very few people have ever had. It would be like being an aide-de-camp to George Washington and writing your memoir, or Abraham Lincoln, or Napoleon, or whoever these great historical figures are, because, in fact, you know what? Mandela is one of them.

And it almost didn't happen altogether. Little Brown was the publisher. They'd signed Mandela up through the auspices of Peter Magubane, I believe whose daughter is actually the South African Consul General here in New York now. And they were looking for somebody to work with him, and I had to be vetted by the ANC, I had never met him before, and I just realized this was an offer that I couldn't refuse.

I flew down to South Africa at the end of 1992 and, as I say, he was preoccupied. There was a lot going on. And I, first week I didn't get to see him. The second week I didn't get to see him. The third week I didn't get to see him. Finally, I got to see him at Luthuli house, where ANC Headquarters was in downtown Johannesburg, under the auspices of the great Barbara Masekela, his assistant, and I walked into the office after waiting a month to see him, and you know, the experience of Nelson Mandela for the first time is an amazing one, really, because, I mean you can't quite believe that you're seeing him, and I know this sounds incredibly superficial, but I'm deeply superficial, he's an incredibly beautiful man, his skin is beautiful, his, he has an aura, he has this incredible size, and we actually forget throughout history the correlation between size and leadership and he's a perfect exemplar of it.

So we were sitting, talking in his office and chit chatting and maybe talking for about, I don't know, less than ten minutes, and he paused and he said, "Mr. Stengel, I assume after two or three sessions like this you will have enough for your book." So, I had been frustrated, as I say, waiting for a month, and I guess it all boiled up and I said, "Mr. Mandela, if you think we're going to have enough for your autobiography after two or three sessions, you are crazy." And I pointed my finger at him, at which point Barbara Masekela walked into the office, grabbed me, ushered me out, and I thought the whole project was over.

So I called her the next day. I begged to be able to come back and see her, see Mandela. Finally, a couple of days later I went back to see him in his office in Luthuli house. And I thought, okay, I have to apologize. And we sat down and I said, "Mr. Mandela ..." this is before I knew him well enough to call him Madiba, which is what everybody called him, I said, "Mr. Mandela, I just want to apologize for my behavior the other day. I'm sorry I was so ..." and I was looking for the right word and the word I came up with was, "I'm sorry I was so brusque with you," terrible word, right? So, he paused, he smiled, and he said, "If you think you were brusque with me the other day, you must be a very gentle young man indeed." And of course I realized he'd spent 27 years in prison, he'd been in

solitary confinement, harassed by guards, he was a outlaw for that time before he'd gone to prison – he'd heard a lot worse than me calling him crazy that day.

But that was, in a sense, the beginning of our relationship, because he – one of the things that people don't realize is that as earnest as he is, as powerful as he is, as devoted as he is, he also has a wonderful sense of humor, a very dry and ironic sense of humor, and that started to bond us together.

We started meeting early in the morning, which was the time that he was, in some ways, most focused, and nobody else was up at that time of day. He was an incredibly early riser. In fact, I think it was our second meeting where I went into his office, we would meet there at about 6:30 in the morning, and he was calling somebody, I think it was Cyril Ramaphosa, and woke him up, and he would disingenuously apologize for waking people up, and then obviously Cyril said to him, "Don't you ever sleep?" and he said, "I'm an old man, I only sleep two or three hours a night." And he put the phone down, and I asked him, "Is that true?" He said, "No, I sleep a full eight hours, I just tell people that."

He is a – one of the ideas of the book is that, as a person who worked with him and Fink, you'll realize this too, and know this too, there's been a kind of, in the last few years, or certainly since his retirement, a kind of Santa Claus-ification of Nelson Mandela, turning him into this kind of kindly, white-haired, old fellow who symbolizes kind of peace and reconciliation. So far from the truth. I mean Nelson Mandela was a revolutionary. He was the man who founded Umkhonto we Sizwe, the Spear of the Nation, the military wing of the ANC. He was a person who had to make terrible and dreadful decisions during his times in and out of prison. He was a man that people counted on for courage and strength, at times when people were at their lowest. I mean he is so far from a Santa Claus-type figure, that I wanted people to see that side of him.

You know, he'll always tell you, you know, I'm not a saint, don't put me up on a pedestal, and I think he half means it. He probably doesn't like some of the things that I had to say about him, but they're said out of love and admiration, and out of this idea also that what courage is, what bravery is, what leadership is, is not what is in you in terms of your DNA, but what you discover about yourself along the way, the insight that you have and the things that you triumph over.

So, for example, one of the early chapters in the book is *Courage Is Not the Absence of Fear*. One of the things I found when we first started talking, and it really was an amazing experience because he didn't get used to it right away, he sort of rejects the use of the first person pronoun. You know, he much would rather say "we" rather than "I," and an autobiography is done in the first person, and he, oftentimes, he would say, when I'd ask him a question, you know, "That is for others to say about me, not for me to say about myself." But he started to get used to talking about it, and of course, when I would ask him a question about what the ANC did collectively, then he would revert to the first person and say, "No, I did that."

So, one of the things I found as we started talking, and you're talking to one of the most heroic figures of the 20th Century, he many, many times talked about how frightened he was, how fearful he was, how distressed he was. And I just kept thinking in the beginning, how is it possible that Nelson Mandela was afraid? And one day, about a particular situation, I think a guard was about to hit him, I said, "How is that you were afraid? How can you tell me that you were frightened? You're the great Nelson Mandela." And he said, "Richard, it would

be irrational not to be afraid.” He was so comfortable with himself, so confident in himself, that he allowed himself to talk about being frightened.

In fact, there was an amazing story once when, it was during the run-up to the election and there was an incredible amount of violence in Natal between the IFP, the Inkatha Freedom Party, the Zulus, and the ANC there. And he decided he was going to fly down there and give a speech, which a lot of people said you just shouldn’t do. And given the general incompetence of ANC bodyguards at that time, I also advised him not to do it.

But I went down to meet him, I went down to Natal a little bit earlier to meet him, and he came down on this very small plane. And it was a propeller plane, and I was sitting in this tiny, tiny little airport waiting for him, and when the plane was about 20 minutes from landing, this fellow came to me and said, “There’s a problem. One of the propellers of the plane has stopped working and we’re going to have ambulances here, we’re going to coat the runway with foam. Usually nothing happens, but I just wanted to let you know.” So I said, “Thanks.”

So, they did all of that. The plane landed safely. He came out and, as often happened, there was a busload of tourists there and he just, of course, in those days he would shake hands with anybody who wanted to shake hands with him, and he was just traveling with one bodyguard, a fellow named Mike. And Mike had probably only ever been on a plane once or twice before, and I asked him how did it go, and he said, about halfway through the trip, Mandela pointed out the window and he said, “Mike, you might want to tell the pilot that the propeller is not working.” So he said, okay, it was about steps to tell the pilot. The pilot knew. Mike came back and told Mandela and said that they’ve called ahead, there’s usually nothing wrong, and Mandela just nodded, had that kind of face where he understood, and went back to reading his newspaper. And he loves, by the way, reading newspapers. He couldn’t get them in prison. He just, he was obsessed with newspapers.

And Mike later told me, he said that he himself was never as frightened as any time in his entire life, it was only his second or third plane trip, he didn’t know what to do. The only thing that would calm him, he said, was I would look at Mandela, who was calmly reading the newspaper like he was on the commuter train into Grand Central. It was the only thing that would calm him.

A similar story to what many people on Robben Island would tell me when I interviewed them about what did he do for you? They said, “All I had to do was look at him and it would calm me.” So, the plane landed, I talked to Mike. Mandela shook hands with everybody. We got into his bulletproof BMW to go to the speech. I was sitting there already, they opened the door, he came down and sat down next to me. I said, “How was the flight?” He said, “Man, I was terrified up there.”

And it was a great lesson because one of the things that he talks about, and that chapter is about, is that courage is not the absence of fear, it’s not not feeling the fear and figuring out some way, something to do about it, to, as he put it oftentimes, “I had to put up a front.” He talked about constantly, on Robben Island, “I had to put up a front,” either when he was terribly sad or frightened, because he knew that other people were looking at him.

And it is an example of why he is, in fact, a great leader and a great politician, because one of the things that he understood, and sometimes I think we forget, is he understood that politics was also about appearances, that the figure makes

the man. He always understood, during the time we worked together, during the time that he was campaigning, that he had to cut the right figure, that people do, in fact, judge a book by its cover, and if you want them to judge it the way you want to appear, you have to appear that way. He would often talk to me about what he should wear the next day, whether a suit was appropriate, whether one of those beautiful Mandela shirts that he just began wearing was appropriate. He would ask me what I was wearing. He understood that that image that he had was so important to who he was.

And, in fact, I would say that his greatest strength, in a way, as a politician, was that beatific smile that he had. In fact, the campaign poster from 1994 just showed him smiling, and it was a smile that seemed to understand everything, to understand all and excuse all, and in fact, that was his great, great, great achievement, which was that he did come out, he did triumph over the fact that people did think that there would be a terrible civil war between black and white, and even within the black community itself, and everybody would say to me, after years with working with him, "I can't believe that he wasn't angry, that he was forgiving of his enemy, that he said forget the past."

And again, one of the insights that I had and one of the daily realities of talking to him was that, in fact, he couldn't forget the past. He was obsessed by the past. His memory was extraordinary. He was, had many, many bitter feelings about what had happened to him. I mean the part of his life that in some way he cherished most, his private life, was completely taken away from him. His relationship with his family, with his children, was completely taken away from him. He spent 27 years in prison, of course the man was bitter. But what he understood better than anybody, and he persuaded everybody that he worked with, and he persuaded a whole country and the whole world, is that you had to forget the past, you did not show any bitterness, because as soon as you showed some bitterness, as soon as you showed some regret like that, that transformation that he was trying to achieve was in jeopardy, and he understood that. And self-discipline was, in fact, his great watchword. That's what prison taught him, because the man who went into prison was not the man who came out.

There was a book published while he was in prison. It was a collection of his speeches, and Oliver Tambo, his law partner, his great friend, his great mate, wrote the introduction to it, and I remember reading the introduction, which was more interesting than the speeches, which were pretty boring, where Oliver says, "And my law partner, Nelson Mandela ..." and he described him, "... quickly stung to anger, easily insulted, thin-skinned, emotional." And I thought, "Who am I reading about?" But in fact, the Nelson Mandela who went to prison in 1964 was in fact a tempestuous fellow, a fellow who was like the leaders of the ANC Youth League who sometimes go off the reservation. He was somebody who was considered, as he even described himself, "a rabble-rouser." He was somebody who did not, he said, was not able to contain his emotions when he was a young man. And, in fact, he wasn't so young when he went into prison, he was 46 years old.

Prison taught him self-discipline. Prison was this great crucible that burned away so many of those aspects of his character which he felt were not good, were not important, so when he praised people for being measured, for being calm, that's something that he learned, and that's another lesson in the book and another lesson that he teaches, because unlike someone like Barak Obama who seems to come by it naturally, he had to learn it.

And one of the questions in the beginning that I always ask him, and he is not a terribly introspective person, as is a man of his generation, I would say, "Madiba, how was it, how is it, that the man who came out of prison in 1990 is different from that man who went into prison in 1964? What's the difference between those two men?" And he would always get annoyed and he'd change the subject. But I'd ask it again and again. And finally, one day in exasperation he said, "I came out mature." I came out mature. That is, in a way, the kind of scrim of how he saw what that prison experience did for him. And that prison experience made him mature, which is something that he considers a very rare and important attribute in any human being. And that was what allowed him, I believe, to lead this great dispensation in South Africa, to avert a civil war, and to create a country which just, remarkably, I think, did a fantastic job in hosting the World Cup, which we all saw. So that, in a nutshell, is Nelson Mandela. Thanks very much.

[APPLAUSE]

Warren Hoge:

I told Rick ahead of time that I'd made a lot of notes here on anecdotes, stories, expressions, comments that I would prod him to say, because he couldn't remember them all. As you were going I kept checking off, okay, he's taken that one away, taken this one away. But there are a couple here, and one of them I mentioned to you beforehand, which I think is a wonderful illustrative story, and that is the day that you were out with Mandela and, I think, a rugby team, and he got word that Chris Hani, a potential leader of the ANC, had been assassinated, what he did, and then what you learned afterwards about what he really felt.

Richard Stengel:

So, we were in the Transkei, where Mandela was born and where, after he came out of prison he built a house, a country house. He said to me once, he said, "Every man should have a house within sight of where he was born." And it was very close to this little village, Qunu, where he was born. And the ironic thing about it is the house itself, the floor plan of the house was exactly the house that he lived in, in his last few years of prison at Victor Verster Prison. He liked the house. It was very simple. It was one level. He gave it to an architect and said, "This is what I want you to build for me." And it, again, I'm told the house has been grandified since then, but it was very simple.

And so I went with him to the Transkei when we were first working on the book. It was actually at Christmastime, which is summer in South Africa. And the other thing I realized in those first trips with him there, is that not only did he get up incredibly early, he would take these very, very long walks early in the morning, beginning at about five or 5:30 and walk for like four hours, and he would walk in that area around there, visiting villages he knew as a child, talking about his childhood, which was a fantastic thing for me because it helped the book tremendously. And just how remote South Africa was, that part of South Africa was, is that almost invariably, if we ran into someone, they had no idea who he was. In fact, I don't speak Xhosa, which is the language there. But he often said people would ask him, was he a head man? Was he the head of the tribe and just visiting, didn't realize he was Nelson Mandela.

So one morning we took this very long walk, we came back, he wouldn't have breakfast until he came back and we would then work for an hour or so. So we were sitting in the kind of drawing room of his house. He had ordered breakfast, porridge, which he loved, and he had forgotten that he had promised a friend of his that the, I think the East London rugby team was coming to visit and there

they were, and of course in Qunu people just show up at his doorstep, and that was the custom and he would always say hello and invite them in. So suddenly, here's the East London ruby team.

He hasn't gotten his breakfast, we haven't started our interview yet. Someone comes in and says, "The East London rugby team is out there waiting for you." He dutifully gets up, he starts going out there, and of course he has a kind word and a smile for everybody, and about halfway through shaking hands with the rugby team, he gets called inside, there's an emergency phone call for him. He picked it up where I was sitting in the drawing room, he said, "Yes, yes" And then his face formed this frown, which was a kind of inversion of his beautiful smile, was listening. He asked a few questions. He asked for a phone number, where he could call the person back. He put the phone down and he told me that Chris Hani had been assassinated. Chris Hani was the leader of the South African Communist Party, a future possible president of South Africa, in some ways also a rival to Mandela at the time, and someone who was very, very popular with the youth, as he called it, and with the left wing of the ANC. And, as he later told me, he thought this was something that could easily tip the country into civil war.

He put the phone down, he proceeded to walk out to finish shaking hands with the ruby team, but he called into the kitchen saying, "Where's my porridge?" He went out, assumed that smile, shook hands with the second half of the rugby team, came back in, had his porridge, and then all without kind of showing any emotion at all, he then picked up the phone and started calling a succession of ANC leaders saying "Here's what we must do. I need to go on television tonight and give a speech to the nation," something which F.W. de Klerk, the president of the country, did not do for four nights. He talked about what he needed to say. He talked about what he needed to do. All done with an incredible calmness and focus which I was just in awe of seeing, and it was a moment which, again, talking about being a fly on the wall or being in a unique historical moment, it was something that I saw in terms of leadership and courage and bravery that I thought epitomized what made Nelson Mandela and what makes Nelson Mandela so great.

Warren Hoge: And you say in the book that afterwards he told you that actually he thought it was a moment of enormous peril that could lead to race war.

Richard Stengel: He really did, and one of the things, you know, one of the regrets I have is not having actually worked with him, like Fink did, when he was president. But he, you know, years later, always said to me, he said the book that I would really like to do, after *Long Walk*, is a book about how close South Africa came to civil war, which people don't realize what the threat from the extreme right was, and it's not something that he's ever done or ever will do now, but he really saw that as a time of terrible, terrible peril.

Warren Hoge: You say in the book that, and you've referred to it a little bit tonight, that Mandela really does understand that he is Mandela, that people react to him as you did the first time you met him, something about the size. You mention in the book the color of his skin, which is sort of luminous, you say. And that he understands the effect he has on people and that he uses it. Basically, he thinks of himself as a great persuader and this is part of his persuasion technique. Now I forget where that question was going to go.

And you also talk, as you did here, about the way he dresses, the way he looks, that's all very important to him. Oh, I know what it was. But you also say that you always had difficulty trying to ask him to become reflective or self-analyzing. You mention the one case about how you said, you know, are you the same man as you are before you went to prison and he finally said "I came out mature," but in general, you had difficulty getting him to talk about himself in a private manner, yes?

Richard Stengel:

I think some of that was generational. One of the things that I did, and one of the great joys of working on that book was that in addition to spending all that time with Mandela, because I had just said, you know, I basically said to him, "I'm going to be your mascot. I'm going to come with you everywhere you go." Just because I – the pleasure of his company is enormous, but also because I saw it a historical opportunity.

But I also went and visited with many, many of the men he was in prison with. I visited the schools that he went to, Robben Island, the university, as the ANC members called it. But I remember going to Healdtown, which was the boarding school, it was a Methodist boarding school that he went to as a young man. He was raised by the regent of the Tembu tribe, and in those days he was very well to do. The fortunate sons would go to this very exclusive African prep school. And I remember going to visit it and realizing, okay, he was here in 1925, born in 1918. His teachers, I remember he talked to me about the principal of the school was in his 60s or 70s. And I was thinking these people who were teaching him were reading Dickens when Dickens was writing. He was a, he is a Victorian man. I mean he was raised – he's an Anglophile. He was raised by these English, you know, Methodist headmasters in the Transkei in the 1920s. I mean we can't even imagine what that world was like. And that was not a world in which men are introspective, where there is much, you know, obviously the world psychology didn't even exist. It's pre-Sigmund Freud.

So he, like a man of his generation, he was not introspective in that way. But I also think one of the things that made him so exceptional, is that he's an extraordinarily quick study about so many different things. And what he also is, in some ways, is a great actor, and he realized, well, we need this for the book, Rick needs this. He could do a kind of imitation of being introspective. But he wasn't self-analytical in that way except in a very hardheaded pragmatic way when it came to politics. I always thought that if I were running for office, I'd want Nelson Mandela to be my campaign manager, as extraordinary as that seems. That's how smart he was about politics.

Warren Hoge:

Rick, Mandela and love – three wives, terribly difficult circumstances until the most recent one, who he married 12 years ago when he turned 80. Have you seen him and Graça Machel, his current wife? Can you tell a little bit about the experience he had with his two sons? Very sad experience. And also, his marriage to Winnie, which largely he was in prison the whole time – anyway, that's – Mandela and love, how could he possibly manage that?

Richard Stengel:

He had a very, I think, you know, going back to what I was talking about in terms of being a Victorian man, I mean I think he had quite a kind of western romantic view of love. And I think that came from his schooling. He famously ran away to Johannesburg when he was a young man because the regent, his adopted father, had arranged a marriage for him and his cousin, I remember him talking about it, and even in his own unpublished memoir, he talked about how, and again, this would have been in

the 1920s or early 1930s, that he didn't want someone to choose a wife for him. He wanted to be able to choose his own wife. And I mean, as ordinary as that sounds today, in that milieu and that venue, it was something that was quite extraordinary. And, in fact, that started his whole life on a different course when he ran away because he didn't want to agree to an arranged marriage.

He was always something – once he became a young lawyer in Johannesburg and started making some money, he was not only a Beau Brummel but a ladies' man. I think he always thought that we'd have an even better book than *Long Walk to Freedom* if I had been a woman because then he would actually have enjoyed talking to that person more than he did to me, as he did talking to my wife, Mary, for the documentary.

I think he, you know, in that review in the FT, I have not read the *Young Mandela* book, and apparently there's stories in there about his kind of romantic ways, and him being a ladies' man. He genuinely, I think, had a romantic love for Winnie. He, when we were together and talking – it was interesting, he was warm in talking about her in the past. He was much more kind of unyielding and taciturn in talking about her in the present. I think he truly had a love affair with her. If you look at the letters he wrote to her from prison, which I think will be published in this forthcoming book about – some of Mandela's letters – they're really extraordinary love letters. He was a wonderful writer. They're incredibly romantic.

There's one that has been published about how he kept a picture of her in his cell on Robben Island and every night he would dust it and every night he would kiss it and he said he would feel that electric thrill that I always felt when I touched you when I was in your presence. I mean really extraordinary letters, and I think that's why, I think the breakup of their relationship when he came out of prison hit him terribly hard. I mean I never saw him so down as when he went through that.

His relationship with Graça Machel, who is an extraordinary woman, is just sunny and lovely and warm and it's – he married her when he was 80 years old. I think she gave him the kind of domestic happiness that he had looked for his entire life and the sad part, I think, in some ways is that it's such kind of short duration. But seeing them together is really lovely. They're very supportive. She's very supportive of him.

We just came back from South Africa. We were there for the World Cup and we did a conference and we spent a lot of time with her, and she really is an extraordinary wonderful woman.

Warren Hoge: Would you have seen him, had not the tragedy of the great-granddaughter happened or ...?

Richard Stengel: We certainly thought about it. You know he's, you know, as he said, he's retired from his retirement. It's not – we saw him a couple of times last year. You know, he's not the Nelson Mandela we all knew, but he's 92 years old so

Warren Hoge: I just want to ask you one last question and then get the audience involved, and that is, you had this 120,000-word diary from your time with Nelson Mandela, and you decided to write this book. First of all, it's a very interesting idea for a book, and as I've said before, it works very well. Why did you decide to write this book now?

Richard Stengel: It's a good question. I mean it's the 20th anniversary of his release. The book I had always wanted to write was really just a kind of memoir of my time with him, which in fact, this book is, a memoir but with lessons. And if anybody knows much about the publishing industry, I couldn't ever get anyone interested in publishing my own memoir about working with him, and then I – I'm the editor of *Time Magazine* and one of the things you're able to do is you can write a cover story in *Time Magazine* if you're the editor. For his 90th birthday I wrote a cover story in *Time* about the lessons that Mandela teaches about leadership and that became the basis for this book, so that's a very pragmatic thing. But it really is, it's really a hidden memoir.

Warren Hoge: Very good. I'd love to get some questions or comments from people in the audience. Has Rick answered all the questions you brought?

Richard Stengel: Actually, where did Fink go? Did he leave? You should ask him a couple of questions.

Warren Hoge: I was looking for him but he said ... please here in the third row — just wait for the microphone, and if you would introduce yourself.

Ana Patel: Hi. My name is Ana Patel, and I'm the Executive Director of the Outward Bound Center for Peacebuilding. And my question is about whether you ever got a sense that he began to be concerned about where South Africa is now in the last few years when you saw him or interacted with him. I don't know if that's been very recent, but if he has been concerned in any way in the direction South Africa is going, about the leadership now. Did he ever express any disappointment, in a way?

Richard Stengel: Well he, as you know, I mean the fact that he chose to run for a second term and to kind of defy what had existed in many, many other emerging democracies in south Africa showed his great leadership. He had even talked about how George Washington, who – when George Washington was elected there were no term limits for US presidents. He served two terms and then he decided he would go back to his farm and that set the template for American presidential politics for 100 years, until FDR. He realized that, like George Washington, every step he took would be a new step in the sand, that somebody else would have to follow.

When Thabo Mbeki succeeded him he very publicly said that he wasn't going to talk about the country in a political way. He wasn't going to talk about how Mbeki was doing. And he kind of kept that promise for a couple of years, which was a very generous thing to do.

He had not so quickly become educated on AIDS/HIV policy. I have to say, when I first started working with him, he was very unenlightened about it. As would be a man of his generation, something that he had not been familiar with when he was in prison, but then he started learning about it. And he actually, I think he became even more progressive and enlightened about it after he left office, because I think one of his regrets about in office is the fact that he didn't do enough.

It was only after, it was about three years into Mbeki's term that he decided to break his silence and criticized Mbeki in particular about HIV policy in South African and the need for antiretroviral drugs. And that was something that, you

know, got a lot of attention and that was something I know that took a lot out of him because he didn't want to be critical.

I think he, in some ways thought that, you know, Thabo did some things very well and there were some things that he didn't do so well. I think one of the things, and again, I'm extrapolating now because I haven't actually talked to him about this and in keeping with his self-discipline, it's not something that he talks about, but I do think also, the current administration, with Mr. Zuma as president, you do finally have a leader of the ANC and a leader of South Africa who actually looks like, resembles, is of the same class of the lion's share of members of the ANC. You know, in the case of Nelson Mandela, in the case of Thabo Mbeki, and in the case of the previous leadership of the ANC, Oliver Tambo, you know, you had men, you know, the exiles is what they were called in South Africa, people from an African elite. You know, very well educated, who could understand, had a foot in the western world and a foot in Africa.

And so I think he thought it was overdo that the ANC and South Africa would have a leadership that mirrors the great numbers of citizens of South Africa.

Warren Hoge: John Hirsch.

John Hirsch: First of all, thank you very much for your wonderful presentation this evening.

Richard Stengel: Thank you.

John Hirsch: You made a big point of Mandela's concern to avert a civil war. Could you say a little bit about his perception of F.W. de Klerk and his relationship with de Klerk and whether he thought this was really a partner or how he felt about sharing the Nobel Prize, sort of generally, how did he feel about the Afrikaaner leadership in those years?

Richard Stengel: His relationship with de Klerk was complex. Of the handful of times where I ever saw him truly angry and on the brink of losing it, it was, there were two times provoked by F.W. de Klerk. There was a famous one that was actually, you can see on video when, during the constitutional negotiations, de Klerk had come to him, I think it was the opening of the negotiations, and de Klerk had come to him and ask if he could speak last, even though Mandela was scheduled to speak last and Mandela being the gracious gentlemen that he is, said fine. Mandela gave some remarks, de Klerk came up and promptly attacked him, attacked Mandela and blamed the ANC for the violence that was going on in South Africa. And you can see Mandela, he was trembling with anger, and as de Klerk left the podium he walked up there and he said, you know, "If a man can do the kind of thing that you have done, he cannot be trusted and no one can negotiate with him." He was furious. He was trembling with anger.

I privately saw him, you know, very frustrated with de Klerk on a number of occasions. And again, this is my interpretation and I don't know if it's correct or not.

Mandela, one of his great virtues, you know, and our flaws are oftentimes the flip side of our virtues, is one of his great virtues is that he believes that people are intrinsically good and he always sees the benign side of people. One of the criticisms that people in the ANC had of him is that he was too willing to think well of people. You know, it was almost impossible to ever get him to say anything ill of anybody. He'd always find something good to say about them.

When he first met de Klerk, and de Klerk is a very charming man, he's a very intelligent man, Mandela was charmed by him. Mandela felt that de Klerk got it. You know, de Klerk was instrumental in his release. I think Mandela ended up trusting him more than he ended up feeling that trust was merited, and there were – and de Klerk was shrewd. He was playing both sides of the aisle. Mandela came to believe that de Klerk and the national government really were secretly supporting the right wing movement in South Africa, that they were supporting death squads which were assassinating ANC leaders and he – I don't think I'm telling tales out of school here. I mean he wasn't delighted to accept the Nobel Peace Prize with Mr. de Klerk. I think at that point they weren't talking.

And so, but I do think, I mean if I'm being a little critical of Mandela myself, I think he – part of the reason that he felt so betrayed was that he trusted him too much to begin with, and as practical and hardheaded as he is, I think he was a little bit snookered by Mr. de Klerk.

Warren Hoge: I remember, among the many things I covered when I was living in Britain was the Northern Ireland peace process and I was there the year that they gave the award to John Hume, Catholic, and to David Trimble, the Protestant, two guys who just hated each other, and they had to accept it jointly.

Sandra Macharia: Hi. My name is Sandra Macharia, I'm with the UN Development Program. I have a very brief -- well, two-part question. The first is land in South Africa and what sort of discussion or his thoughts were about land and redistribution.

Richard Stengel: Right.

Sandra Macharia: And secondly about Zimbabwe and governance on the rest of the African continent. I mean he is part of the elders and he has made some comments from time to time, but it would be interesting to hear your thoughts about the discussions you had about governance on the continent and about land.

Richard Stengel: I think maybe I'll take the second one first. He, when it comes to Zimbabwe, and obviously they're related, you know, one of the tiffs that he and I would sometimes get in, and this was in part because one of the things I think Americans – Americans, of course, think they're the center of the universe and that everybody cares and thinks about America all the time. You know, one of the things I realized about Mandela is that he actually didn't know much about America, didn't actually care that much about America, and wasn't very pro-American because, you know, he talked about how in the 1950s he had gone around looking for funds for the ANC, you know, not only did he not get any from America, but America had him on a terrorist watch list. It was the CIA who he believes was in part responsible for his capture. He wasn't enamored of America at all.

And so he was also very skeptical of the West's view of people that he actually embraced. I remember getting in an argument with him a couple of times about Muammar Gaddafi, whom Mandela adores. He adored him because Libya gave a lot of money to the ANC. Fidel Castro, he adores Fidel Castro. He was sort of unwilling to talk about the shadowy side of some of these leaders, which they have.

So in the case of Zimbabwe and Mr. Mugabe, I mean he thought, A, that, you know, Mugabe had been a great leader and a revolutionary; B, he didn't like the fact that the West was constantly berating African leaders for supporting him;

C, now this is between us, you know, he thought Mugabe was jealous of him, you know, that why, you know, Mugabe would say, "Well, why is this Nelson Mandela fellow getting all of this publicity and not me?" So he had this mixed feeling.

I mean, he thought Mugabe was doing terrible things and should be condemned, but he didn't ever want to seem to do it as a result of Western pressure. I think that's a situation that a lot of African leaders were in and it's understandable.

I think when it comes to the land, and we were talking about this before tonight, I mean the ANC Freedom Charter, which was created in '54, basically said, and it was a Socialist-slash-Communist document, which basically the ANC was a Socialist-slash-Communist organization, for better or for worse, you know, it said the land is owned by the people, the minerals under the land are owned by the people, it was for the nationalization of industry. You know, basically that, the Nelson Mandela who went to prison in 1964 would have said basically, "When I come out of prison, if I'm President of South Africa, I'm going to, the government will take all the land and the apportion it to people."

He, obviously, once he came out of prison, changed his mind about a lot of that, I mean and realized that it wasn't practical. I think he would say, and I think it would be true, that his job when he came out was to reconcile the country. I think there were so many issues of equity that are still outstanding, that basically, he didn't address, and he would, he knew he couldn't address them.

I think one of his criticisms of how South Africa has been post-Mandela is that equity issues like land ownership, is something that still has not been addressed in South Africa in any macro way. And, frankly, I mean I don't know how to do it, but I think he would say that it hasn't, that the ANC hasn't lived up to its promise when it comes to that. I don't know if that answers your question or not.

Warren Hoge: Got another African Fellow.

Toyin Ajao: I'm Toyin Ajao, I'm a fellow of King's College London, and I'm with IPI on African Junior Professionals Program, I'm just kind of curious about the marriage of Winnie to Mandela. It's a kind of a big shock, you know, to see them parted, what they did. And I know you've touched on it, but what I'm really curious about is Nelson Mandela is somebody that believes in forgiveness and I think probably he believes in second chance. Do you get to know if he tries to work this out with Winnie? Can you share more light on why that failed? Do you know if there was a second chance given, you know, in this marriage before it failed? Thanks.

Warren Hoge: Do you know that?

Richard Stengel: Yeah. I missed a little bit ...

Warren Hoge: The very beginning, you were speaking a little too quietly.

Toyin Ajao: Okay. I am just curious about the failed marriage of Winnie and Nelson Mandela, because I believe Mandela believes in forgiveness and second chance as, you know, and I'm wondering at what point did he realize that this cannot work out? Did he give a second chance to Winnie to kind of sort out whatever has happened when he was in prison, because Mandela is the one that we've learned a great deal from and this kind of something I'm really, really curious about, and I don't know if we get to know that part. If you can share it with us.

Richard Stengel:

The Winnie issue for him actually was kind of bifurcated. It was his personal relationship with her and his marriage and his family. And then there was his political relationship with her and her politics. And I think ultimately what caused the final, final rupture was because he, I think he was a little bit, had rose-colored glasses on when it came to her, in terms of his personal relationship with her, but what her behavior in the ANC, before he came out of prison, after he came out of prison, the leadership, the collective leadership of the ANC believed that his relationship with her and her own politics were damaging the ANC and damaging Mandela. Her own, you know, her own private behavior, which he also came to understand and was upset by, I think compounded it.

But in some ways his leave-taking from her was a political decision that was in part foisted on him by the other members of the ANC, in fact, by his great and close colleagues Walter Sisulu and Oliver Tambo. So that was a complicated issue. I don't know if that answers your question or not but ...

Warren Hoge:

Got time for one more question. This gentleman here on the ...

Franz Baumann:

Franz Baumann, UN Secretariat. You mentioned a little bit in response to a previous question about Mandela's relationship or attitude towards America, for example, or western governments. In your discussions with him, did he ever discuss about the western anti-apartheid movement? How, in the '70s and '80s, I mean after all there were big demonstrations, boycotts, whatever, Tutu won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1984, there was a lot of, I guess, moral support by social movements in the west for the anti-apartheid cause. So how did he perceive it? Did he know about it in Robben Island? What did he learn when he came out? How did he talk to you about that? Thank you.

Richard Stengel:

He, you know, in the last, probably the last ten or so, or 15 years in prison, he did have access to news. He – remember, only 18 of his 27 years were on Robben Island – and once he was back on the mainland, he did get more news. Again, one of the themes of *Mandela's Way* is that Mandela is a pragmatist, not an ideologue, not an idealist even. I mean there's a whole chapter about how, for example, he explained to me that Gandhi and non-violence was a tactic, not a principle because to him the great goal was freedom and democracy for his people, and whatever way you got there was justified, and if non-violence wasn't working, you had to abandon it, because it was simply a tactic that wasn't working.

He was very unsentimental about the sanctions movement and the protests. He thought it was fantastic. I mean he thought this was mobilizing world opinion against South Africa. In fact, what ultimately got him to begin negotiations with the government and his willingness to abandon the armed struggle, was he thought that that was far more powerful and effective than an internal armed struggle, which had basically been unsuccessful for 30 years.

So, he saw that, you know, the tide of public opinion was such that it would force the Nationalist party, you know, the Afrikaners to come to the negotiating table and he wanted to make that as powerful as possible.

He saw that in part as a function of the righteousness and justice of their cause, in part because of the success of the ANC's own PR. But he never ever thought – I mean, he thought, for example, that Americans always exaggerated their importance in ending apartheid – but he certainly saw that the value of the anti-apartheid movement as mobilizing world opinion was the thing, actually, that triggered the government into negotiation, and certainly not the ANC armed struggle.

Warren Hoge:

Well, Rick, it's a – it was a tremendous challenge for a writer to deal with somebody not just iconic, but gigantic and sizeable and all that, and capture the human dimensions. You really do it in the book very effectively, as the reviewer today, or Saturday, in the *Financial Times* said, and you've done it for us here tonight. Thank you so much.

Richard Stengel:

Thank you very much.

[APPLAUSE]