

Transcript

“Multilateralism Under Fire”

Hosted on Zoom by UNA-USA

With Adam Lupel, Vice President, International Peace Institute;

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign;

and Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA

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Opening Remarks

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

Thank you, Peter and Rachel. This sense of “Multilateralism Under Fire” at a time of great need has been with us for a while, but it does seem that in 2020 it has come to a head, in part because of the coronavirus pandemic and the actions of the United States and others. But it comes at a curious time for those of us that work around the UN, because 2020 was set up to be a year to celebrate the UN and its accomplishments on the occasion of its 75th anniversary, and to look ahead to imagine what kind of UN we want in the next 75 years. Instead the context is one of great anxiety and uncertainty about what that future holds. And I will say a couple of words about that in a second.

I have been asked to start by introducing IPI, the International Peace Institute, and I will do that by way of another anniversary, 2020 is not only the 75th anniversary of the UN but the 50th anniversary of IPI. We are an independent, not-for-profit think tank based across the street from the UN in New York (such as it may be in the virtual world).

And our founding story is relevant to these discussions, in part because we were born out of a moment of geopolitical tension, not unlike the one today. We were founded in 1970 as a training academy for military and civilian peacekeepers at a time when, because of Cold War politics, it was difficult to do that within the boundaries of the United Nations. We were founded by an American philanthropist, Ruth Forbes Young, and an Indian Major General Indar Jit Rikhye, in close consultation with then Secretary-General U Thant. So, we were set up in a time of gridlock, as an insider-outsider or an outsider-insider, depending upon how you look at it, to help get past some of these institutional problems. Over the years our identity as a training academy evolved, and in 2008 we rebranded as the International Peace Institute.

We have 3 Pillars of Work:

- i. Research and Publications (we are a full-fledged think tank)
- ii. Public Events and Convening

iii. And then closed-door Strategic analysis and advising

We have 4 main programs of work:

- i. Peace Operations and Sustaining Peace
- ii. Peace and Sustainable Development
- iii. Women, Peace, and Security

And our topic for today:

iv. Revitalizing Multilateral Cooperation

IPI has a long history of working on issues related to multilateral cooperation. You said we “advocate”. We are careful not to frame ourselves as an advocacy organization, but to the extent we advocate for anything, it is multilateral solutions to transnational problems.

Between 2014 and 2016 IPI was the Secretariat for the Independent Commission on Multilateralism, which was part of a process to review the multilateral system in the context of the UN’s 70th anniversary.

And it is striking to me how the conversation today is different from what it was just 5 years ago. In 2015 the question was, is the UN “fit for purpose” for the challenges the world is facing. It was about reform as response to crisis.

Today the conversation around the UN at 75 is more future oriented. It is about recognizing global transformations and the uncertainty regarding where the international system is heading.

And this uncertainty has only been exacerbated by the pandemic and the evident divisions in the multilateral system that has made a cooperative response to the pandemic very difficult.

Many people are beginning to speak about this moment as one of two things in the international system:

- i. It is either a moment in which long-term trends are simply being accelerated: geopolitical division, inequality, rising nationalism.
- ii. or it is a fork in the road: there is a possibility to change direction, so we can make real change.

As often these polemics are, it is likely a bit of both, but what is clear is that the decisions being made today will have profound consequences. Organizations like UNA-USA, Better World Campaign and, I would like to think IPI, have an important task ahead of us to work against those trends that threaten multilateral division and work toward international cooperation. Much of our work in this period is toward that.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

Thank you Adam that is a great introduction, not only to what IPI does, but to the broader frame of the threat to multilateralism that we are currently facing, and how it is different than five years ago. I want to take a step back ask you why do we work multilaterally? Why is it important, not just to the US? Why do other countries make these multilateral investment as opposed to tackling everything through effective bilateral diplomatic, economic and security channels? What is the case for working multilaterally?

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

That is a really important question and one where you can either go big or small. In the broadest sense a multilateral world, a world organized by multilateral cooperation, is a more just world order. It is based upon sovereign equality of states, the rule of law, and the practice of diplomacy, not “might makes right”, in which a strong country can simply take territory from another country, as you saw for all of human history up until the 20th century. This is most important for the small states, who are often the biggest defenders of the multilateral system. The strong also have an interest in this system, because it allows for a more peaceful world, and we all have an interest in peace. There is no doubt, statistically, that interstate war has been in dramatic decline since the creation of the UN.

It is also a bit aspirational, in that it is only through multilateral cooperation that we can aspire to do the really big things: end poverty, feed the world, combat climate change, advance human rights. All these big things that we are looking to do on a global scale. It is only through the multilateral system that we can even aspire to do that.

It is also more practical. It's not just big idealistic things, it is also about cooperation in our competition. The multilateral system was not constructed for us to forget about our own individual interests and only focus on the common good, it was constructed for member states to pursue their national interests within a multilateral context, in a way that could be more predictable, ordered and based upon cooperation. When we think about the multilateral system, we think about the Security Council, but a lot of the multilateral system relates to technical cooperation — civil aviation or the Universal Postal Union or telecommunications — all these things have multilateral mechanisms that ease the way for us to do things that we think of as common, but actually would be very difficult if we didn't not cooperate internationally.

Then there is the big problems. Today's context of a pandemic is case in point. This is a global phenomenon, even the strongest country in the world can't handle it in isolation. There are a number of issues like that – climate change and migration, among others. There is a whole host of problems that the

strongest country in the world can't deal with on their own, so you need multilateral cooperation to address them.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

You've made the case for multilateralism. Regarding American leadership in the multilateral organizations, I recognize that IPI is a global institution, but you're an American, you live in New York, so put on an American hat and tell us why American leadership in the UN system matters, and what happens when we leave the stage, when we withdraw from organizations or defund them? What are the implications?

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

It is a really fundamentally important question, and one that is only becoming more and more important. Truth be told, you don't need to put on an American hat to answer that question. Working in the international community, the absence of US leadership in multilateral institutions is lamented, and for many reasons. At a practical level, the US is a major financial contributor to all of these organizations and the US is currently in major arrears. That represents over 20 percent of their funding. That has a real impact on the ability of the system to function. The UN is in a major liquidity crisis right now.

Beyond the financial, which maybe some Americans might see as a burden, it's also about who fills the leadership gap and what effect that has on the shifting priorities of the UN. Working in the UN community, it is very tangible that as the US steps back, China is stepping forward. They are interested in ways in which to use the multilateral system to shift priorities toward their interests. That has a real impact. They have different priorities in many ways and different ways of seeing some of the similar priorities. I am sure you read in foreign affairs recently, where Stewart Patrick quoted former US diplomat Richard Holbrooke: "blaming the failures of multilateralism on the UN is like blaming Madison Square Garden when the Knicks lose". The UN succeeds or fails based upon the leadership and cooperation of member states. The US is the biggest military and economic power in the world. When we withdraw from that leadership and cooperation, it has an effect. It creates a vacuum, and that contributes to a sense that without the strongest power in the world engaging, the system is both a bit rudderless and fragmenting. In particular at a time when we have so many crises to deal with, that is reason for concern, for the whole world not just for the US.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

I want to address this issue about reform and change. The Secretary-General, in celebration and commemoration of the UN's 75, has called for dialogues about the world we want in 25 years, when the UN will celebrate its hundredth anniversary. We at the United Nations Association of the USA have conducted consultations in all 50 states to make sure that Americans were fully consulted about the issues the secretary-general asked us to tackle.

One of the issues that is being discussed is what kind of reform and change needs to happen at the UN. As you look over the next decade, what do you think the hot topics are in terms of reform and change, to make sure that ten years from now, the UN is more updated and changed and is reflective of the demand from donor countries to ensure that dollars are spent wisely and that programs are effective?

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

As I said in my introduction, the conversation today versus five years ago is more forward-looking, in part because this question of reform and change is a perpetual one at the UN. The final years of Ban Ki-moon's term were characterized by a whole process of review and reflection about what and how the UN should be reformed. When Secretary-General Guterres took over in

2017, he instigated the whole reform process. So, this conversation now is indeed trying to look ahead.

Some of it is a bit more nitty-gritty, related to the institution of the Secretariat.

Some of the biggest reforms are quite prosaic around issues related to human resources, how to improve the flexibility of hiring and firing practices, reporting lines, and accountability for performance.

Then it comes to the big issues, trying to look over the horizon and understand what are the mega trends that are developing, and that the UN has to have a response to if it is going to remain the essential institution for international cooperation. I like to quote Niels Bohr on these sorts of issues: “prediction is very difficult, especially if it's about the future”. So, I hesitate to predict, but it is obvious what some of the mega trend issues are:

- issues related to climate change;
- issues related to technology, which the UN has to get to get better on – artificial intelligence is on the cusp of having a major international impact;
- Inequality and its consequences in the world – the UN needs to anticipate the degrees to which that is going to have an impact on peace of stability;

- Inclusion – we are in an increasingly multipolar world in which there are not just the rising powers like China and Russia, but a rising middle class around the world, and people who are engaged and need to be included. The issue of inclusion is a really important one, and the UN75 process of consultations has done a good job of flagging that;
- Issues related to how the UN handles peace and security at the institutional level are going to remain prominent. The need for Security Council reform is pressing and yet seemingly impossible. Part of it is that there is a growing sense that the UN structure reflects the post-World War II order, but the world has changed and is shifting. How the UN responds to change beyond that reflection of a previous order is going to be critically important. It doesn't have to be just Security Council reform. The way that the UN adjusts peace and security through other parts of the system is equally important, maybe even more important.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

That is a reminder of the reform trends and big issues, and as challenging as they seem, they do need to be tackled for the UN to continue to have credibility, not

just among a small group of diplomats and decision-makers, but broader global credibility. So, reform and change has got to continue to be part of the agenda.

Q&A

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

As Adam just brought up post-WWII, I will start with the following question:

- Is this moment comparable to 1944-1945, when a national dialogue is critical to renew US engagement with the multilateral community?
- Is it more important to think of US action domestically than to act internationally at this stage?

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

The answer the first question is “yes”.

The answer to the second question: “no,” or rather, I shouldn't say no, they go together. One of the differences about the 21st century and 2020, especially for a country like the United States, is you can't easily separate those two questions out. Many people are pointing to the coronavirus pandemic as a moment in which the trends are of borders becoming firmer, rising nationalism and the end of globalization. It is never going to be that that simple. While trade might go

down and, for a time, immigration patterns will slow, the rate of international awareness and connection – because of technology, because of climate issues, because of demographic trends – is only going to continue. So, our national conversation has to include America's role in the world, and the impact of global trends on our national self-interest and well-being.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

The next questions are two-part:

- What policy recommendations should we give our members of Congress when we are making the case for multilateralism and strong US leadership at the UN?
- What are the top three arguments we can make to members of Congress about the importance of multilateral leadership by the US?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

I will punt that question to Peter, I suspect he is much more prepared to discuss Congress. We at IPI don't advocate in Congress, but I would say just one thing: release the funds. We need to make good on our commitments. Funding is a part of our membership in the UN and Congress needs to push for that.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

I think that you have to meet members of Congress where they are, instead of where we wish they were. As always, the best way to communicate effectively with members of Congress about the UN is to understand what issues do they care about.

One of the best parts about the UN is that it tackles almost every issue under the sun, from peace and security to humanitarianism. If a member of Congress is focused, for instance, on global terrorism and the rise of terrorist groups, we focus on peacekeeping and what peacekeeping can do in conflict and post-conflict situations.

We might talk about the role of UNESCO in promoting effective education around the world, to give hope to the next generation of young people so that they don't feel like they have no other option than to join extremist groups.

If somebody cares about humanitarianism, we talk about the UN's work at the World Food Programme in making sure that people are fed in some of the worst crises around the world, including in Yemen.

If they care more about development and alleviating long-term poverty, we can talk about the role of the UN broadly in moving families from dependence to sustainability, and the exciting trend in the UN, which is making sure that all of the UN fund programming agencies are actually working as a team, with a

common plan, in conjunction with the host government, in a way that they really haven't been doing before. That is a new reform. The people who run these country teams now report to the deputy secretary-general. It's a really exciting reform for those of us who do this for a living.

To pick up on the point Adam made earlier, as to what happens when we don't lead, first of all countries like China, which doesn't necessarily always share our values in the UN system, they fill the gap. The concept that the US will defund an organization, and somehow the organization will go away, or that UN will say "Oh my gosh, we're so sorry we offended you! Please, what can we do make you happy?"... It just doesn't work that way. The UN is reflective of its member states, so it has to have a broader perspective, and try to meet the needs of a lot of different member states.

What will happen, from a funding perspective and a policy perspective, is other countries fill the gap, and that is not consistent with American interests. How we talk about the UN and the US in Washington is very different than in New York. In Washington, we are talking about how the UN serves American interests but obviously it doesn't necessarily [make for] the best talking point.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

What do you think is the most powerful argument against nationalism, isolationism and xenophobia, which we are seeing sweep across the globe ?

Adam Lupel, Vice President IPI:

First of all, in my view it's important to understand that nationalism and isolationism are not necessarily the same thing. The multilateral system was constructed so that member states can pursue their national interests within the global context. So, when we talk about the pursuit of national interests and multilateral cooperation as somehow opposed, it's a false dichotomy.

If nationalism means isolationism and go-it-alone, from an international perspective it is a problem, because it won't lead to a safer, more secure and more prosperous nation. It will actually lead to an impoverished and more insecure nation, because there are a host of problems that can only be addressed through both cooperation and the pursuit of national interests.

On the question of xenophobia, as an institute that studies peace and conflict, you can identify conflicts throughout history in which xenophobic discourse graphs onto ethnic and social divisions domestically, causing internal conflict to rise. It's a recipe for internal conflict, as well as external.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

Peter this might be for you. These questions are around elections:

- How do you see the US engaging with the world, or the world engaging with the US, if in November
 - a. a new president is elected
 - b. the current president is re-elected?
- How important do you think the upcoming election will be in impacting the American government leading toward or away from multilateralism and support of the UN?

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

This election will have a tremendous impact upon American foreign policy, including its relationship with the United Nations and other multilateral organizations, in a way that I have never seen before. As a non-profit, we don't have a position as it relates to political candidates, so what I am offering is my analysis of what the candidates have said or done, related to international organizations.

Vice President Biden, as Vice President and as Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee and Senator from Delaware, took a number of steps to demonstrate his commitment to the UN. One of the most interesting ones was when he was Vice President he hosted a session at the UN that was designed to get other

countries to make new commitments to UN peacekeeping, and it was incredibly successful in terms of getting countries to come at the head of state, deputy head of state and foreign minister level, and actually say “Here, this is what the government of Denmark is willing to do” in terms of increasing their commitments, not only financially, but through the contribution of technology and troops to UN peacekeeping. It was really exciting to see Vice President Biden hosting that.

When he was Chairman or a ranking Democrat on the Foreign Relations Committee, he was the one that negotiated the Helms-Biden package that resulted in over a billion dollars in overdue bills being paid to the UN. Throughout the whole recent campaign we have seen the Vice President indicate a strong desire to work multilaterally, he just tweeted that the US would re-join the World Health Organization on day one of his administration.

President Trump has at times indicated his commitment to working with the United Nations. He has maintained a very close relationship with the Secretary-General on a wide variety of issues, including our national security and foreign policy issues. Both Nikki Haley and Kelly Craft, as Permanent Representatives to the UN, have at times taken very constructive approaches to Security Council debates on important issues, particularly what is happening in Africa, the instability there. Obviously we have seen the withdrawal from the Paris

Agreement, the Human Rights Council, and UNESCO and the defunding of UNWRA and the World Health Organization. So, the administration's commitment to these multilateral organizations has been a challenge. I would say if the president were to be re-elected, we will see additional UN organizations and multilateral organizations either being withdrawn from or defunded. But obviously it's hard to predict what the second Trump administration would look like, because we don't know the personnel that would be at the highest levels in the administration.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

- What do you think has been the largest negative impact on the American view of multilateralism within the past ten years?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

It is important to recognize that there is quite a bit of support for the UN among the American public, and that's across party lines, it's not just Democrats. Historically, support for the UN was very much a bipartisan issue. As the world has transitioned from that immediately post-Cold War unipolar moment to a multipolar world, there is a sense that there are other interests at play within multilateral systems that may not jive with the US position. I think it is very

important to educate the American public and have conversations with the American public about the fact that the changing nature of the world is not going to go away if we retreat from the United Nations. We are just going to cede ground, and that vacuum will be filled by those exact powers that we are seeing advancing their priorities. We need to step up and compete with them, and advance our interests within these institutions.

The WHO is a very important point. If part of the rationale for withdrawing from the WHO was that the WHO is doing the bidding of China, to withdraw from the WHO doesn't solve that problem, actually it gives China more strength within the UN Health Assembly.

It is not just political. I am an advocate for the UN, I am a supporter of the UN, but the UN has its problems. In peacekeeping there have been real problems with sexual exploitation and abuse, you had the Cholera episode in Haiti, or going back to the Oil-for-Food [Programme] crisis in Iraq. So there have been scandals that have contributed to this negative view, but I don't think those should distract from the real benefits to US participation within the multilateral system that we are bringing to the US public at large and the world.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

- Given the receding US leadership at the global level, do you think that

- a. it can regain leadership in the future
- b. other countries will fill the void and permanently change the global leadership dynamics moving forward?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

This does require some crystal ball viewing, which makes me nervous, but it is important that our allies would like the US to come back and show leadership on international cooperation issues. They are not waiting for the US – France and Germany have started an alliance for multilateralism they are looking to lead – but they would like the US to return to leadership.

That being said, if a more pro-multilateralism administration comes in next year, it is not going to be a snap back to normal, things have changed. The foreign policy that is instituted on day one in the next administration does have to recognize that. Part of this is a recognition globally that support for multilateralism and for these agenda does not have a bipartisan consensus in the United States anymore. So, even if a pro-multilateralism administration comes in, there will be hesitancy to fully commit from some people around the world, because they don't know whether the US will do a 180 in the next term. It's not like that in many countries around the world. IPI works with the whole UN membership, but we have each year about 30 or so different member state

donors, and we work with the UN missions, and frankly I often don't notice when there is a change of government in countries, because the policies of the member states at the UN don't change that much based upon changes in government. That helps diplomacy, because there is consistency and predictability. There is a broad worry that the US has lost that, no matter who comes into the White House. That is something that we are going to have to work on.

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

I agree, I would just put a finer point on the US side. If there is the change of administration, my sense is that the new Biden administration would have a series of day-one issues to snap back to where it was before the Trump administration. In that category would be things like re-joining certain organizations, like the WHO. Then there is a broader spectrum of diplomatic issues and approaches that will require some learning, and some humility, and some time. A Biden administration won't be able to just pick up where the Obama administration left off, there has been four years of diplomatic developments, so it will be more nuanced than that.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

The next three questions are about taking action:

- How can the UN-USA and IPI make their voices heard on the importance of multilateralism for peace and climate action, etc, when the State Department and other institutions such as the EPA have been disseminated by this administration?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

What is IPI strategy to get these issues out? I mentioned early on about the work that we do in terms of research and publications, public events and closed-door strategic advising. In the past, our convening was very much focused on the physical location of the UN. We have an event space that looks out on the UN. We have always considered it one of our great added values. Now that everybody is working from home, we have transitioned to virtual convening – this isn't IPI, this is my living room – and in many ways, we are reaching new and bigger audiences. Moving forward we will have to understand when to take advantage of these new formats to reach that broader audience, when we should focus on decision makers in person – whether it's closed-door advising or public convening – when to step on the pedal and when to drawback. It is a strategic question.

From a more substantive policy perspective, the UN system has to work across institutional silos so that there is an understanding that, for example, environmental issues have an impact on peace and security, on economic development, on trade, and other things that the US government considers its priorities. These things are all interconnected, and communication works toward making that better understood.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

- How can we be more effective in having conversations about the importance or benefits of multilateralism with those who are more focused on the local or national level?
- What can you do to help the situations that are happening?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

This gives me an opportunity to plug an event we are having tomorrow on localizing the Sustainable Development Goals/2030 Agenda. We have not actually talked much about the Sustainable Development Goals/2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It is a really important piece of the equation of how we are going to respond to the current environment and the pandemic. The local level is so important – and when we say local we are not just talking about

international actors, we are talking about cities, civil society, activists, teachers. We have to understand how global discourses translate to them and how we can learn from what is happening at the local level to make connections to the international agenda.

The youth is the key to that process, because it's young people who are most connected to the new ways of talking and doing. I mentioned earlier that one of the key themes for UN reform is inclusion, and trying to understand how mechanisms of inclusion can be improved. There is a lot of discussion about how to better include youth conversations. There are youth representatives and youth special envoys who are doing some of this work. It is really important to listen to them and to bring them into these conversations.

So you can get information about this event on localizing the 2030 Agenda that we are having tomorrow at IPI's website – www.ipinst.org.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

- Does IPI work at all with the US Institute of Peace?

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

We get confused with USIP quite a bit. We have partnered with USIP for events in New York, and there has been some crossover between researchers,

consultants and such, but we are very separate organizations. USIP is a congressionally-funded organization, and IPI is an independent institution that is funded by 30 or so different member states, foundations and others. We look to work with them but we are not closely associated.

Rachel Pittman, Executive Director UNA-USA:

This is a great closing question for both of you:

- When do you think the world will be completely multilaterally [linked]?
Do you believe that the COVID-19 aftermath will begin the process of [improving] multilateralism [out of] the blue, why or why not?

Peter Yeo, President of the Better World Campaign & Senior VP at the UN Foundation:

I am a bit more pessimistic. I think that the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the opportunity of multilateralism, but also its limits. In the case of the WHO, there was a hope (or criticism) that it should have had the ability to immediately detect what was actually happening in China, and if it had that ability it could have had a transformative impact in terms of the global response. The reality is no country, including the United States or China or anybody else, wants the WHO, a multilateral organization, to have the ability to “truth tell” as to what is actually happening in countries around the world. When you don't

have that political consensus, not just in the US but every country around the world, to empower multilateral organizations, it limits the ability of a multilateral organization to have that transformative impact. As a result that organization, in this case the WHO, is exposed to criticism about why it didn't do better, why it didn't truth tell. It is in part because of the limits that member states have placed on them. It is always going to be a balance and between trying to empower and strengthen multilateral organizations and prioritize national interest. We recognize their transformative impact, their ability to collect resources and our common strengths towards a common good. Yet, most larger countries, not just the US, want to put their own national interests and their bilateral relations on an equal plane with multilateral investments. I think it's always going to be a tension, and that's probably healthy. Sometimes bilateral initiatives can work, it doesn't always have to be multilateral.

Adam Lupel, Vice President, IPI:

I think you are absolutely right. It points to a common misunderstanding, that is often revealed by criticism of multilateral institutions. “Why didn't you do better? Why didn't you X?” – it's a way of thinking about the UN, about the WHO, as some sort of independent organization that has the freedom to act how it likes, as opposed to a system by which countries work through diplomatic

channels to manage competition and advance common interests. That geopolitical tension is always going to be there. Looking into the crystal ball about the global trends, there is no way of avoiding the fact that we are entering into a period of heightening geopolitical competition, because of US-China relations, the assertiveness of Russia, and other issues at play. So, when will we be fully multilateral? I think we have to expect that there is going to be this tension, this competition. The point is that we need to do everything that we can so that this geopolitical competition happens within the multilateral framework, because it's only that way that it can be a productive tension as opposed to a destructive tension.

On the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on these questions, beyond just the attacks on the WHO – it is important to recognize that if we are at the end of the beginning of this, we are nowhere near the beginning of the end. The effects of the pandemic are only going to be rippling out into other domains, we are already seeing it in the economic sphere, it is becoming evident in the humanitarian sphere, in sustainable development. As those ripple effects become increasingly evident, the multilateral system is going to be increasingly engaged on the response. That has to become increasingly evident. So this initial fear, in which everybody pulled up gangplanks and pushed out the world, is going to have to soften, and cooperation on the response to this crisis is going

to increase. How we navigate that is going to be really important over the coming period.