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## **Yale Student Town Hall**

“Transatlantic Perspectives on Sovereignty and Intervention”

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### **Panel II: Humanitarian Aid and Nation-Building - Can outsiders really help?**

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**WG:** Good Afternoon. The topic that we are covering this afternoon is the relationship between humanitarian assistance and development assistance too, and what I would like to do is suggest that both humanitarian assistance and development assistance do in fact play a key role in nation-building, provided that the assistance and the programs are used properly. And I think to do that we have to identify what are the core obligations of intervening states, and also be realistic about the cost and the time that it takes to implement those core obligations. An assumption I am making here is that we are talking about failed or fragile states, and we are talking about some sort of intervention that took place by one of more countries. We could use Iraq right now as an example, but we could use several other countries as well.

I would argue that there are four basic core obligations that an intervening authority or group of countries is obliged to carry out, and they are essential elements for nation building. They involve relief and development, and they involve both military and civilian responsibilities, and they should all be done simultaneously. The core obligations

are humanitarian assistance, governance and capacity building, demobilization and disarmament and reintegration and security. Without the fourth, security, the other components of nation building will not work.

Now, a couple of comments about each of these categories of obligations. Humanitarian assistance is fairly obvious. It involves providing healthcare, water sanitation, shelter, these sorts of things that stabilize the human side of nation building so that the other processes can continue simultaneously. I would also include human rights monitoring in that category. All of these are life saving activities.

The second obligation is governance and capacity building. We need to assist governments at all levels to develop transparent and accountable governments, promote rule of law, and develop civil society. This is not the same as elections. I would not suggest that elections are an immediate requirement in a nation-building exercise. They should come later, but rule of law is a critical element in governance and capacity building.

The third obligation is disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration, and that's an activity that the military has to do. If you look at Haiti and at the current events in Iraq, the military is very reluctant to engage in the disarmament of populations. It is not really what they do. However, it is an important assignment and they are the best equipped to do that sort of thing. Along with the demobilization and disarmament of combatant populations, it is equally important to start job-training programs in both rural and urban areas so as to get people off the streets. You are training ex-combatants and others and giving them a stake in the system. This is an important task to take on as soon as possible. In the past couple of months I've been in Iraq, Liberia, and Haiti, and in each country when you talk to officials of that country and UN representative there, job creation is the issue most often referred to.

A comment about the military and disarmament and demobilization: it is a very tricky process. The combatants that are being disarmed feel very vulnerable when they've had their weapons taken from them and when they are placed in containment situations. It is critical that the intervening force, whether it's the Americans in Iraq or some other place, provide security and stability to these folks who have given up their arms. It's an important task for the military and it has to be done quickly. If you go back a few years, it was tried twice in Angola and did not work. Fighting started again in the early 90's and then again in the late 90's. So again, it's a very tricky business, but it is an important business as well.

The fourth element of core obligations here is security, and this is primarily a policing function. It is something the international community does not do very well. The policing function is quite a bit different from the military one. Everybody's military trains and prepares for war, and when a war happens they are dispatched. Police don't do that. We don't have any unemployed police officers all over the world I suspect. If we need police from the United States to go to the Balkans or Iraq, we've got to go to Los Angeles and New York and ask for policemen. Now they will be very reluctant to do that. There is no

standing policing force anywhere in the world to call upon quickly. So in all these situations, the military does its thing, wins its war quickly, and then there's a gap. And it's a long gap until police are brought to the fore; they are brought in and then trained. And it's a very unstable period of time in all of these post conflict settings.

There is a book that has just been written by Bob Perito called, 'Where is the Lone Ranger When you Need Him?' He does a very nice job of talking about these issues with policing. You don't need a police force, you don't need a military, you need somewhere in between. Historically in the U.S., the only kind of force that played that role was the Lone Rangers back in the 1800's and 1700's. Nowadays you find the Italians, the Dutch, the Spanish, the French all have police forces that are somewhere between a traditional police force and a traditional military, and this is what we need in nation-building settings. This is what was urgently needed and is still desperately needed in Iraq and in Afghanistan because we simply don't have them. This is something the international community will have to focus on for a long time so that we can figure out how to do that.

These are the four broad areas that I would think any intervening country or group of countries have to address immediately if nation building is going to work. Once we agree on these core obligations, then there are a series of questions that follow: how do you manage this process, who runs it, and what's the philosophy behind the nation-building process? In the United States and I'm sure the rest of the world there are some very hot arguments on how we should do this and who should control the nation-building process. Should it be multilateral, should it be bilateral, should it be civilian, or should the UN lead it?

From where I sit in the Agency for International Development, we are convinced that it should be multilateral, it should be led by the UN, and there is a big role in that for the military, but it should be led by the civilians. The essential role for the military in nation-building exercises are early on engineering activities, security activities, and humanitarian activities where civilian organizations cannot work, then in demobilizing and retraining a military and in border protection. These are the areas, in my mind, that the U.S. military should confine itself to, or any other military for that matter.

Once we agree on who should run a nation-building exercise, the next question is what should the approach be? Again, within the U.S. government as we talk a lot about Iraq, there are two approaches. One is that the essence of nation building is in infrastructure -- building roads, ports, hospitals, airports and so on. If you do all of these things then economic investment will follow that and all the other requirements for nation building will follow as well. It's a relatively short-term approach that can be done quite quickly. It is not seen as a long-term exercise.

Now, the other perspective is that the essence of nation building is capacity building: development of government structures, establishing rule of law, civil society and election procedures. This is a very long-term and costly process. In Afghanistan for example, it's more toward the capacity building approach. It is UN led with a great deal of emphasis on capacity building and some emphasis on infrastructure. In Iraq right now, there has

been no capacity building whatsoever. It has been all infrastructure, and I think this is taking a very short-term approach and perhaps a shortsighted one.

A couple of general observations. Unfortunately, we are going to see more Iraqs. The war on terrorism will continue, and inevitably there will be additional nation-building activities in different places around the world. The U.S. and the international community up to now have been very unrealistic about nation building, and unrealistic about the time it takes and the cost for doing this sort of thing. It's important somehow to convince our policymakers to consider these sorts of implications regarding nation building before we intervene somewhere. That may be wishful thinking, but I do think it is an important element. As a result, we continue to intervene in these situations, and then soon after we tend to realize that we have neither the commitment nor the resources to carry out the activity and quite often we risk leaving the country we're originally trying to help in worse condition than when we started, in political chaos. This doesn't help the United Nations, it doesn't help the United States, it certainly doesn't further the war on terrorism, and it most certainly doesn't help the nations we're working with.

**PS:** Thank you very much. In my previous capacity I visited the U.S. very much, and I think on a professional basis we have much in common. Unfortunately, in our work politics do interfere now and then.

I would ask regarding humanitarian aid and nation building, can outside nations really help? My short answer is yes, with five "ifs." It can really help if it is supporting national and regional structures, indigenous assets, local men and women, institutions, NGOs, and the business community. If it is a partnership, or a contract, like the European Union has with 70 countries, built on solidarity from one side and good governance on the other side. And in this instance, Zimbabwe is breaching the contract we have by not providing good governance. Therefore, we have frozen the solidarities there. You can also argue that the donor side is not really fulfilling their pledge fully, if you think that the 0.7 percent of GNP should be the goal, and then we only have 5 nations reaching and surpassing that goal. Another "if" is that if the formula for democracy and development are not perceived as imposed from abroad. And another "if" is, the outside help should be multilateral, sustainable, and cooperative. My final "if" is if we have a common analysis and a common agenda. If all these five "ifs" are there, then I think outside nations can really help.

As to common analysis and common agenda, I think we do have that in principle in the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, which were signed by all heads of governmental states. We have it also in EU strategy and in the World Bank. Let me quote to you what the President Mr. Wolfensohn said recently. He complained about the growing imbalance in global spending by world's governments, with \$900 billion spent annually on the military, \$300 billion spent on the world's richest farmers, but only \$56 billion on development assistance for the poor. And he argues that if the priorities were

reversed, then the so-called war on terrorism would be better served. People without hope, he argues, can be influenced by terrorism, and I agree.

If we look at Afghanistan as a case in point, I remember when Mr. Brahimi gave up because there was not enough outside engagement to support Afghanistan after the Russians left. And he warned in 2000 when he presented his report that if we do not do better with the outside world than we will have another Afghanistan. Unfortunately, he was proven right.

Speaking of solidarity, or rather the lack of solidarity. You know that every year Kofi Annan launches a so-called consolidated appeal to all donor nations. For the year 2004, the appeal was targeted to help the most vulnerable of our fellow human beings on Earth, and he asked for \$3 billion in order to save the lives of the 45 million people affected by the 21<sup>st</sup> worst crises on the planet. And that sum would equal \$3 contribution per head in developed nations. Everything indicates that that target will not be met, perhaps not even halfway met.

At the same time, billions and billions of dollars were quickly raised for Iraq, for instance, an oil-rich country where no one is really hungry and where no one is affected by HIV/AIDS. And yet we know that poverty, despair, injustices and humiliation feed violence and wars and serve as a breeding ground for potential terrorists. Ninety-five percent of the global production of hard drugs occurs in countries that are experiencing civil wars, and Al-Qaeda chose to locate in Taliban territory in Afghanistan, even though most of its recruits were not Afghans. And it used the war in Sierra Leone to generate profits from the trading conflict diamonds to store its wealth.

I don't particularly like the expression failed states because if you look at the root causes of why they are called that or stuck in that sad state, there are a number of us that share the responsibility because we have a stake in their state, -- through colonialism, apartheid, covert action, Cold War rivalry and so on. And our lack of solidarity, or lack of political foresight and sustainability in our supporting efforts like in Afghanistan or Haiti also play a role here. The UN is very much involved in helping in these situations. Today we have 15 peacekeeping operations that employ about 60 thousand men and women as military personnel. The two latest operations have been put in place in the Ivory Coast and Haiti. Right now, a new operation is being considered in Burundi and Sudan, while Iraq and Cyprus are waiting.

U.S. participation is vital in many places, but when I visited the DRC [Democratic Republic of Congo] as an example, of the participants from 53 nations, most of them were from small nations and there was only one American. What struck me during my visit there was the new face of UN peacekeeping operation. It is at the heart of nation building. It is no longer a military presence only performing military tasks only, but a multinational, multifunctional, long-term operation with a robust and comprehensive mandate. MANUC, as the operation is called started with Chapter 6, which states that you could not use force to protect civilians. That didn't go very well, after violence erupted last summer the Security Council changed it's mandate to Chapter 7.

So today more than 11 thousand peacekeepers and other UN personnel keep the peace, protect civilians, assist in building schools and roads, set up a army and police patrols, run hospitals, radio stations, bring justice to human rights offenders, and promote gender issues. All of this is incorporated into a transition government with local authorities and a civil society. Outside support comes from donor countries, the World Bank, the IMF, and the UNDP. I would argue that these programs are precisely the opposite of what has happened in Iraq so far, where a lot of people have been left demobilized. Relations with the neighboring countries are also very important. The situation overall is fragile and a bit shaky, but I would say on the right track. And for countries like China and South Africa, it is their first peacekeeping operation.

The key word in the DRC for the relative success or hopeful success is legitimacy -- legitimacy coming from a UN Security Council mandate. It looks like nation building is going on there, but I would argue that you cannot separate effective peacekeeping from nation building. I would also say that today two-thirds of the world's poorest countries are at war or in a post-conflict situation, and the need to better handle the transition from war to peace is shown by the fact that 40 percent of countries in post-conflict situations fall back into armed conflict. In Africa it is as high as 60 percent.

To me, peace, democracy and development form one unit. You cannot have one without the other. Foreign aid, trade and culture must also be part of our security policy, and to glorify hard power or even soft power is a recipe for disaster. I think it is essential for everyone to see that foreign aid is a form of foreign policy, and is an integral part of our national and global security policy. My late prime minister said that our foreign policy is on the offense line. In other words, the best homeland security is a generous and humane foreign policy.

I would also say that unilateralism brings collateral damage, and that multilateralism brings collateral benefits. You cannot replace the United Nations, and there is no better hope for the men and women living under distress and poverty than the United Nations, with its collective and sustained action, with its universality, diversity, global organization and outreach. Thank You.

**KM:** Thank you. Well, the question being humanitarian aid and nation building, can outsiders really help? Maybe for the sake of argument, let me take a different point of view and say that outsiders cannot help very much. I'll try and argue that case.

I'll begin by telling two stories of from my life of experience with two states that were supposed to fail. One failed and one did not. The first one of course is my own state, Singapore. In 1965, when Singapore became independent, if you read any editorial in the British, American or Australian Newspapers, they all said that Singapore was a state doomed for failure. The reasoning was that in a modern world if you are going to have cities, you have to have hinterlands, and if you take a city and cut it off from its hinterland, which is how Singapore gained its independence, than you will a state doomed for failure.

The good part about that is that when Singapore became independent with the expectation that we were going to fail, it immediately meant that the sense of responsibility was passed onto the citizens of Singapore, who then would have to decide whether or not they were going to accept the fate given to them or if they were going to try and make a difference. Unfortunately, in Singapore's case the leader said, ok we are going to fail but why not give it a try? So we tried and we succeeded.

One important event happened around this time. We elected a government that was left of center that was very critical of the U.S., very critical of the British government, very socialist, and the British Special Intelligence units had to make a very important decision, whether or not to evict the left of center government or keep it in place. And the wisest decision that the British made was to say 'no, we let the left of center government stay because they have the support,' and they didn't replace it with a regime change by installing a more pro-Western style government. And that was a crucial decision because it enabled Singapore to try and later succeed because it allowed the government to enjoy the legitimacy and the support of its population.

Now let me turn now to another state that unfortunately failed for quite awhile. This is Cambodia. I was there in 1973 and 1974, when the city Phnom Penn was being shelled everyday and every passing day the siege got tighter and tighter. I happened to befriend a very young American diplomat who was living there at the time, and I asked her 'So what do you do?' And she replied 'Each day, I go into the ministry of economics and I sit down the minister of economics and I advise him on which economic policy he should implement each day.' Needless to say, I was very impressed. This was a 25-year-old young graduate, advising the minister of economics what to do.

But the consequence of that is that this ministry didn't have any sense of responsibility, they didn't have to make the decisions because the decisions were being made for them. And the tragedy is that a year later Phnom Penn fell. For me, it was a very vivid realization of what happens when people don't take charge. Towards the end when the city was about to fall, and the city was about to be taken away by the Khmer Rouge this cabinet actually set down and tried to save the city by declaring Cambodia as an international city. Instead, the Khmer Rouge came in and took them away in garbage trucks, then slaughtered them all. And the lesson to be learned from that is if you don't take charge of your own fate, you will suffer the consequences. Now the moral of these two stories is that if you really want to help people, than you really have to make sure that the people you help feel that they are the ones in charge and not you. Because if outsiders come and take charge of the country, it takes away the sense of responsibility, it takes away the commitment, and it takes away the desire to say we will make a difference.

So if I were to give four rules of how to successfully intervene in a country, the first rule I would say is you must make sure the people of that country feel that they are in charge, and not anybody else. And that is a fundamental for success for any effort in nation building. No outsider can build a nation; only the citizens of a country can build a nation.

Especially in this moment of history, when for some strange reason there is a fascination in this country with notion of being an empire, and that it must exert itself and reestablish itself in a way similar to the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

I want to make the point that the era of empire is gone. That the 5 billion people who live outside the developed world, poor as they may be, have no desire for an emperor. No matter how wonderful, no matter how nice or generous, they do not want anyone taking their destiny from them. That moment of empire is gone, and its part of the larger cycle of world history. And this is more a controversial point that I will make in passing, that the 500 years of western domination of the world is coming to an end, and now you are seeing basically peoples who have been subjected, colonized, or dominated in one form or another for 500 years who no longer except it and are now saying we are in charge, we will decide what is best for us. And that is the moment of world history we live in, and given this moment, when we practice nation building we should put the people of the country in charge.

Second rule. What is the role of the international community in this setting? The international community can be at best a midwife. If a nation is about to be born, you can help it give birth, but you cannot create the nation. And that should be the standpoint of any international community participation in nation building. We are not building the nation; we are helping you build it because it is your nation. That does not mean that the international community should not intervene if things go drastically wrong. If you're going to have genocide as in Rwanda for example, that was a point when the international community should have intervened to fulfill its obligations under the Genocide Convention to rescue the country. That should have been done and as you know it wasn't done. Apart from emergency crisis like that, do not go in and take charge.

To reinforce the point that Pierre was making, this is where it is essential to give the UN the primary role because when the UN comes into a country it believes its job is to allow the country to take charge and take care of itself. And that is one reason why the UN interventions are in general the most successful. The best example as of late is in East Timor, where there could have been a failed state due to civil war, ethnic conflicts, militias and so forth, but the UN came in and established a transitional administration that has become self-sustaining. The way the UN acted as a midwife in East Timor is the best model to use for intervention in the international community.

The third rule is that if you are going to have any kind of external intervention, it is absolutely vital that that external intervention is in one way or another endorsed by the United Nations, and I think Pierre also made this point. The UN as you know is not the strongest organization in the world. It does not have a \$400 billion defense budget. It survives on \$1 billion a year. But it has in some ways a much more precious commodity in its hands on which it has a virtual monopoly globally, and that commodity is legitimacy. Because when the UN comes in, or when the UN decides that an intervention is correct, it is perceived both by the citizens of that country as well as by the rest of the world to be a legitimate exercise, and that legitimacy enables any kind of intervention to succeed and to do well. Even if the UN does not have the financial resources sometimes

to follow through, that's a secondary consideration. The legitimacy that the UN provides should far exceed any other consideration at hand.

My fourth and final rule about any kind of international community involvement in nation building is that it is absolutely vital that you show a degree of persistence, and that it is persistence that decides whether or not you will succeed in that country. If you want a clear example of the negative results of not being persistent, look at Haiti. Look at how many times the Security Council went inside and went out. The confusing signal that this sent to the people of Haiti was devastating. It says, yes, you are important for a while, but after we leave you are no longer important.

This is why I believe the time has come now to hold the international community, or any organ of the United Nations that decides to help any country, to the standard that it must do so under the principle of accountability. It must be held responsible. So if you decide to help Haiti, you should be held accountable for what you do in Haiti. And you should be judged on the basis of whether or not you failed or succeeded in doing what you set out to do. And this I think is one reason why we've had so many unsuccessful interventions in recent times; because most of the major organs of the world are not held accountable for what they do. Thank you.