

UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT
The Graduate School and University Center, City University of New York
365 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10016

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW OF

MICHAEL DOYLE

BY

THOMAS G. WEISS

New York, 3 March 2004

THOMAS G. WEISS: As I mentioned, before we get down to the nitty-gritty, we're going to talk more generally. I just wondered if you would take a few minutes to tell us a little bit about your parents' background and what you think this meant to you and to your subsequent development, how it made you who you are.

MICHAEL DOYLE: I think the point that would be relevant is that my father and, for a while, my mother were both U.S. civil servants. They were in counterespionage operations during World War II. Then my father went into the FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation) and Justice Department for a career serving in U.S. embassies in France, Germany, Italy, and Switzerland. He was a hard-working civil servant, but he was also an inspiring person. He was someone of real commitment to both U.S. civil rights and national security, a genuine patriot. He inspired in me an appreciation for government service—that would be the most important connection. Then, living overseas undoubtedly played a role in some degree of awareness of the world. So throughout my career, I've leaned toward public service and academia, and never really being able to sort out one or the other, and in fact enjoying a combination of the two. So that is one connection that brings me to the world of the UN.

TGW: Most people would juxtapose public service and the academy. How do you mention them in the same breath?

MD: I find that the kinds of interests I have are very difficult to separate, in the sense that one of the reasons I'm an academic doing international politics is because I care about international public policy. That is one reason I've always been policy-driven. I've never been interested in scholarship because there was a hole in some model that needed to be filled in. There was always some real policy problem that interested me. I did a book on empires, inspired by the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, where we created a temporary empire. Then I worked on

questions of war and peace, and what the end of the Cold War means. This was also driven by policy concerns. I started out thinking about becoming a speechwriter in the Defense Department, of all places, but fortunately I didn't move in that direction. I went into academia. Then, while in academia, I thought of going into a variety of different things—briefly the UN, but that didn't work out. After I received tenure, I had the opportunity to work for the International Peace Academy (IPA) for two years. I jumped at that opportunity to do public policy through research and advocacy.

The opportunity to engage in public policy arose again when the possibility of going into the UN came up in 2001. It was both a chance to do public policy and an opportunity to assist this Secretary-General. I'm not sure I would have felt the same way about going into the UN without Kofi Annan being the Secretary-General. He was what made the difference.

TGW: Somewhere on your c.v., it mentions that you were subjected to Jesuit hair-splitting. Since I'm a product of the same background, I was just sort of curious whether that played a major part in public service, or values, or an orientation towards problem-solving.

MD: Yes, but not in the simple doctrinal sense. I was taught by Jesuits only for two years, or actually three years—my education was so erratic, and there were always different schools—so it amounted to three years. I was inspired by the intellectual quality. The Jesuits have an impressive track record in attracting high-quality secondary school teachers. I was also attracted by their attitude towards the world—my freshman history class started out with *The Guns of August*. The inspired agenda of Mr. Torres, who was teaching this class, was that there was a real danger of the world stumbling into wars. This was the early 1960s, the era of the Cuban Missile Crisis, so there was genuine connection.

The analytic worldview came through without the religious doctrine—I was never very religious. Nor did they teach us casuistry, other than through osmosis. But the overall orientation towards public service—that you had to make a difference in the world—was real to them. I don't think they inspired a single person in my entire school, at least in my class, to become a priest, but a lot of people became lawyers and doctors and officials and military officers. I think that was in some way attributed to them. I think that is a fair supposition.

TGW: If I were doing my interview, I would say the same thing. What was the segue to the Air Force Academy? Was this an early experiment? A cheap way to go to college?

MD: It wasn't a cheap way to go to college. I won a college scholarship as a senior that would have paid my ride—I think the deal was to any Jesuit college. I wasn't going in that direction, but I'm sure that I could have gotten enough financial aid to get into college someplace. So that wasn't it. It was driven by just what you were asking me about, which was the public service ethos. I was pretty sure that I wanted to become an Air Force officer and change the world for the better. Now putting those two things together may have reflected a little naiveté in 1966, but it was definitely the model I had in my mind before I left to go to the Air Force Academy. And for a while, it fit the bill very nicely. I truly respected some parts of the Air Force Academy—the esprit de corps, the demand for public service, the thrill, the adventure. Parts of it—the airborne training—were like Disneyworld at the taxpayers' expense. It was a calling.

What I found was wrong with the Air Force was that the petty discipline, which I found to be a pain in the neck, and the Vietnam War, began to creep up on me. I can't say that I was a great war dissenter, not while I was there for sure, but I began to feel a bit uneasy about why we were over there. It began to sink into me, without any sophistication—this was a seventeen and

eighteen-year-old kid—that this wasn't World War II. This was more problematic. I could not have gone beyond that until later on. But I have to say that was not the primary factor. I was not a moral dissenter who felt he had to leave the academy; it was the life of petty discipline. I signed up to become an Air Force pilot, not to shine my shoes. That was the problem, frankly.

TGW: And alas, the two go together.

MD: There was a lot more shining shoes than flying planes at the Air Force Academy.

TGW: So while you were there, you just decided to leave?

MD: Yes.

TGW: And they allowed you to do that.

MD: That was very difficult. They said that they were going to send me directly into the regular Air Force at this point and pack me out to Vietnam. I wasn't thrilled at that. But a very good anti-war congressman from New York heard about our case, because one of his constituents also wanted to get out, and that guy had much more pull than I did. He protested, so they said, "OK, you can resign right now, but you'll be subject to the draft." I transferred to Harvard.

TGW: One of my real "what if" questions is that I had an appointment at West Point, the Air Force Academy, and the Naval Academy, because I knew how to knock people over, as well as had a half a brain at that point, but I didn't follow that—

MD: I go through the same feelings. It was roughly at about the same time, I imagine.

TGW: Clearly there were fewer shined shoes in Cambridge. What happened? How did that feel?

MD: It felt disoriented at first. The Air Force, like the priesthood, like a prison, is a total institution. For a few months after leaving the academy, I experienced an immense sense of

liberation. I had been there for two straight years, with two weeks off total, during the whole time. So I had been totally in their grip, intellectually and psychologically. On leaving, one of the very first things I did was to walk to a grocery store and walk through the aisles to see all this consumer choice in front of me. There was an immense sense of liberation when I went to Cambridge, both personally—I felt so free it was extraordinary—and second of all, intellectually, in that I could take this whole smorgasbord of a course catalog that was 400 pages long. I felt the excitement in scholarship—scholarship and the freedom of it. Those were the two things that were most extraordinary.

I walked into a politically and socially radical environment; to me it was another planet. What were these people about? It took a long time to figure out that they were engaged in issues that I should be interested in. The whole first year I spent every waking moment in class or in the library working, just soaking up an intellectual feast available to me. In my senior year, I got more involved in politics, as we all did.

TGW: So you weren't drafted. Did you have to stay in ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps)?

MD: No. In the eminent company of Dan Quayle and our current president, I went into the National Guard. The alternative was the draft. The war resisters from Harvard and MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) at the draft physical created a huge mess. We all flunked the examinations. We did all of the things that—you remember *Alice's Restaurant*?

TGW: Yes.

MD: We did all of that stuff. So it was clear I was persona non grata, but they would take me anyway. At that point, I was very much opposed to the Vietnam War. So it was either go to Canada or find some easy way out. Like so many people in my generation, I took an easy

way out, which was to go into the U.S. Air National Guard for the next four years as a weekend warrior, like George Bush and Dan Quayle.

TGW: Did you actually go?

MD: I showed up every weekend. Unlike what we read about the president, I had a perfect attendance record. I was there playing blackjack every weekend for the next four years. That's how I did my military service. The ironic thing was that the National Guard unit was in Wellesley, Massachusetts, so we kidded ourselves that the only danger we ever faced was the Veterans' Day Parade every year. They marched our unit right downtown through Wellesley. And the Wellesley College students were out there shouting and throwing things at us. That was the only "combat danger" to which I was exposed in the Vietnam War: the Wellesley women.

TGW: So you simply continued two years, and then another two for an M.A. and a Ph.D.

MD: That's right. I won a Marshall Fellowship to go to the UK, but the National Guard precluded my accepting it. I stayed at Harvard on an Atherton Fellowship to do my graduate school.

TGW: Who were, or was, your mentor?

MD: That's a good question. There was a collection of people. I was still so imbued with a spirit of independence, an indirect a product of the academy, that I was never a group-joiner. Nor did I find strong mentors, either as an undergraduate, or a graduate student. All of my teachers treated me very well, and I later on acquired friendships with them. As an undergraduate, I found Jim Kurth inspiring. He's a very talented teacher. Now he teaches at Swarthmore. As a graduate student, it was Joe Nye, the economist, Richard Caves, Judith Sklar, the political theorist, and Jorge Domínguez. Those were the people that I worked with most closely. I taught for Stanley Hoffmann and Michael Walzer, so I got close to them as well. But I

never was one of their students. I was doing more empirical stuff than theoretical work at that time.

TGW: You mean cleaning up their exams?

MD: I was Stanley Hoffmann's "section person," or teaching assistant, same for Michael Walzer's course on "Just and Unjust Wars." But Joe Nye and Jorge Dominguez were my dissertation advisors on the topic of empires. I was close to them without being a follower. That is, I've had students like that myself, that I've worked with very closely, but they are not, so to speak, fully apprenticed, or fully wrapped in. And there are others that are very close. I was one of the more distant graduate students. But all my teachers treated me very well. They were conscientious, and they were all good advisors.

TGW: Your own work doesn't really take off from any of their work, does it?

MD: No, it doesn't. There was one person—Leo Gross. I also taught for him. Leo was a wonderful international lawyer who taught "The UN and International Law." I was his section person, too. But I didn't wind up working with him, even though he wanted me to, I think. There were very few political science students doing international law or the UN at Harvard at that time. Those subjects were about to be phased out completely as graduate fields. It was a sad academic phase. The first grand generation—the Lee Gordenkers, the Leo Grosses—were retiring, and there wasn't really a "follow-on" on the academic side for many years until our generation, when we started teaching it again. There was a huge gap that was quite striking. I didn't wind up doing what Leo wanted me to. But he was an impressive person, and I sometimes regret that I did not follow him into the field.

TGW: It really is true. That was the reason that ACUNS (Academic Council on the United Nations System) was founded, when all of these people who were very long in the tooth

suddenly realized that they hadn't reproduced. There just weren't young academics around interested in the UN.

MD: That's right.

TGW: That first generation—the average age at the first ACUNS meeting was about seventy-five or eighty. It was just astounding.

MD: The younger generation has come back in all sorts of ways, and now you wouldn't believe the number of students writing dissertations in peacekeeping and conflict resolution in political science departments around the country. There is a huge wave of talented people right now, who are twenty-five and twenty-six.

TGW: Actually, the year that I finished my Ph.D. (1974), mine was the only one on file at the University of Michigan on that central service that had UN in the title.

MD: I might have, but I wound up writing on empires.

TGW: Actually, we're going to go back and forth a little. I wondered whether we could fast-forward to your arriving on the 38th floor and trying to distinguish—the public service is clear, but what happened to your academic side when you got to the 38th floor? Was there a thirst for some of the kinds of things you spent much of your life looking into? Is your sense that ideas actually survive at that altitude, or not?

MD: They do. In some sense, ideas are the currency. The UN has no power. It has good ideas. It convenes, it mobilizes, it inspires, it provides legitimacy. It is an idea shop. So at that level, ideas are very important. But at a different level, no one should think that you apply political science in public policy. It's just not what happens. We're responding, on the Secretary-General's staff, to what is happening out there in the world—to 9/11, Afghanistan, Iraq, to global poverty, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, to the need to protect children, the human rights

agenda. It's a responsive institution. There is only so much ability to lead out of the blue. What the Secretary-General and the best members of his staff are good at is seeing where these waves are coming from and identifying the ones to which the UN would add value, where the leadership of the Secretary-General (SG) could make a difference, as it did on HIV/AIDS, on development issues, at least intellectually, on preventive diplomacy—trying to bring things together.

For that, ideas were useful. It was useful to have somebody who had spent a lot of time teaching broadly in international political economy, war and peace, and history. I can think many of my colleagues who are as good as, if not better, scholars than I am who would not have flourished in that environment because they are much too narrow. They know everything you need to know about deterrence theory, but they would not flourish in the world of public policy. Or they knew everything you needed to know about trade politics. A breadth of understanding was very useful. But then it was the ability to spot something where the SG could have leverage, more leverage—that was very important—and a wide open mind to what was going on out there.

A hard-nosed realist, moreover, wouldn't flourish in the UN environment. John Mearsheimer, whom I admire greatly, would be a disaster in that environment. The cultural disconnect would be so enormous. At that same time, my friends who are strong postmodernists, for whom there is no text that doesn't need to be subverted and no term that doesn't have to be parsed in twelve incompatible directions, too, would not flourish in the UN public policy environment. You need a political scientist who had ordinary language, attitudes, and some experience with policy—and a practical orientation—the kind of a person, the kind of work that you do, I do, John Ruggie, Andy Mack. You could go down the list. That was the kind of

person who could operate in the environment I entered. It wasn't a place for highfalutin political science of any form. It just wasn't compatible with it.

TGW: You mentioned issues on which there is some leverage, on which the Secretary-General could exert more leadership. In other parts of this project, there are people who were on the top floors of the building who argued that there really was very little room to be interested in the heartless project of economic and social ideas. [Javier] Pérez de Cuéllar, in writing his memoir, says, "I was the first Third World Secretary-General and it really disappointed me that development was a residual part of my job description and we never got around to it." We are going to talk about some of this in a minute, but what made it possible for this particular Secretary-General to at least spend part of his time on something that wasn't putting out a fire?

MD: I think it's his own commitment. He is quintessentially a man of the Third World, a man of Africa, a West African, a Ghanaian. So these issues are not ones that he could ever, or would want to, escape from. So when we would have conversations like, "What are your priorities?," he would always say, "Addressing extreme poverty is priority number one." Now, what he could do was a different story. The job of a Secretary-General is still overwhelmingly preventive diplomacy. That is three-quarters of his agenda, and it's effectively the highest priority. Stopping wars—preventing and stopping them—are still ninety percent of his business. For the rest of the agenda, he knew that he could have a doctrinal effect and a facilitating effect. The money is in Washington. It's at the World Bank, it's at the IMF (International Monetary Fund), it's with the separate countries of the OECD (Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development). All of the development work that takes place in the UN outside of the World Bank is a tenth of the World Bank's annual budget.

What he could do was lead on some development issues. He was very successful in pushing forward HIV/AIDS. He was able to put that on the agenda in ways that had been difficult for others, to convene meetings of pharmaceutical companies, in effect, to embarrass them into better arrangements, to say that HIV/AIDS had to be a global issue for everyone, to bring home its importance and how deadly and debilitating it is. On the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), he was able to use his authority to convene the Bank, the IMF, and the OECD and stop the bureaucratic battle over what development means. The MDGs became a set of criteria for what development meant. The goals did not eliminate the bureaucratic conflicts, but at least get development policy focused on a similar target. That was useful. Whether it should be GDP (gross domestic product) per capita, or human rights, or sustainability were a source of considerable tugging back and forth. He was able to bring them together on that.

His role was predominantly one of creating doctrine, identifying key issues, convening, and providing a stamp of legitimacy. When we reached agreement on those issues, it wasn't a victory or loss for the Bank, or the IMF, it was a win to which they could all concede.

But ninety percent of his work was still diplomacy, dealing with the crises. The economic and social agenda, as important as he said it was, was something over which he knew the UN did not have as much operational leverage as the World Bank had. And given the rest of his responsibilities, it could not be given as much time. Internal staffing of the Executive Office reflected the division. The deputy-secretary-general, Louise Fréchette, focused on economic, social and reform issues. Iqbal Riza, the chief of staff, supported the SG directly on the political and military front. I reported directly to the SG, supported both Fréchette and Riza, and was assigned special projects while overseeing the Global Compact and the Strategic Planning Unit.

TGW: One of the things that, when you pitched up in 2001 you inherited, was the portfolio for the Global Compact. As you look back on this, what do you think the real origins of this idea were? How did it get on the radar screen, and how did one choose this instead of a more direct notion—codes, or what have you, at the opposite end?

MD: The Global Compact originated in the SG's understanding that there was an opportunity to add to the policy clout of the UN by mobilizing the private sector to promote UN goals. The key person who turned that idea into a reality was John Ruggie. The first purpose underlying the Compact was mobilizing the private sector to make a difference on development, on human rights, on environmental protection, and labor rights. The second purpose was that the very act of reaching out to the private sector would position the UN as an institution that was friendly to the more conservative powers—that is, the U.S., the Europeans, the Japanese—because it engaged with private enterprise. Previously, the UN had been regarded as an enemy of private enterprise. That made Washington more difficult and some of the other governments more difficult. From the political point of view, and from the ethical point of view, this was a chance to find a new constituency.

Why didn't we say, "Why don't we regulate them, tell them to pull up their socks and make them do something for human rights and the environment?" We just could not go there. Previous codes had failed. The Europeans weren't even enforcing their own code. It was clear that there wasn't the clout to regulate. So rather than do nothing, the SG tried a voluntary, inspirational approach to mobilizing this sector of world influence and authority and moving them onto the page of UN goals and, as a bonus, making ourselves look more serious to the powers that be in Washington, London, Berlin, and Tokyo.

TGW: This is almost taking Robert Cox and turning him on his head. Instead of doing this unconsciously, we are sort of playing into the hands of the liberal capitalist ideology. Did this make it harder for the 38th floor to interact with other folks? How did one weigh those two tensions?

MD: John Ruggie gets all the credit—with the SG's direction and inspiration—for launching and making his Compact acceptable to the private sector, the ILO (International Labour Organization), and the rest of the UN bureaucracy. But when I stepped in, there was a spreading firestorm. Opposition started mounting to it from two sources that made a lot of difference to us. The G-77 (Group of 77) were saying, "Well, what's going on here? There are a bunch of CEOs (chief executive officers) hobnobbing with the Secretary-General, and we can't even get to see him. The UN has been taken over by these companies and the agenda is global capitalism, and we're going to lose out in this." The G-77 was truly angry in April of 2001. Added to that, the NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) were counter-mobilizing. We were being accused of "blue-washing" the companies that were signing up and getting all sorts of PR (public relations) benefits and doing nothing. So the NGOs—including Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, which we had signed up as initial supporters were ready to defect. They said, "Our membership is crucifying us on this stuff, saying that you are selling our reputation to these companies and getting nothing for it."

Working with Georg Kell, the manager of the Global Compact Office, and the Compact's energizing spirit we developed a plan to have a series of lunches with UN diplomats of the G-77. I had already established an alliance with the G-77 on the Millennium Development Goals, so that helped transfer some credit. Georg and I went around promising the G-77 and political donor governments, "You will be in the loop. We will be consulting with you." We are going to

bring you some companies that are not only pledged to be progressive on human rights and environmental sustainability, but we will shift the center of gravity to add a development dimension. This will help to produce the right kind of FDI (foreign direct investment) in the developing world.”

To the NGOs, we said, “Give us some breathing room. We are not going to sell the UN to the corporate sector. We are going to inspire and, if need be, embarrass the corporate sector subtly into actually doing something about human rights, labor rights, and the environment. And if you’ve got something better,”—this was the message to them—“if you think you can go out there and regulate them—if London, and Washington, and Tokyo are going to set a strict set of rules—more power to you. But in the meantime, why don’t we see what we can do informally?” And they gave us some breathing room.

Eventually, Ken Roth (Human Rights Watch) and Irene Khan (Amnesty International) were asked to give us a bit of breathing room, under the promise that we would avoid the problems they were complaining about. We created a council that NGOs, labor, companies, and UN agencies, including UNDP (UN Development Programme), were all invited to join. We also established an informal watching group of countries. The Compact still has not been able to demonstrate a strong impact on corporate good governance. We’re still working on a “leash” that they gave us. But there is still no better alternative.

TGW: In fact, we read something that there is going to be a report this summer trying to summarize that.

MD: The Compact has gone out, to its credit, and commissioned studies—including one by Richard Locke and a few guys at Sloan who are doing a study to see whether the Compact can make a difference. Frankly, I think the answer is going to be, “Who knows?” But my

view—what I say to the critics still when it comes up—is that I think we probably inspired some companies to do a little bit more. Second, we have provided a “barefoot doctor” version of international corporate social responsibility for Third World companies who can now participate. There are all sorts of companies from Thailand, India, China, the Philippines, South Africa, Nigeria, and Egypt that have signed up. Third, if you have something better, put it on the table. This is the best we can do in today’s world. That was the consistent defense that we of the Global Compact would give to the critics, and they never persuaded us that we were wrong. We always also said, “Give us some time, and we will prove that this makes a positive difference.” And frankly, we’ve never been able to prove that. Who knows what will happen next?

TGW: A moment ago you said that you had accumulated a benefit from your work on the Millennium Development Goals. When we first talked, this was going to be one chunk. So part of this will be open, I guess we can say, and part of it closed. So I’m not quite sure how we should do this. Or maybe we can move it around later and tell the story.

[Embargoed text deleted, 2 pages]

MD: The Millennium Declaration is designed to be the UN’s marching orders for the next fifteen years. The UN was determined to take advantage of the millennium in order to garner political support and define goals covering development, human rights, peace and security, et cetera. The SG was looking for a reauthorization—a Charter revision without a Charter revision—to provide that political momentum to steer the UN to a much more constructive direction.

The development goals were where we could get the most traction. If you look at all of the other chapters of the declaration, they are lovely prose and mishmash. There is nothing in it that is a concrete commitment. Only when we get to the development chapter does one find

bulleted concrete commitments that are action-oriented, that have dates, and endpoints attached to them—real goals. It says, “To halve by the year 2015 the proportion of the world’s population that lives on less than \$1 per day.” We wanted to use the member states’ own commitments in order to put pressure on governments to treat the goals as something more than a piece of paper. We knew that oblivion was the major danger. It is still the major danger, frankly.

[Embargoed text deleted, ½ page]

MD: The campaign to promote the MDGs is in the hands of UNDP, with Mark Malloch Brown the head of the campaign. Jan Vandermoortele is providing expert policy advice and DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs) continues to perform impressive data complication. The 2005 fifth year major review may establish the needed momentum. But frankly, there is a very significant danger that this will turn out to be just a piece of paper, as so many other UN commitments have become.

TGW: Actually, you mentioned that this grew out of the Millennium Summit. In these sets of interviews, there really seems to be quite a distinct set of opinions about global ad hoc conferences, this being the mother of all global ad hoc conferences. Do you feel comfortable generalizing as to how useful these things are, or when they’re more useful than others times as one looks back at these two waves in the 1970s and then in the 1990s, ending with the one in the year 2000?

MD: In the 1990s, I think they were by and large useful. Forty-five, fifty years after the founding of the UN, we needed a new burst of goals. At the end of the Cold War, there was an opening to redefine what the international order was going to be about. We had to have broad participation. These conferences were useful. They re-envisioned what the, quote unquote, “international community” is all about. From Rio (UN Conference on Environment and

Development) to Cairo (International Conference on Population and Development), I think these were all useful conferences.

When you got to Copenhagen (World Summit for Social Development) and Vienna (World Conference on Human Rights), there was more hot air, though no harm. I think the problem started coming when you got to Durban (World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance) where, in my view, the conference did as much harm as good. It provided a platform for nasty anti-Semitism and very bad Third World rhetoric. It generated contempt in the North. The fact that there was a bit of progress on caste issues and a couple of other things was not worth it, to my mind.

The Millennium Summit, however, was useful because it summed up the commitments of the 1990s, and put it all together as a platform for action. The only reason to have conferences in the future is if there is some prospect of a real agreement in advance. We need the ability to pull the plug, which we didn't have in Durban.

In the future we have to make sure that something constructive can be done, not just have a conference in the *hope* that something constructive can be done. We need to say that only if this prepcom (preparatory committee) is very good will we go ahead, otherwise not. In Durban, we went ahead under the hope that the conference would rescue it, and that is sometimes realistic. You don't get the final hard deals done until the conference, but we need to have achieved enough in the prepcoms that even if the conference gets nothing more it will be a success.

TGW: I am very interested in process and procedure. You had proposed a kind of Brahimi report on conferences, almost.

MD: The U.S. and other countries are skeptical of their value. We have to ask what are the circumstances in which a conference is useful.

TGW: The conferences are one way that one either massages ideas or puts them out in a new form that people can consume in one way or another. One of the other major vehicles are independent groups. For instance, we have this new High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. There have been lots of commissions. Do you have any thoughts, as a way to get new ideas out, when these seem—is it the quality of the idea, is it the timing? When do these things make a difference, and when do they fall flat?

MD: I was involved in putting together the Global Commission on International Migration, which I'll talk to you about in more detail later. So I am guilty of one of these. I think it is quite important to realize that they can fall flat. One alternative to an independent commission is a panel, when there is a particular question that you want to get answered, when you want to solve a problem that you've defined carefully.

A good model of a panel is Ernesto Zedillo's development panel. That was very useful and had relatively narrow terms of reference. What sort of international assistance is useful? It was closely defined. That's the first thing: you need to have a clear mandate, an answerable question. You need to have a good leader. That is, the chair is the be-all and end-all. Zedillo was a model director of that sort—somebody with credibility, a former president of Mexico, and expertise, a Yale Ph.D. economist who knew what he was doing. And the third thing you need is a superb research staff. A strong leader, a great research staff—think of Brahimi, a strong leader, and the Durch-Ahmed team. That kind of combination was first rate. It makes a big difference.

If on the other hand, you have some people, however well-meaning, who say, "The world needs to be made a better place. How can we make a better neighborhood out there?" The

commission can produce good ideas, but its focus is so broad and amorphous that it is unlikely to make a contribution.

Now the commission on migration: why do we do it? The SG wants to put global migration on the global agenda before his term is up. He is of the view that migrants are being discriminated against and, second, there are win-win possibilities. Migrants can do much good for themselves, the countries they leave, and the countries they enter. We're not reaching the positive potential of good migration. He says, "I am a migrant," which he is, of course. And he feels that there are too many migrants who don't have somebody speaking for them. He has appointed himself a spokesman for migrants. He wants to bring their issues to the forefront of the global agenda.

He asked me to put together a team to explore the issue. I assembled—Eric Morris, from UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees); good people from ILO; OHCHR (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights); Joe Chamie from DESA; and IOM's (International Organization of Migration) Bob Paiva to scope out this issue. With the support of Abiodun Williams and his team in the Strategic Planning Unit, we drafted a report to (not of) the SG. One of our recommendations was a global commission. The reason we recommended that is that right now there is a total stalemate in the GA (General Assembly). The countries of net emigration—Mexico, the Philippines, and others—would like to have a strong protection regime. The countries of net immigration—the Europeans, the Japanese, others—are afraid that their culture is going to be undermined by immigrants wearing headscarves. There is no common ground between those two. There is this no way the GA can talk about this issue seriously.

The SG was persuaded that, if we established a good, truly independent commission—not a panel, according to him, because we didn't yet have the right questions to ask them—it could

define the issues, identify the win-win solutions, define what protection was needed, and what the responsibilities of migrants were—both the rights and duties. For that, we needed outstanding leadership.

We found good leadership—[Jan] Carlsson, the former development minister from Sweden, and Mamphela Ramphela, former minister from South Africa, managing director of the World Bank and who herself has written books on migration. The question is, can they pull it off? That's still up in the air. We don't know yet, but the view was that we needed a commission with credibility—a big, high-powered commission to identify migration as a win-win opportunity and explain how to reach win-win outcomes. We needed a commission that could make the case for the protections that migrants need that are compatible with the rights of states to decide who comes across their borders.

We are hoping that they will produce an inspiring document in the way that Gro Brundtland did with the issue of health and sustainable development. Her commission said that health and development are connected, and here are the connections. She brought in a first-rate staff—Jeff Sachs and others—that put together a powerful, persuasive document. That's what we're looking for on migration, too. To sum up, there are two models: the highly-targeted panels—Brahimi and Zedillo's panels—and commissions that explore broadly, solve by bringing in a new way of looking at the problem that is concrete, persuasive, well-documented and credible. The Brundtland Commission on health is one of that second sort, and we're hoping that migration will be its equivalent.

I should have mentioned the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty. That was one of our useful models, too. It had good leadership at the top. And, obviously, you had a superb staff. And you sold it in the regions. Your lessons are in the hands

of the international commissions on migration, as well. You've got to sell the ideas in Santiago and Cairo and Delhi and Canberra and Bangkok, and everywhere else you go for it to have a resonance globally. Your commission did exactly what we'd like the migration commission to do. You didn't change the Charter, you didn't solve the problem of protection, but you put forward a coherent, moral worldview that made it possible for people to talk about humanitarian intervention seriously without getting into a sovereignty squabble. And you had the intellectual back-up to make it credible. Those are the two things we want to do on migration as well.

TGW: You said intellectual back-up. What kinds of outsiders can become insiders? Or what kinds of outsider-insiders exist? How do we talk truth to power, at least, to the upper floors of the building and to the member states? What kinds of folks are most effective? We started on this a little earlier, but if you are going to hire a consultant or an expert, or try to staff a research team, what are the kinds of framing issues, or what kinds of people are easily consumable?

MD: I think you need a team. There are very few people—none that I can think of—who have all the talents, but a team can make a difference. I think it is useful to have two sorts of people, especially. One is an academic who can think of the big thoughts and has credibility doing so. To me, one of my ideal academics of that sort is Jeff Sachs. Jeff is both a first-rate economist who can think the really big thoughts in the way that the best of the economists can, with all of the intellectual horsepower and credibility needed. And he has a practical mind. He understands that this has to be practical. Even if he himself doesn't know all the practical stuff, he knows this has to be doable. The other type of team member you need is somebody who has slogged away in the trenches for enough years that he or she knows where all of the bodies are buried bureaucratically. They know about all the failures that have taken place, of previous people trying to reform the system. A good commission brings both kinds in.

I think your commission had big thinkers, like Michael Ignatieff and very good, practical people who knew how the system worked. It was a good combination.

[Embargoed text deleted, ½ page]

TGW: If you were thinking about commissioning a piece of research, is there a particular value to going totally outside of the system, trying to do something in the halfway house of UNRISD (UN Research Institute for Social Development) or UNITAR (UN Institute for Training and Research), or making it come out of DESA (Department of Economic and Social Affairs)? What are the political and the intellectual plusses and minuses of going these routes?

MD: Well, some things you have to do inside the system. In the migration report that I submitted to the SG in March of last year, the essential focus of the group that I assembled—UNHCR, IOM, ILO, OHCHR, DESA—the essential purpose of it was to mobilize in-house wisdom and get the system on board, to make sure that everybody inside felt that they had been consulted. At the same time the report has to have intellectual coherence and that's a large challenge. How do you get a document that everybody owns that has coherence to it?

I was lucky, and there was some design, picking the right people. Eric Morris was there, Bob Paive, Kathleen Newland, and Joe Chamie were key contributors. They were prepared to find common ground. IOM and UNHCR don't always get along well for many reasons. But these people searched for and found common ground. This put us all on the same page, and it had some coherence to it. But it was not easy. There were paragraphs that were negotiated word by word. The first paragraph was rewritten many times; it looked like a peace treaty being negotiated. Other parts left us more leeway. An inside product gets you ownership from the officials. Nobody is undermining it once it gets out the door.

The “outside” can give you a fresher intellectual work, new ideas—UNRISD, UNITAR, UNU (UN University) are useful for some of that. But frankly, if you want genuinely fresh ideas, you’ve got to go outside the system altogether. You have to go to commissions, panels, academics and NGOs, and a few governments—mostly academics and NGOs, if you want to have something really fresh. I asked Kathleen Newland to join the group. The officials were surprised, at first. What is this NGO person doing in an internal UN meeting? But she is charming enough, and smart enough, that after everybody did a double-take, she became a valued member of the group. We also consulted other outsiders—Jerry Neuman, Ari Zoldberg, Jagdish Bhagwati, Arthur Helton—who introduced fresh ideas.

One of the places in the UN that regularly produces fresh ideas is the Human Development Report. Together with Joe Chamie’s group in DESA, it’s the exception that proves the rule, and that’s because they’ve had excellent directors, and because the administrators of UNDP have told them, “You are independent. Go make a name for yourself.” They have, and they’ve done very good work. At the regional level, this has been replicated recently with the Arab Development Report. That’s an extraordinary document.

TGW: You mentioned, with Kathleen, the role of non-governmental organizations. Do you see a growing role in the future? How does one keep them in the tent, or even bring them in the tent, I suppose, of intergovernmental discussions? Are there ways that we haven’t thought of, other than the fourth chamber, or the third chamber? And how many chambers have we got?

MD: There is some good thinking going on there. [Fernando Henrique] Cardoso is involved in this—a panel on the role of civil society. Nitin Desai suggested an appropriate analogy. He said that right now, NGOs are organized—or disorganized—like a medieval fair. There are all sorts of activities going on. It’s very entertaining and quite confusing. How do you

move from that “medieval fair” to a “supermarket” where you have aisles and shelves, and reliable goods, and you know where to find them, and you restock it when it runs out? I think the fourth chamber, third chamber, whatever, is a non-starter. The one thing the member states can agree upon is that they don’t want to have that. The big question then is, “What good can the NGOs do?” We’re not taking real advantage of their expertise, their ability to mobilize, inspire, their ability to implement.

The Strategic Planning Unit and I did a study for the DSG (deputy secretary-general) of how national parliaments treat civil society. We looked at twelve parliaments, including the EU (European Union) as a parliament, asking, “What’s the menu out there? How is civil society used?” And we provided a range of possibilities. It was designed to provide some ideas for the Cardoso panel. This is another thing the SG would like to do before he completes his term; he would find a way to make civil society more useful, and to give civil society a larger and more recognized voice.

TGW: You mentioned your ex-boss a couple of times. What’s it like to work with him on the 38th floor? What kinds of ideas strike his fancy? When is he likely to listen to a new pitch—any time, or early in the morning?

MD: He is most likely to be struck by an idea in an informal setting, rather than at a morning meeting, or the SMG (Senior Management Group) cabinet every Wednesday at ten. He’s most likely to be struck by a new idea when he’s on the road, when he meets somebody new. We propose them to him, but frankly we’re fighting fires. We’re wrapped up in the day-to-day.

[Embargoed text deleted, 2 pages]

TGW: I'm going to stick with the millennium, now, and end up on these goals, and use them as a way to talk about ideas in general. Throughout these interviews we've identified a few ways in which they make a difference. I think you've sort of hit on a couple of them. If Washington is irritated with them, and it thinks that there is an impact, or possible impact, or it will make a difference, are these goals themselves important? Do they change the way people talk about the issues, think about the issues, have to defend themselves? Is it this normative cut that's really important, or is it more the fact that people in policy are going to take MDGs and actually do something with them? Is it more in terms of what they're going to do? Is it both?

MD: Both. I think the two have to be connected. That is, unless you can create a series of goals that you can sell, they won't go beyond governments. Global goals have to reach beyond governments, because governments, too often, don't want to be bothered. Thus, we have an immense amount of work to do. I don't think there is anybody outside the GA and the development community, the specialists, who has ever heard of these things. President Clinton and Hillary Clinton knew about them, but I'd bet that Chuck Schumer doesn't.

There needs to be a normative impact, and the MDGs do not have this yet. A normative impact will help advance policy a little bit. Congressmen will vote this as a criterion for foreign aid, possibly. But it also has to make sense to the experts, and the experts were truly looking for a common platform at this time. They've gone through all sorts of development debates. They were tired of getting into arguments about what development means and having three or four different ways to measure it.

So the World Bank issues its report based upon its criteria, and UNDP and UNCTAD (UN Conference on Trade and Development) turn around and say, "This is selling out every villager who has been swamped by a dam." This was untenable. The Bank was utterly fed up,

and UNDP and UNCTAD weren't doing much good with their criticisms. They were unable to translate their policy language into cash, because the World Bank and the IMF have the cash.

So there was a need to bring them together with a common platform. For that, one needed something with normative legitimacy that also makes sense to the experts. The experts came in and helped define targets to meet the goals and then indicators. The last was important for Ph.D.s in statistics and development economics—the devil *was* in the details. They spent an immense amount of time coming up with the indicators—all forty-seven of them. There were debates about what was the best way to measure clean water, for example, or access to information technology. Do you measure the latter by the number of phone lines, the number of computers, by the number of people with Internet access?

Right now, many of these indicators are inadequate. The way we measure clean water is by an improved water source. So if you take a pool of stagnant, polluted water and you pour a cement rim around it, that's an improved water source, even if what you're drinking is the same polluted water. So we don't truly have a good measurement device. But it's the most comprehensive data source available, we're on the same page, and it's allowed us to cooperate.

We now have reports – Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers and Common Country Assessments and national MDG Reports– in which the Bank, the IMF, and UNDP all “get on the same page,” discussing how we will assist the Zimbabweans with their development strategy. We've agreed to measure progress now. So the two things—both the technical part and the normative part are very important. And until you can get a good technical part, the norms are just hot air. You've got to have a way to monitor. And until you've got the internationally endorsed norms, then you can't sell it to the Bank and the IMF and say, “This is now the global community view.”

TGW: It seems also what you're saying, however, is that reformulated ideas, or set of ideas, also provide the way for both enemies or allies to get together in new constellations to try to push the agenda ahead or hold it back, if they consider it important. Are there other new institutional manifestations as a result? That is, are there MDG units, or what have you, in governments? This is one of the ways that bureaucrats usually suggest that something is consequential, by assigning new bodies to it.

MD: Yes, in the sense that the MDGs are the platform under which the UN Development Group (UNDG) convenes. This is UNDG's work. UNDG is the place where the World Bank, the IMF, UNDP get together for their policy meetings. The MDGs provide a "constitution," if you will, for the UNDG. That was one part. The MDGs also provide the agreed-upon country framework for development planning. This is the template through which the World Bank, the IMF, the regional banks, the bilaterals, and UNDP talk to a member country about its development strategy. This is the template by which a country's development is measured.

And there were compromises. The most notorious one was that we had to leave out reproductive rights. I've had dozens of women's organizations write me letters, cc'd to the Secretary-General, explaining why this was a retrogressive step: how could you possibly justify leaving out reproductive rights? And that was a very hard one. The reason was—reproductive rights were not in the Millennium Declaration—Catholic countries and the Islamic countries said, "No," and the United States wasn't very much in favor either.

So even though the Cairo conference had endorsed reproductive rights, six years later they couldn't get into the Millennium Declaration. This is a retrogressive step. Those were ideals that had to be cut. But the compensatory advantage is that we have a Millennium

Declaration and MDGs that that the international community shares and is working with. It ended the debate on what development is for, at least for the next umpteen years.

TGW: I was going to say, is there ever an end to a debate? This has been great fun.

Thank you, kindly.

MD: My pleasure.

TGW: We'll stop this infernal machine now and move to the next movable feast.

INDEX

- Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS), 7-8
- Afghanistan, 8
- Africa, 10
- Ahmed, Salman, 18
- Air Force Academy, 3-4
- Amnesty International, 13
- Annan, Kofi, 2, 10-13, 19, 24
and civil society, 24
and the Global Compact, 12-13
and the MDGs, 11
and migrants, 19
- anti-Semitism, 17
- Arab Human Development Report, 23
- Bangkok, 21
- Bhagwati, Jagdish, 23
- Brahimi, Lakhdar, 18, 20
- Brown, Mark Malloch, 16
- Brundtland, Gro Harlem, 20
- Brundland Commission, 20
- Bush, George W., 6
- Cairo, 21
- Canada, 5
- Canberra, 21
- capitalist ideology, 13
- Cardoso, Fernando Henrique, 23
- Carlsson, Jan, 20
- Caves, Richard, 6
- Chamie, Joe, 19, 22-23
- children, 8
- China, 15
- civil rights, 1
- civil society, 23-24; *see also* nongovernmental organizations
- Clinton, Hillary Rodham, 25
- Clinton, William, 25
- commissions, 18-21
- Common Country Assessments, 26
- conferences, 16-18
- corporate social responsibility, 15
- Cox, Robert, 13
- Cuban Missile Crisis, 2
- Delhi, 21
- Desai, Nitin, 23
- development work, 10-11
- Durch, William, 18
- Dominguez, Jorge, 6-7
- Egypt, 15
- empire, 1, 7-8
- environment, 12, 14
- expert panels, 18, 20
- Europe, 12, 19
- European Union (EU), 24
- Federal Bureau of Investigation, 1
- France, 1
- Fréchette, Louise, 11
- Germany, 1, 12
- Global Compact, 11-15
- Global Commission on International Migration, 18-21
- Gross, Leo, 7
- Group of 77 (G-77), 13
- Guns of August, The*, 2
- Harvard University, 4-7
- health, 20
- Helton, Arthur, 23
- High-level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, 18
- Hoffmann, Stanley, 6-7
- Human Development Report, 23
- human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS), 8-10
- human rights, 8, 12, 14-15
- Human Rights Watch, 13
- humanitarian intervention, 21
- ideas, 8-10, 18-19, 21-24, 27,
and academics, 21, 23
and commissions and panels, 19, 23
and global ad hoc conferences, 18
and Kofi Annan, 24
and nongovernmental organizations, 23
- Ignatieff, Michael, 22
- India, 15
- International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, 20-22
- International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo), 17, 27
- International Labour Organization (ILO), 13, 19, 22
- International Migration Organization (IOM), 19, 22
- International Monetary Fund (IMF), 10-11, 26-27
- International Peace Academy, 2
- Iraq, 8
- Italy, 1
- Japan, 12, 14, 19
- Jesuits, 2-3
- Khan, Irene, 14
- labor rights, 12, 14
- Locke, Richard, 14
- public policy, 1-2
- Kell, Georg, 13
- Mack, Andy, 9
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), 5
- Mearsheimer, John, 9
- Mexico, 18-19
- migration, 19-22
- Millennium Declaration, 15, 27-28

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 11, 13, 15-16, 25-28
 indicators of, 26
 normative legitimacy of, 25-26
 Millennium Summit, 16-17
 Morris, Eric, 19, 22
 Naval Academy, 4
 New York, N.Y., 4
 Neuman, Jerry, 23
 Newland, Kathleen, 22-23
 Nigeria, 15
 nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), 13-14, 23-24
 Nye, Joseph, 6-7
 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 10-11
 Paive, Robert, 22
 Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations-Civil Society Relations, 23-24
 Pérez de Cuéllar, Javier, 10
 Philippines, 15, 19
 poverty, 8
 poverty reduction strategy papers, 26
 preventive diplomacy, 9-11
 private sector, 12
 Quayle, Dan, 5-6
 Ramphela, Mamphela, 20
 reproductive rights, 27
 Riza, Iqbal, 11
 Reserve Office Training Corps (ROTC), 5
 Roth, Ken, 14
 Ruggie, John, 9, 12-13
 Sachs, Jeffery, 20-21
 Santiago, 21
 September 11, 8
 Schumer, Charles, 25
 Sklar, Judith, 6
 South Africa, 15, 20
 sovereignty, 21
 Strategic Planning Unit, 11, 19, 24
 sustainable development, 20
 Swarthmore College, 6
 Sweden, 20
 Switzerland, 1
 Thailand, 15
 Third World, 15, 17
 UN Charter, 21
 UN Conference on Environment and Development (Rio), 16
 UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), 25-26
 UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA), 16, 19, 22-23
 UN Development Group (UNDG), 27
 UN Development Programme (UNDP), 14, 16, 23, 25-27
 UN General Assembly (GA), 19, 25
 UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 19, 22
 UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), 22-23
 UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), 19, 22
 UN Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), 22-23
 UN Secretariat, 8-9
 UN Secretary-General, 9-11
 and economic and social issues, 10-11
 UN University (UNU), 23
 United Kingdom (UK), 6, 14
 United States (U.S.), 12, 18
 University of Michigan, 8
 U.S. Air National Guard, 5-6
 U.S. Defense Department, 2
 U.S. Justice Department, 1
 Vandermootele, Jan, 16
 Vietnam War, 1, 3-6
 Washington, D.C., 10, 12, 14, 25
 Walzer, Michael, 6-7
 Wellesley, M.A., 6
 West Point, 4
 Williams, Abiodun, 19
 women, 27
 World Bank, 10-11, 20, 25-27
 World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (Durban), 17
 World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen), 17
 World War II, 4
 Zedillo, Ernesto, 18, 20
 Zoldberg, Ari, 23