

2005: MAKE OR BREAK FOR GLOBAL GOVERNANCE

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Let me begin with the bad news, which is easy enough to state. In every single area of governance which impacts most directly on people's lives – from peace and security from violence, to poverty and hunger, to health, to education, to the sustainability of the environment, to the protection of human rights – the world last year earned failing grades, doing less than half of what was needed to achieve basically agreed goals. This was the conclusion of the World Economic Forum's Global Governance Initiative Report, released at Davos last month, which scored global performance numerically in each area from 2 to at most 4 out of 10 - and should have received more attention than it did.

The 'agreed goals' this report was referring to are obvious or familiar enough. In the area of peace and security from violence they include an end to all existing wars within and between states and no new wars breaking out. In other areas of basic human security they mean doing what is necessary to meet the Millennium Development Goals, which include the objectives of, by 2015:

- halving extreme poverty and hunger;
- halting and reversing the spread of HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB;
- reducing child mortality by two-thirds and the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters; and
- ensuring environmental sustainability, including halving the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water.

It should be intolerable, in the world of the 21st century, that there are still over a billion people living in extreme poverty, with life expectancy closer to 40 than the rich-world's 80; and with 100 of every 1000 children dying before their fifth birthday, compared with less than 10 in high-income countries. But it is abundantly clear that at the present rate of progress the Millennium Development Goals, modest as they are when you think of the scale of the human misery that would still remain, are simply not going to be met.

And it is abundantly clear how much remains to get the world back on track in other areas of governance concern, given for example:

- the long history of failure through the 1990s to get it right on humanitarian intervention, from the lamentable inaction in response to the Rwandan genocide in 1994, to the action in Kosovo in 1999, defensible in principle but unsupported by the Security Council;
- the resurgence of unilateralist sentiment and behaviour, culminating in the coalition invasion of Iraq in 2003, the defenders of which seem for the most part to remain resolutely unchastened by the subsequent course of events;
- the loss of confidence in the existence and vitality of the rules governing the use of force, including in particular the assertion of a much more wide-ranging right than ever previously been acknowledged to use preventively the self-defence power.

- the absence of any apparent institutional capacity or willingness at a global level to deal with the problem of failed, failing and fragile states, a recurring element in explaining the resonance and reality of most classes of contemporary security threats;
- the lack of support by key countries for international treaty regimes and multilateral institutions; and
- the manifest dysfunctionality of intergovernmental organisations like the Human Rights Commission and ECOSOC, and in many ways the UN Secretariat itself (with the question of the efficiency and accountability of the Secretariat now crystallised by the controversy over the administration of the Oil-for-Food program).

The good, or at least better, news is that this year, 2005, is emerging as the one in which all this can be turned around, with the UN and other key elements in the multilateral system beginning to be wrenched into the shape they need to be to confront all the challenges of security and development that the world and its peoples are facing now and will for decades ahead. Maybe it's naively, or even dementedly, optimistic to say so, but it does seem to me that just about all the relevant stars are, for once, in the right alignment:

- We know very well where the weak points and stresses are in the international system: there is no shortage of analysis as to what is going wrong.
- We know what we need to do get things right: there is no shortage of major reports laying out prescriptions and agendas for the necessary change – above all the two on which I will be concentrating here, of the UN Secretary-General's High Level Panel on 21st century security, released in December, and Jeffrey Sachs's Millennium Project report, released in January.
- We know we have, as a global community if not always individually, the available resources and capacity to do what we need to do, if those resources are properly directed.
- We have the occasion this year for a major change effort, with the 60th Anniversary of the UN and all the high-level meetings and summits associated with it.
- And (most optimistically of all, given the speed with which memories of even the worst horrors fade) we may even have the final crucial ingredient - the spark, the catalyst, the political will to make it all happen – triggered by the catastrophic Indian Ocean tsunami, demonstrating as perhaps nothing else could that we are indeed one human family, exposed to ever increasing common risks and sharing the responsibility to tackle them.

Certainly there is a flurry of activity now going on, mainly in the lead up to the UN's 60th Anniversary session, and the Millennium Review Summit that will precede it – but also in the context, for example, of the forthcoming Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference – aimed at identifying strategies for change and creating the momentum to make them possible.

Sixty year olds are notoriously unreformable - as I can personally testify, being precisely that disconcerting age myself – and the task ahead is formidable indeed for anyone who would seek to transform the United Nations, and the other main elements of global order put into place after the Second World War, into a fully effective, efficient and equitable institution. But I sense that 2005 really is a make or break year

for global governance, and that if we don't begin to make some major policy and institutional changes this year the onset of senile decay in the multilateral system is going to be rapid indeed.

The High-Level Panel Report

The December 2004 report of the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change, *A More Secure World: Our Shared Responsibility*, was above all an attempt to recover credibility for collective security and traction for cooperative internationalism, rather than unilateralism and all that implies.

The Panel's recommendations were both substantive and unanimous, an important achievement given its extraordinarily diverse, experienced and strong-minded makeup, including among its sixteen members such well-known figures as Gro Harlem Brundtland, Sadako Ogata, Yevgeny Primakov, Amre Moussa, Salim Salim, David Hannay and Brent Scowcroft. (along with some other rather less exalted ones like me). Our recommendations were also rather numerous, 101 of them in a report of 93 pages. Some have taken the view that was vulgar excess, but like to think of that reaction as being no better merited than the Emperor Joseph's response after hearing Mozart's first opera in Vienna: "No doubt a very fine piece of music, Mr Mozart, but too many notes." No doubt you will make your own judgement – though it will have to be on the basis of a few selected passages. This is not the occasion to take you through the entire score!

The Panel's approach was to begin by identifying the six major categories of threats the world will confront in the decades ahead: war within states; war between states; weapons proliferation; terrorism; organised crime; and, as a separate basket, the human security threats posed by poverty, disease and environmental crisis. We sought to explain the interconnections between them and the extent to which there have been shortfalls in performance in responding to them. For each of the threats in question, we outlined our preferred policy solutions, with a strong emphasis throughout on prevention, but also making clear the circumstances in which, if prevention failed, the use of force may be defensible and unavoidable. And we concluded by making a number of quite specific recommendations for institutional change – not for its own sake, but where we felt this was critically necessary if we are to do a better job at meeting the range of threats we will continue to confront

Some of the *preventive strategies* proposed, for example, are:

- on preventing deadly conflict, to have better and more effective regulatory frameworks and legal and judicial regimes (including the International Criminal Court – not music to Washington's ears); better information and analysis available to the UN; and more effective professional mediation through better-trained and generally better-chosen special representatives and envoys;
- on the world's most dangerous weapons, with real concern about a 'cascade of proliferation' in the years ahead, to have four-layered response, with attention not only familiar supply-side issues (curbing the availability of fissile material and technology), but the demand side (issues that motivate states to acquire nuclear and other weapons – everything from real security threats to perceived double

standards in arms control regimes), better strategies to enforce verification, and better public health defences; and

- on terrorism, to have a new definition of terrorism (violent action against civilians or other non-combatants for essentially political motives), a major contribution, given the years of stalemate on the negotiation of new international norms; and a comprehensive policy approach, extending not just to policing, intelligence and military action, but addressing underlying root causes, in particular acute political grievances.

In many ways the heart of the High-Level Panel report is its recommendations on the rules and principles governing *the use of military force* – what should happen when countries or peoples are threatened by invasion, terrorist attack or mass internal violence and non-forcible preventive measures all seem to have failed. The report addresses squarely every one of the issues that have divided the international community in recent years, arguing that any use of force must satisfy tough criteria of both legality and legitimacy.

On legality, we make clear that the scope of permissible unilateral self-defence is quite limited. Article 51 of the UN Charter says a state can act in self-defence without going to the Security Council in the case of actual armed attack, and 200 years of international law practice extends that to imminently apprehended attack. But that's where legality runs out: 'pre-emptive' self-defence in cases of imminent threat may be justified, but 'preventive' self-defence in relation to a threat distant in time, however real, is not. If someone, somewhere, is building a nuclear reactor which you think is going to make bombs directed at you, there might be the scope, and even necessity, for military action to be taken against that threat. But that is a matter for the Security Council. For any one country to be able to interpret the right of self-defence so broadly is to open the gates for everyone to do the same, and that way lies anarchy.

On the other hand, the report makes clear that Chapter VII of the UN Charter fully empowers the Security Council to authorise the use of force in any situation whatever : preventively, reactively, in relation to external threats, or - in relation to internal threats - in the exercise of the concept of the international community's responsibility to protect its most vulnerable peoples: so-called 'humanitarian intervention'. It is squarely acknowledged – in what might be a better tune for Washington ears - that it may be necessary in some circumstances for the Security Council to authorize military action preventively, against a threat which is real but not in any way imminent – eg. the nuclear reactor case just mentioned.

But legality is only ever part of the story. There is also always a question about legitimacy: the common sense and the morality of legal action. And here the contribution the Panel has made is, I think, a very important one, identifying five criteria of legitimacy that should be satisfied before any decision is ever made to go to war:

- seriousness of the threat: is the threat of harm to state or human security of a kind sufficiently clear and serious to justify, *prima facie*, the use of military force?

- proper purpose: is it clear that the primary purpose of the proposed military action is actually to halt or avert the threat in question, whatever other purposes or motives might be involved?
- last resort: has every non-military option for meeting the threat in question been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing that other measures won't succeed?
- proportionality: is the scale, the duration, the intensity of the proposed military action the minimum necessary to meet the threat in question?
- balance of consequences: is there a reasonable chance of the military action being successful in meeting the threat in question, with the consequences of the action not being likely to be worse than the consequences of inaction?

We say these criteria should be adopted as guidelines by the Security Council in a formal declaratory resolution, and adopted indeed by the General Assembly. The point about them, and we say this in so many words, is not that they will produce, with push-button inevitability, clear cut agreement in every case. The argument is simply that over time, and with the pressure that the criteria will create for states to publicly explain and defend their positions, there will be more likelihood of consensus being achieved both as to what are the proper cases to go to war, and what are the proper cases not to go to war - and less likelihood that states will want to bypass the Security Council entirely and put at risk the whole collective security system.

On *institutional reform*, most public attention has focused, inevitably, on the Panel's proposals to restructure the Security Council, on the basis that not to have an India, a Japan, a Brazil, any major African country, guaranteed a regular presence on the world's pre-eminent body for deciding great issues of war and peace, is to have a Security Council that is not remotely representative of the balances of credible power, authority, and contribution, in the world as it is today.

The report comes up with two clear, self-contained alternative models for achieving that representativeness. Neither would extend the veto to any new members, and both would increase the numbers of SC members from 15 to 24, with each of the world's four major geographical regions having 6 seats each - the Americas (North and South), Europe (East and West), Africa, and Asia & Pacific

The difference between the models comes down to the way in which the major countries would be represented. Model A provides for six new permanent seats - with the new ascendants to heaven coming 2 from Asia (not identified, but presumably Japan and India), 2 from Africa (contested between Nigeria, South Africa and Egypt), 1 from the Americas (presumably Brazil) and 1 from Europe (presumably Germany).

Model B, by contrast, provides for no new permanent seats, but creates a new category of renewable four-year terms, with 2 such seats for each of the four major geographical regions: thus allowing for some degree of negotiated rotation, with a possible place in the sun for next-tier countries like Mexico or Pakistan or Italy/Spain, and the chance for some accountability to be applied to the major occupants.

You can probably imagine the lustiness of the politics now being waged in capitals and New York corridors around this issue at the moment. Panel members were not unaware of its capacity to distract attention from the other substantive matters in our report: we just hope that distraction will not be total, and reasonably swiftly resolved. There is a fair chance that will be the case, because states do seem to have a dawning sense (through admittedly the sun has yet to come up for quite a few countries!) of just what a watershed year this is, and how important it is that a full range of issues be addressed.

In addition to Security Council reform, other major changes proposed include:

- Creation of a brand-new institution, a Peacebuilding Commission, to address very specifically the generic problem of failed, failing, and fragile states under stress, particularly but not only in the context of post-conflict peace-building. The idea is to create a new structure as a subsidiary organ of the Security Council which would bring together the relevant UN organs and agencies, the relevant major donors, including the Bank, the Fund, relevant regional organisations, and relevant bilateral donors, to address in a systematic, coherent, focused, sustained way the full range of policy responses to state fragility and failure with which we are now so familiar.
- Measures to create a more competent and professional UN Secretariat, with much greater management flexibility on the part of the Secretary-General, who must now be the most micro-managed chief executive in any international or any commercial organisation anywhere in the world. He should have the capacity, to put people where they're needed – and then be fully accountable, fully transparent in those decisions, subject to a full auditing exercise thereafter. And he should be supported by a new Deputy Secretary-General coordinating peace and security affairs.
- Measures to make less dysfunctional a number of organs within the UN system, ECOSOC, the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly itself – none of which are these days at the heart of serious policy making or norm setting. At the very least their internal processes must be reformed to prioritise issues and ensure real engagement on the great issues of the day rather than stylized point scoring.
- In the particular case of ECOSOC, which many have argued should be transmogrified into an 'Economic Security Council', sitting alongside the present Security Council and exercising real macro-economic coordinating authority, the Panel took the view that too many functions had now been irretrievably lost, for better or worse, to the World Bank, IMF, WTO and G8/G20 for this to be a realistic option. But it was highly desirable, and we thought realistic, for ECOSOC to become a serious world development cooperation forum, regularly discussing at a head of government rather than second-secretary level the interlinkages between development, trade, finance, the environment and social issues.
- Stronger support for regional security organizations like the African Union, with their better coordination and integration with other institutions in the

collective security system - though not as an excuse for any abdication of responsibility where necessary by global security institutions

The Sachs Report

The other big report setting the global governance agenda for 2005 and beyond is that of the Millennium Project, a team of some 250 researchers headed by Columbia University's Professor Jeffrey Sachs. Published last month, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, sets a human security agenda on a breathtaking scale. In 13 volumes totalling over 2,700 pages – mercifully summarized in an overview document of just 74 pages – strategies are outlined which, if successful, are claimed would result in, by 2015:

- more than 500 million people being lifted out of extreme poverty;
- more than 300 million no longer suffering from hunger;
- 30 million children being saved who would otherwise die before their fifth birthday, and 2 million mothers' lives being saved; and
- 350 million fewer people living without safe drinking water, and 650 million fewer people living without basic sanitation.

The strategies identified are straightforward, and do seem deliverable, albeit not without some pain. Those with a longer- term time frame involve:

- specific MDG-based poverty reduction strategies being adopted by developing countries to anchor the scaling up of public investments, capacity-building, domestic resource mobilization, and official development assistance (ODA);
- high-income countries scaling up their ODA from the current overall figure of 0.25 per cent of donor GNP at the moment to 0.44 per cent in 2006 and 0.54 per cent in 2015 (still less, it will be noticed, than the 0.7 per cent figure to which countries are presently supposed to aspire to, and which five countries – all European – have already exceeded);
- high-income countries opening their markets to developing country exports through the completion of the Doha Round negotiations no later than 2006;
- international donors mobilizing support for global scientific research and development to address specific needs of the poor countries in the areas of health, agriculture, environment management, energy and climate (\$7billion a year's worth by 2015) ; and
- the UN system strengthening the coordination of its agencies, funds, programs and country support teams, working with the international financial institutions.

In addition to these longer term strategies the Sachs report recommends the immediate launch, in 2005, of an intriguing and lengthy list of 'Quick Win' actions that could work very quickly to save and improve millions of lives, including, for example:

- free mass distribution of malaria bed-nets and effective antimalaria medicines for all children in regions of malaria transmission by the end of 2007 (at a cost of under \$500 million a year); and
- successful completion of the '3 by 5' campaign to bring 3 million AIDS patients in developing countries on to antiretroviral treatment by the end of 2005 (at a total cost of some \$5 billion)

The figures involved in all these initiatives and strategies, both long term and short term, are not small. But when it comes to the issue of available resources to spend on these global public goods, the point is always the same. Individually countries may not have the necessary capacity, or anything like it, and the same may be true of whole regions or sub-regions. But the world as a whole certainly has - and the rich countries certainly do. It's just a question of what we choose to spend those resources on.

The response to the Indian Ocean tsunami is an illuminating example. Because people could immediately relate to the catastrophe, because they saw so much of it in almost real time in the media, because people from so many different countries in so many parts of the world - some 40 in all - were directly affected by the death and suffering involved, both government and private hearts and wallets opened to an unprecedented extent. In the first three weeks over \$7 billion was pledged - with my own Australian government topping the table with over \$800 million, and Germany and other European countries and the EU itself being extraordinarily generous, especially in per capita terms.

The wealthiest country in the world, the US, produced a sizeable \$350 million from the government, and another \$650 million from its private citizens, hardly 'stingy' in absolute terms - if not as generous as many others (with a total per capita contribution, as of mid-January, of \$3.54 per person, as compared to Norway's \$57.95 and Australia's \$44.90). What most commentators focused on, however, were not so much the comparisons between the US and other countries, but the US's own internal expenditure priorities. It was perhaps a little unkind of Democrat Senator Leahy to say of Washington's initial contribution of \$35 million that "We spend \$35 million before breakfast in Iraq", but it is true that even the later contribution of \$350 million represents just 2 ½ days of the US's additional military expenditure in Iraq, at its present rate of about one billion dollars a week, and less than 1/10 of 1 per cent of the total US military budget, now running at around \$450 billion a year, just under half the world's total.

The tsunami example is perhaps a special case of which not too much should be made. But the scale of US military expenditure does put into perspective even the very large sums identified as being necessary by Jeffrey Sachs and his team if the world as a whole is to fully meet every one of the Millennium Development Goals in every country in the world: \$121 billion in 2006, rising to \$135 billion in 2015. Next year's global expenditure, in other words, would be around one-eighth of what the world is currently spending on its militaries, and not much more than one-quarter of the US's own defence budget.

Clearly soft power has some distance to go before it rivals hard power as a priority for the world's policy makers.

The Politics of Change

If 2005 is to be the watershed year for global governance we want it to be, the clear need now is to bring together in a coherent and effective way both the peace and the development agendas I have outlined - the Millennium Development Goal agenda

laid out in the Sachs report, and the broader state and human security and institutional reform agenda mapped in the High Level Panel Report. The Secretary-General's intention is to prepare the ground in this respect for the heads of government Millennium Review Summit in September by bringing together, in a single short document that he will submit to those heads next month, the key recommendations of both reports.

Intensive consultations are going on right now as to what will be in the Secretary-General's report, and it is too early to make judgements about which of the major proposals from the two reports will fly, and which will not survive this early cut. My strong hope is that the international political debate will be allowed to run its full course, without the Secretary-General and those advising him yielding ground too early or too easily on recommendations on which disagreement emerges.

In this context I have been pleasantly surprised so far by the extent of the positive reaction to the High Level Panel report, and the seriousness with which it is being taken by all major governments, all of whom are studying it carefully at the moment, without too many strong negatives so far publicly emerging. Whether the rest of the world likes it or not, we know that much will ultimately ride on the attitude of the US, and so far the news is not bad. Within the administration intensive inter-agency work is proceeding across the full range of issues, and Congress, on the initiative of Republican Representative Frank Wolf, has just established a bipartisan Task Force, co-chaired by former Republican Speaker Newt Gingrich and former Democrat Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell, which includes in its ranks, along with much more conservative figures, some formidable liberal internationalists like Wesley Clark, former Ambassadors Tom Pickering and Don McHenry, and Anne-Marie Slaughter of Princeton. Coordinated through the US Institute of Peace, the Task Force is mandated to report in June – and our breath will be bated!

I have described how, at the international level, it is intended to move forward the main proposals as a matter of process. But the question still arises, as always, as to how the politics of all this will be managed, and in this respect there are, among friends of the reform process, two rather distinct schools of thought, which might be labelled respectively the 'Grand Bargain' and 'We're in All of This Together' approaches.

The 'Grand Bargain' approach starts from the premise that there are essentially two quite distinct sets of security concerns that are in issue here: a 'hard security' set focused around the threats posed by terrorism, weapons of mass destruction proliferation and organized crime, and to some rather lesser extent war between and within states, which are primarily of interest to the countries of the north; and a 'soft security' set focused overwhelmingly on the human security threats posed by poverty, starvation and environmental degradation and other failures more generally to meet the Millennium Development Goals, that are primarily of interest to the countries of the south. Against this, the idea in essence is that a bargain, or trade-off, be sought, in which the countries of the north meet the dollar costs of the south's priorities, while the south countries give the necessary political support, in the Security Council, regional organizations and at national government level to the tough regulatory and enforcement measures demanded by the north in pursuit of its own security priorities.

The alternative approach, which I personally favour, is to argue that the truth of the matter is that we *are* in all of this together in the contemporary world, that we bear the risks together and we have a shared responsibility to find and implement solutions. However much different security threats might resonate differently in different parts of the world, reflecting differences in geography, power and wealth, nonetheless none of us can escape, ultimately, the impact of any of them. The tsunami natural disaster, occurring in the south, killed thousands from the north. Terrorist outrages have killed more people in developing countries, from Kenya to Iraq to Indonesia, than they have in the north. A nuclear weapons exchange, by accident or design, is as likely to kill millions in the south as the north. Health pandemics like HIV/AIDS have distressed the whole world; the economic and social impact of refugee outflows has affected northern countries almost as much as those in the south. And so on, and on.

The problem with the Grand Bargain approach is not necessarily the tinge of cynicism that runs through it: those of us who have been in politics a long time tend to like anything that works, being guided by Deng Xiao Ping's maxim that 'it doesn't matter whether the cat is black or white so long as it catches the mouse'. And it may be that there will be some in the corridors of New York who will find a deal cutting approach familiar, comfortable and productive. The concern is partly that the bargain would in fact not prove to be workable, never really being able to be implemented in practice, with the packages being traded being so hugely difficult in character and being deliverable over such different time frames. But even more substantially, the concern is that the Grand Bargain approach is based on a quite false premise and is just not inherently plausible.

The really critical need is to change the mindset of policy makers and those who influence them, to get everyone to recognize that cooperative internationalism really is the name of the game, and that it really is in everyone's interest to move forward simultaneously on all elements of the reform agenda, on both the peace and development sides.

In trying to do this, however, and to build a real consensus for change, it is important for multilateralists – those passionate about improving the instruments of international cooperation, not to overstate their case, especially to those both in the first world and in the third world who are not so easy to persuade.

It's important to recognize, for a start, as the High Level Panel put it, that the frontline actors in dealing with all the threats we face, both new and old, continue to be individual sovereign states, whose role and responsibilities, and right to be respected, are fully recognized in the UN Charter. The principle of 'subsidiarity' in fact runs through both the High Level Panel and Sachs reports – the notion that, while not a substitute for collective global responsibility, more responsibility has to be exercised at the individual country and regional level.

It's important to recognize that not every security problem has an immediate UN solution. Sometimes, as with Aceh disaster relief in the first hours and days, it's a matter of direct government action rather than working through an international coordinating mechanism. Similarly with conflict resolution: every situation has its own dynamic, and its own best institutional solution. When it comes to negotiating a way through the North Korean or Iranian nuclear standoffs, or finding a way to the

longed-for Palestinian settlement, or facilitating peace talks in Nepal, the critical roles may need to be played by individual countries, small groups of them, regional organizations, or non-government mediators, not necessarily acting under UN auspices.

Again with institutional effectiveness generally: multilateralists do no service to the cause by loving intergovernmental structures, but leaving them inefficient and ineffective. They must acknowledge that the UN's Secretariat, many of its organs and agencies, and most regional organisations, are ripe for far-reaching reform.

All that said, the bottom line must be universal and unequivocal acceptance of the UN Charter as setting the ultimate rules of international behaviour, particularly when it comes to the use of military force, whether in self-defence or the defence of others. As the High-Level Panel insisted, if there are weaknesses in the present collective security system, the task is not to seek alternatives to the present institutions but to make them work better.

The evidence since the Cold War ended is that cooperative security efforts do bear fruit. For all that has so often gone wrong with Security Council decision-making, and with peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations, there have been in the new century so far just 20-30,000 people each year suffering violent deaths in wars within and between states - as compared to over 200,000 a year through most of the 1990s. And an enormous amount of that can be directly attributed to the big strides forward that have been made over the last fifteen years in cooperative diplomacy and peace operations. There are similarly plenty of good news stories on the development side about countries, regions and strategies which have spectacularly succeeded – much drawn upon by the Sachs report in pointing a new way forward.

We must hope that from the various different channels of action that will follow from the High Level Panel and Sachs reports something really major will happen. The stakes are really very high. There are plenty who are sceptical that the multilateral system, the UN organisation itself, and the major states who actually of course determine so much of what happens would ever be capable, separately or together, of even beginning to respond to the challenges the reports have identified.

But my very last word is this. We have no alternative. The truth of the matter is that we have run out choices. As the world learned, very much to its cost, when the League of Nations fell apart in the 1930s, if we did not have an effective global collective security institution, we would simply have to reinvent one all over again. So let's start with what we've got, and let's make the system work. The big reports published in the last three months have shown the way forward: it's now up to political leaders, and those who influence them to deliver.