

JOAN B. KROC
Distinguished Lecture Series

Senator George J. Mitchell

Negotiating in Business, Politics and Peace

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Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice
Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
University of San Diego

Editor — Emiko Noma

Senior Program Officer — Diana Kutlow



Fostering Peace, Cultivating Justice, Creating a Safer World

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JOAN B. KROC SCHOOL OF PEACE STUDIES



The University of San Diego’s Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies is dedicated to building and sustaining peace and justice through innovative learning, interdisciplinary analysis, advanced practice, and engaged public policy. Responding to visionary philanthropist Joan B. Kroc’s challenge to “make peace and not just talk about peace,” the Kroc School produces graduates who are scholar-practitioners able to address international conflicts and build sustainable peace with justice. They go on to serve in a range of international, national and local institutions, whether in civil society, government or the private sector. The school’s two institutes — the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace and Justice and the Trans-Border Institute — are engaged in ongoing peacebuilding and human rights projects around the world. They provide students with opportunities to gain practical experience and see how research and practice intersect.

Located on the University of San Diego campus, the Kroc School is a resource for international peacebuilders, students, faculty, community members and all who are dedicated to peace and justice. We invite you to learn more about the Kroc School at www.sandiego.edu/peacestudies.

UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

The University of San Diego is a Roman Catholic institution committed to advancing academic excellence, expanding liberal and professional knowledge, creating a diverse and inclusive community, and preparing leaders dedicated to ethical conduct and compassionate service.

JOAN B. KROC INSTITUTE FOR PEACE & JUSTICE

The mission of the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice (IPJ) is to foster peace, cultivate justice and create a safer world. As one of the Kroc School’s institutes, the IPJ draws lessons for public policy from field-based peacebuilding and working with civil society, government and the security sector to strengthen women peacemakers, youth leaders and human rights defenders.

JOAN B. KROC DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

Endowed in 2003 by a generous gift to the Institute for Peace & Justice from the late Joan Kroc, the Distinguished Lecture Series is a forum for high-level national and international leaders and policymakers to share their knowledge and perspectives on issues related to peace and justice. The goal of the series is to deepen understanding of how to prevent and resolve conflict and promote peace with justice.

DISTINGUISHED LECTURERS

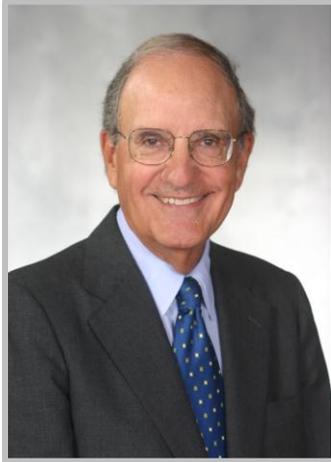
- April 15, 2003 **Robert Edgar**
General Secretary — National Council of Churches
The Role of the Church in U.S. Foreign Policy
- May 8, 2003 **Helen Caldicott**
President — Nuclear Policy Research Institute
The New Nuclear Danger
- October 15, 2003 **Richard J. Goldstone**
Justice of the Constitutional Court of South Africa
The Role of International Law in Preventing Deadly Conflict
- January 14, 2004 **Ambassador Donald K. Steinberg**
U.S. Department of State
Conflict, Gender and Human Rights: Lessons Learned from the Field
- April 14, 2004 **General Anthony C. Zinni**
United States Marine Corps (retired)
From the Battlefield to the Negotiating Table: Preventing Deadly Conflict
- November 4, 2004 **Hanan Ashrawi**
Secretary General — Palestinian Initiative for the
Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy
*Concept, Context and Process in Peacemaking:
The Palestinian-Israeli Experience*
- November 17, 2004 **Noeleen Heyzer**
Executive Director — United Nations Development Fund for Women
Women, War and Peace: Mobilizing for Security and Justice in the 21st Century
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- March 31, 2005 **Mary Robinson**
Former President of Ireland
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Former President of the Republic of Botswana
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U.S. Department of State
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- September 7, 2006 **Shirin Ebadi**
2003 Nobel Peace Laureate
Iran Awakening: Human Rights, Women and Islam
- October 18, 2006 **Miria Matembe, Alma Viviana Pérez, Irene Santiago**
Women, War and Peace: The Politics of Peacebuilding
- April 12, 2007 **The Honorable Gareth Evans**
President — International Crisis Group
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- September 20, 2007 **Kenneth Roth**
Executive Director — Human Rights Watch
The Dynamics of Human Rights and the Environment
- March 4, 2008 **Jan Egeland**
Former Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and
Emergency Relief Coordinator for the United Nations
War, Peace and Climate Change: A Billion Lives in the Balance
- April 17, 2008 **Jane Goodall**
Founder — Jane Goodall Institute and United Nations Messenger of Peace
Reason for Hope
- September 24, 2008 **The Honorable Louise Arbour**
Former United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
Integrating Security, Development and Human Rights
- March 25, 2009 **Ambassador Jan Eliasson**
Former United Nations Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Darfur
and Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs
Armed Conflict: The Cost to Civilians
- October 8, 2009 **Paul Farmer**
Co-founder — Partners In Health and

Distinguished Lecture Series: “Negotiating in Business, Politics and Peace” by Senator George J. Mitchell

- United Nations Deputy Special Envoy to Haiti
Development: Creating Sustainable Justice
- November 18, 2009 **William Ury**
Co-founder and Senior Fellow — Harvard Negotiation Project
From the Boardroom to the Border: Negotiating for Sustainable Agreements
- February 25, 2010 **Raymond Offenheiser**
President — Oxfam America
Aid That Works: A 21st Century Vision for U.S. Foreign Assistance
- September 29, 2010 **Monica McWilliams**
Chief Commissioner — Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission
From Peace Talks to Gender Justice
- December 9, 2010 **Johan Galtung**
Founder — International Peace Research Institute
Breaking the Cycle of Violent Conflict
- February 17, 2011 **Stephen J. Rapp**
U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for War Crimes Issues
Achieving Justice for Victims of Genocide, War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity
- May 9, 2011 **Radhika Coomaraswamy**
U.N. Special Representative for Children and Armed Conflict
Children and Armed Conflict: The International Response
- October 6, 2011 **Zainab Salbi**
Founder — Women for Women International
Building Bridges, Rebuilding Societies
- February 16, 2012 **John Paul Lederach**
Professor of International Peacebuilding — University of Notre Dame
Compassionate Presence: Faith-based Peacebuilding in the Face of Violence
- April 18, 2012 **His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama**
Spiritual Leader of Tibet
Cultivating Peace and Justice
- September 27, 2012 **Asma Jahangir**
Former Chair — Human Rights Commission of Pakistan
Walking Together for Freedom
- December 6, 2012 **Senator George J. Mitchell**
Independent Chairman — Northern Ireland Peace Talks
Negotiating in Business, Politics and Peace

BIOGRAPHY OF SENATOR GEORGE J. MITCHELL



George J. Mitchell served as U.S. Special Envoy for Middle East Peace from January 2009 to May 2011. Prior to that he had a distinguished career in public service, including 15 years in the U.S. Senate and six as Senate majority leader. Senator Mitchell enjoyed bipartisan respect during his tenure, where he served on the Finance, Veterans Affairs, and Environment and Public Works Committees. He spearheaded important legislation on the environment, civil rights for the disabled, low-income housing and free trade.

Mitchell received an undergraduate degree from Bowdoin College and a law degree from the Georgetown University Law Center. He served in Berlin, Germany, as an officer in the U.S. Army Counter-Intelligence Corps from 1954 to 1956, followed by positions as a trial lawyer in the Justice Department and executive assistant to Senator Edmund S.

Muskie. Returning to Maine for more than a decade in private legal practice, he was appointed U.S. Attorney for Maine, then U.S. District Judge for Maine. He resigned that position in 1980 to accept appointment to the U.S. Senate.

In 1995, he served as a special advisor to President Clinton on Ireland, then served four years as the independent chairman of the Northern Ireland Peace Talks. Under his leadership the Good Friday Agreement, an historic accord ending decades of conflict, was agreed to by the governments of Ireland and the United Kingdom and the political parties of Northern Ireland. For his service in Northern Ireland, Mitchell received numerous awards and honors, including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor given by the U.S. government; the Philadelphia Liberty Medal; the Truman Institute Peace Prize; and the UNESCO Peace Prize.

In 2000 and 2001, at the request of President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Chairman Yassir Arafat, Mitchell served as chairman of an International Fact-Finding Committee on violence in the Middle East. The committee's recommendation, widely known as the Mitchell Report, was endorsed by the Bush Administration, the European Union and many other governments.

Mitchell also led investigations into the use of performance-enhancing drugs in Major League Baseball and allegations of impropriety in the bidding process for the Olympic Games. He was the independent overseer of the American Red Cross Liberty Fund, which provided relief for September 11 victims and their families.

Mitchell served as chairman of the global board of the international law firm DLA Piper; chairman of the board of directors of the Walt Disney Company; a member of the board of the Boston Red Sox; and a director of several companies.

Mitchell is the author of four books covering the environment, the Iran-Contra investigation, the fall of communism and his peace work in Northern Ireland.

WELCOME

Edward C. Luck, Ph.D.
Dean
Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies



Good evening, everyone. Thank you very much for joining us this evening. This Distinguished Lecture Series has been a very important event for the school and for the San Diego community for many years now. This year obviously with Senator Mitchell we have a particularly distinguished lecturer. It's not my job to introduce him, but I do get to introduce his introducer. But let me at the beginning say one word of thank you to all of our colleagues in the Institute for Peace & Justice for all their work on this, particularly to Diana Kutlow who has done a terrific job in pulling this together and keeping the senator to a rather demanding schedule already today, which we very, very much appreciate.

Now I have the great pleasure of introducing my boss. For most people most of the time that's not a particular pleasure. In this case for me it is. Julie Sullivan is our executive vice president and provost of the university, which means she oversees all important things in the university, like curriculum and faculty. It's been a great, great pleasure to get to work with her, and I think she shares a vision and excitement for what the Kroc School can be and already has been.

INTRODUCTION

Julie H. Sullivan, Ph.D.
Executive Vice President and Provost
University of San Diego



Good evening. Thank you, Dean Luck. Here at the University of San Diego, we have taken our designation as an Ashoka Changemaker Campus very seriously. Change is a creative process that can be applied in business, politics and peacemaking.

Our honored guest this evening, Senator George J. Mitchell, has worked for change in all of those arenas. His bio is in your program. Years of service of many kinds you will see described there: military service in the U.S. Army Counter-intelligence Corps, legal service in the Justice Department as a U.S. attorney and a district judge in Maine, and political service in the Senate

and as a diplomat. Senator Mitchell alternated that service with business experience and private law practice as chairman of the board of the Walt Disney Company, a member of the board of his beloved Boston Red Sox, and as a director of several other companies.

In each of those positions, Senator Mitchell was not focused on the status quo, but on changing laws, on changing organizations, on changing this world and on changing his own country. Senator Mitchell knows that change takes time. It was 14 years ago that he brokered an agreement between Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland and the Good Friday peace accords were signed. Then, just this summer while visiting Belfast, Queen Elizabeth shook hands with former IRA chief Martin McGuinness, now a top official in Northern Ireland. This was a man who had been an avowed enemy of the British and in fact a representative of a paramilitary group that in 1979 was responsible for the death of the Queen's cousin. Yet this moving reconciliation, a symbol of putting violence in the past to create a better future, is the ultimate goal of every peace negotiation — more than just a ceasefire or a signed peace agreement or even a power-sharing agreement.

Change takes time and change takes vision, like the vision that Senator Mitchell has for bringing people together in the most difficult of circumstances. And now it is our honor to listen and hear and share with Senator George J. Mitchell.

Negotiating in Business, Politics and Peace

Senator George J. Mitchell

Thank you very much, Julie, for that generous introduction.¹ And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for your warm reception, for your presence here this evening. To the new dean, thank you for inviting me and for being such a gracious host. It's a real pleasure for me to be here at the University of San Diego and in particular here at the Joan B. Kroc Institute for Peace & Justice.



I welcome the opportunity to visit the university because I know it was started by the Sisters of Mercy. I started my education at a parochial school in a small town in Maine, and I was taught by the Ursuline Sisters. I can remember to this moment the discipline that they instilled in me. And I have had a high regard for nuns of all kinds ever since then. So it's a special pleasure to be here in that regard.

Tonight, I'm not going to talk about the Senate. I was asked to speak about my experiences in Northern Ireland and the Middle East. I'll do that. Then I want to say a few words in conclusion about our own country. And then I'll be glad to take your questions in conclusion.

I spent five years in Northern Ireland, coming and going and working there. I chaired three separate sets of discussions. The principal negotiation lasted about two years. It was for the most part extremely difficult, very discouraging, with little progress. There had been ceasefires established, but they were routinely violated. There were regular and periodic assassinations, bombing. Two of the men who were delegates to the talks were assassinated during the talks. Several others had been involved in the conflict. Some had been wounded badly, some had served lengthy prison terms for their activities and violence.

We hit what I thought was rock bottom in December of 1997, about 18 months after we started. Two days after Christmas a prominent Protestant paramilitary leader was assassinated in prison by a group of Catholic prisoners. That touched off a tit-for-tat series of assassinations on both sides. Emotions rose dramatically, and the prospect of success declined.

In an effort to try to change the direction, the governments of Britain and Ireland moved the talks from Northern Ireland to London, and then from London to Dublin. But the change of venue did no good. The rancor increased. On the flight back to New York from Dublin after a week there, I concluded that the process was spiraling to a failure and the likelihood of a resumption of violence on a scale previously unimaginable would result.

¹ This is an edited transcript and may not be verbatim.

So in desperation I honed a plan to establish an early, firm and unbreakable deadline, after which the process would be over one way or the other. After some consultations, I established midnight April 9 as the deadline, after which I told them I'm leaving and we'll either have an agreement or we'll have failure and war.

The last two weeks were round-the-clock negotiations. On the last night, Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Bertie Ahern came. President Clinton stayed up all night in the White House on the phone. I was in constant communication with him and them. We finally succeeded in getting an agreement on the afternoon of Good Friday of 1998.

I, with two colleagues who assisted me, was responsible for drafting the document which became the peace agreement. As I did so I had in mind many objectives, two principal ones. One was that it had to be their agreement, not my agreement. On the very first day that the negotiations began, I said to the delegates to the peace conference, "I do not come with an American plan. There is no Clinton proposal. There is no Mitchell proposal. Any agreement that you reach will be yours."

Over the two years of the negotiations, collectively they spoke millions of words to me and they buried me in documents: legal briefs and memoranda and petitions and papers and statements. When I drafted the agreement I made certain that every word, literally every single word, had been spoken or written by one of them. When I presented it to them I said orally what I just said, and I had a cover letter that said to them the same thing.

That was of critical importance. No one is going to subscribe to a document in which they must by definition make concessions if they feel it is imposed on them, unless you have an all-out war and you have a total winner and a total loser. But in conflict resolution, short of that there has to be ownership by the parties. I was acutely aware that whatever happened, I was leaving and going back to America. They were staying. Their lives were the ones at risk and at stake. And it was critical therefore that they decided their future.

The second objective I had was to make certain that in that document was something for both sides. I tried to envision each of the political leaders on both sides of that divide meeting with their strongest and most ardent supporters, and include in that agreement something that they could hold up and say, "This is what I got: A, B and C." Of course, I had to give them a little something to get an agreement, but it has to be a win-win situation.

Short, as I've said, of total conflict and total victory and defeat, there has to be a prospect which enables political leaders, and particularly political leaders in democratic societies, to justify their willingness to enter into an agreement. They knew, as we all knew, that under the terms established by the two governments for the negotiations, any agreement reached would not take effect unless approved in a referendum by the public in Northern Ireland and in the Republic of Ireland. Both had to approve independently before it would take effect. So the politicians who were in there making the agreement were going to have to defend it and explain it to their public. And they did, and it was approved by a wide margin in the referendum in both Northern Ireland and the Republic.

"In conflict resolution you can't take the first no for an answer, or a second no or the 10th no or the 50th no."

Now, what did it take to get there? A lot, and I can't describe every aspect of it, but let me make just a few points that I think contributed to it. They all come under the heading of common sense. Patience and perseverance: you have to stick with it. In conflict resolution you can't take the first no for an answer, or a second no or the 10th no or the 50th no.

I don't intend or mean to be critical of the press, but every day you see the reporters wanting to set up failure. A negotiation begins, but they didn't get an agreement the first meeting they had so it's a failure. Almost every day over the five-year period that I was there, I was asked by reporters, "When are you going home, because you've failed?" In a sense they were right. If your objective is to get a peace agreement, until you actually get it you have failed to do so. But there's a difference between a final failure and working toward success even as you experience setbacks. There has to be perseverance.

Secondly, and this is so simple, you have to treat everyone with respect — even, indeed I would argue especially, those with whom you disagree. None of us have problems agreeing with people of like mind. We're all humans. One of the things we've learned now from the amazing scientific discoveries that are being made, particularly about the human body and especially the brain, is that our receptors for information that agrees with our preconceived notions are very acutely sensitive. Our sensors that receive information that disagrees with our prior beliefs are not very sensitive to things coming in. Every one of us suffers from that.

Politicians in life-or-death negotiations to end conflict, to end death and destruction, have especially acute sensors to that which they agree and very little to that they don't agree. So you have to listen very hard. You have to try very hard to open your receptors especially to people who disagree with you. I think that's true not just in conflict resolution between nations, but in political negotiations within a country such as ours.

You always have to have the humility to recognize that on occasion you may be wrong and the person who disagrees with you may be right. It takes a person of self-confidence and self-knowledge to make that kind of approach to issues, and to genuinely practice those. But that's what's needed in conflict resolution situations. You have to give everyone their say.

When I first went there, indeed on the first day, I said to them, "I'm a product of the U.S. Senate. We have the rule of unlimited debate. I've actually listened to a 16-hour debate, to an 18-hour discussion, to a 12-hour speech. Nothing you guys can say or do will faze me." Did I regret that years later. When I said that I had no idea how long this was going to go on. So there I sat day after day, month after month, year after year, listening for hours and hours and hours.

"A lot of people talk about Clinton, about me, about Blair, about others. The people who really did this in Northern Ireland were the political leaders and the public, who understood the consequences of failure would mean a new outbreak of violence."

But what I learned is that first off, if you really do listen to people sometimes they make sense when you really think about it from their perspective. Secondly, it is a necessary condition to getting their agreement to something that they don't like that their view has been heard and genuinely considered. Every one of us, everyone who is a parent, everyone who is married, everyone who has any kind of a

personal relationship knows the difference between someone who is genuinely listening and someone who is going through the motions of listening. Genuinely listening is hard work, but it has to be done.

Finally I'll say, you need political leaders with courage. The political leaders of Northern Ireland were ordinary men and women. You had one of them here before, a terrific woman, Monica McWilliams, a very close friend of mine. She is not unique; an ordinary person like every one of us here, placed in a position of responsibility and authority. They rose to the occasion.

It's very fashionable in our society and others to denigrate, to ridicule, to demean and to insult politicians, and Lord knows they earn it and deserve it some of the time. But the fact of the matter is, people can and do rise to the occasion with courage, with judgment, and do the right thing. And that's what they did in Northern Ireland.

A lot of people talk about Clinton, about me, about Blair, about others. The people who really did this in Northern Ireland were the political leaders and the public, who understood the consequences of failure would mean a new outbreak of violence, to the savagery and the destructive toll that far exceeded anything that had occurred before. That's what we need in other crises as well.



While I thought it was tough in Northern Ireland, and it was five very tough years, a few months ago I spoke at a dinner of an Irish American group in Queens in New York City, with about 1,000 Irishmen there. I said to them, "I'm about to say something that I never dreamed I would believe or say. And it is that after three years in the Middle East dealing with the Israelis and the Palestinians, the Irish were a bunch of patsies. They were really easy."

The conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians is historic, complex, very difficult. So I cannot in a few moments or even in a few hours give it full justice, so what I am about to say is necessarily a summary that won't touch on every aspect of the conflict, but describes some of my experience and my conclusions from the time I spent there.

The upheavals now occurring across the Arab world, especially in Egypt and Syria, have created anxiety and uncertainty among both Israelis and Palestinians, making progress in resolving that conflict more difficult than ever. But even before the Arab Spring, the conflict has gone on for so long, has had such destructive effects, the level of mistrust and hostility is so high, that many there and elsewhere regard it as incapable of solution. But the pursuit of peace there is so important to them and to us that I think it demands our maximum effort, whatever the difficulties or setbacks.

The key to resolution is very easy to state, but extraordinarily difficult to achieve. It is the mutual commitment of both Israelis and Palestinians, and the active participation of the United States government and the many other governments and entities that want to help, to the task of reconciling the Palestinian goal of a viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent state based on the 1967 lines with agreed swaps of land, with the Israeli goal of a Jewish state with secure, recognized and defensible borders. Security is what the Israelis don't have for their people, even though they have a highly successful state.

In early 2008, President George W. Bush went to Jerusalem, where he said in a speech, "The point of departure for permanent status negotiations is clear: There should be an end to the occupation that began in 1967. The agreement must establish Palestine as a homeland for the Palestinian people, just as Israel is the homeland for the Jewish people. These negotiations must ensure that Israel has secure, recognized and defensible borders. And they must ensure that the state of Palestine is viable, contiguous, sovereign and independent. It is vital," Bush said, "that each side understands that satisfying the other's fundamental objectives is a key to a successful agreement. Security for Israel, and viability for the Palestinian state are in the mutual interest of both parties."

When he took office in 2009, President Obama publicly reaffirmed that policy. And it seemed then, in early 2009, that the culture of peace so carefully nurtured during the Oslo process had largely dissipated and had been replaced by a sense of futility, of despair, of the inevitability of conflict.

The first Gaza military operation, as you will recall, had just ended four days before Obama took office. Israelis had an election campaign on, the Palestinians were deeply divided, and as a result very few people believed that there was any chance even to get negotiations started, let alone conclude negotiations successfully. Unfortunately, that remains the case today nearly four years later despite an intense effort.

An external solution cannot be imposed. The parties themselves must negotiate directly, with the active and sustained support of the United States. Both recognize that, both acknowledge it publicly and privately. Now, to succeed they will both have to engage in compromise and be flexible. But most of all it will take political leadership by all concerned, leaders who are willing to take some risks for peace.

I still believe that this conflict can and will be ended, in part because I believe that the pain from negotiating an agreement — which will be substantial — will however be much less than the pain that both will endure if there is no agreement. If the conflict continues, both Israelis and Palestinians face a dangerous and uncertain future that includes of course the possibility of renewed violence, which could expand in unexpected ways to enflame the region. This is after all a region in which there are several intersecting conflicts occurring at the same time, and any one could trigger a spread to others like a wildfire out of control.

"I believe that the pain from negotiating an agreement — which will be substantial — will however be much less than the pain that both will endure if there is no agreement."

There are many other dangers to both. I can't go into them all but I'll briefly summarize the principal ones. For the Israelis I'll mention just two. The first challenge they face is demographics. There are now about 5-and-3/4 million Jews living in the area between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. In that same space there are about 5-and-1/4 million Arabs, including Israeli Arabs, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. The Arab birthrate overall is much higher.

They don't agree on much, but both agree that within just a few years — and I'm talking about a very few years — the Arabs will be in a majority. If there is not by then a two-state solution, the people of Israel will have to choose between being a Jewish state or a democratic state. It will not be possible for them to be both. It cannot occur if there is not a two-state solution. This is not much

discussed in this country but widely discussed in Israel, most recently and forcefully by Ehud Barak, the former prime minister and now the defense minister who has said repeatedly that this is a painful choice that Israel should not have to make.

Their second challenge is technology. To keep out suicide bombers Israel built an enormous wall. But the real threat as we all know now doesn't come from suicide bombers. It comes from rockets. Hamas still has thousands of them even after the recent operation. They're crude, most of them homemade, lacking in guidance, lacking in destructive power, but they still create fear and anxiety. And can anyone doubt that over time they will achieve an increase in both numbers and quality of the arsenal? They've stated it as an objective following the ceasefire.

On Israel's border, Hezbollah has tens of thousands of rockets. The public estimates in Israel are between 30,000 and 50,000. They're somewhat more effective, and although limited in range they are engaged in an effort to upgrade their arsenal.

Finally and most threateningly, Iran now has rockets that can reach Israel when launched from Iran itself. All of the discussion has been about nuclear weapons. That's a very serious problem. But aside from that, Iran has made a huge technological advance in moving from liquid-fueled to solid-fueled rockets; they're easier to operate, are easier to conceal, are more difficult for Israel or us to target. The Iranian rockets don't yet have the precision ours do — that is, to strike a specific building or military target. But they can come close and if launched they could cause enormous destruction and death in Israel's cities.

"It's a daunting challenge especially to build trust where mistrust exists not only between political leaders but between the public in both societies. But they must find a way to renew hope."

The United States is fully committed to Israel's security. That commitment is firm, unshakeable and will be kept. To honor it we've provided enormous financial and military support to Israel, most recently in the development of the effective anti-missile system that protected them from many of the rockets launched by Hamas. But it is unknown, because it's never before occurred in human history, what would happen if simultaneously thousands and thousands of rockets were launched from all three locations. And so, Israel's very existence then could be threatened.

The Palestinians also face serious problems, obviously and especially the indefinite continuation of an occupation under which they do not have the right or the dignity that comes with the right of self-government. In 1947 the United Nations proposed a plan to partition the area and create two states. Israel accepted it, the Arabs rejected it. The first of several wars began, all of them won by an increasingly strong Israel.

Every sensible Arab leader today would gladly accept the 1947 plan if it were still on the table. But it is not on the table and it will never again be on the table because the circumstances have so dramatically changed. Since then, the plans offered to the Palestinians have been less attractive than the '47 plan, and they've rejected them all.

But as I told Chairman Arafat directly during my first tour of duty in the region, and as I told President Abbas directly during my most recent tour of duty, there is no evidence, none whatsoever,

to suggest that the options available to the Palestinians are going to get better in the future. So what they've got to do is to reach the common sense conclusion that they've got to sit down, participate and stay in direct negotiations, and get the best deal they can: less than what they want, no doubt from their perspective it will be imperfect and unfair, but they've got to bring the occupation to an end and they've got to create their own state.

They can then build on it as Israel has done, and as the Palestinians can do as they are demonstrating now under the outstanding leadership of their prime minister, Salam Fayyad, who has laid the foundation by building the institutions needed for a viable, independent state. Unfortunately, that state-building effort cannot be sustained in the absence of progress on the political side. They're inextricably linked, and so there has to be progress on both in order to be progress on either.

It's a daunting challenge especially to build trust where mistrust exists not only between political leaders but between the public in both societies. But they must find a way to renew hope, and we must do all we can to help them despite the difficulties, because it is not only in their interest, it is in our interest as well.

My last point this evening involves our country, where I believe our power and our principles are mutually enhancing and must be firmly bound together. The American Declaration of Independence was a powerful statement of the right of free people to self-governance. The first 10 Amendments to the Constitution, what we call the Bill of Rights, is a concise and eloquent statement of the right of the individual to be free from oppression by government. Most concepts of democracy in our world today rest heavily on these two principles, and in this dangerous world they can be maintained and defended only if we are strong and prepared.

The American Revolution was not initially a rejection of British principles. It was triggered by what the colonists believed was the failure of the British government to apply those principles equally to them. A perceived gap between our ideals and our actions now is a factor in the hostility of others to our country and to Western democracy. The triumph of democracy and the fall of communism was the signal event of the 20th century. As we move into the 21st century, the power and the ideals of the United States are influential, indeed ascendant, around the world.

There have been many dominant military and economic powers throughout history, and that role brings enormous benefit and many problems. In this era of instant communication especially, every grievance in the world — no matter how local, whether real or imagined — leads to both a request for assistance from us and resentment to us, whether we grant the assistance or not.

Obviously, most people want to be on the side of the strong. But for too many people in our country and outside of our country, power increasingly is perceived to be the primary or for some the exclusive basis of American influence in the world. I think there's much more involved.

Power is clearly important, and we must be prepared to use it — including military force — when necessary and appropriate. A strong economy and a strong military are essential to our security, our freedom, our prosperity. But power must be deployed not as an alternative to our ideals, but in service to our ideals, for it is American ideals that is and always has been the primary basis of American influence in the world.

They're not easily summarized, but surely they include the sovereignty of the people, the primacy of individual liberty, an independent judiciary, the rule of law applied equally to all citizens and crucially to the government itself, and opportunity for every member of society. Because of those ideals, I believe that the United States was a great nation long before it was a great military or economic power.

This was a great nation the day the Constitution was ratified. Four million people clinging to the Atlantic seaboard became instantly one of the most influential countries in the world because of our ideals. There were no wars then. We had a very tiny army and a tiny navy. We didn't have missiles. But we had the power of our ideals. They guided us through the early turbulent years; through the greatest crisis in our history, the Civil War; the difficulties of the 20th century; and they have to guide us now through the different but still difficult challenges of the 21st century.

I'll close with one more personal story to make the important point of opportunity. When I was a federal judge I had great power, and I have to confess I really loved that part of the job. The only job I ever had where I had any power. When I was Senate majority leader all you can do is ask people to do things that they should be doing without being asked. But when I was a federal judge every order I ever gave was carried out to the letter, and that was great.

But what I really enjoyed was when I presided over what are called naturalization ceremonies. They're citizenship ceremonies. A group of people who had gone through the required procedures gathered before me in a federal courtroom in Maine. There, by the power vested in me under our constitutional law, I administered to them the oath of allegiance to the United States and I made them Americans.

It was always highly emotional for me because my mother was an immigrant, my father the orphaned son of immigrants. Neither had any education. My mother could not read or write. She worked the nightshift in a textile mill in Maine for 40 years. My father was a janitor at a local school. But because of their efforts, and more importantly, because of the openness of American society, all of their children got the education they had been denied — and I, their son, became the majority leader of the United States Senate.

After every one of these ceremonies I met personally with each of the new Americans, individually or in family groups. I asked them where they came from, how they came, why they came. They talked about their hopes, their dreams, their fears. Their answers, their comments were as different as their countries of origin, but through them there were some common themes. They were best summarized by a young Asian man, who when I asked him, "Why did you come here?" replied in very slow and broken English, "I came," he said, "because in America, everybody has a chance."

Think about that. A young man who had been an American for 10 minutes, who could barely speak English, was able to sum up the meaning of our country in a single sentence. America is freedom and opportunity. That's what it is for all of us, and they are linked. There will not be freedom for all if there is only opportunity for some.

I believe that in this great country which we are so fortunate to be part of — the most free, the most open, the most just society in all of human history, despite its many imperfections — no one should be guaranteed success, but everyone should have a fair chance to succeed, to go as high and as far as their talent, their willingness to work, their willingness to take risk, will carry them.

Our challenge, each of us here, is to so conduct ourselves that 50 years from now, 100 years from now, people all over the world will still want to come here for the same reason that young Asian man wanted to come: because they will believe in America there is a chance for everyone.

I spoke in Europe recently and there's a certain amount of hostility, some envy, about the United States. One guy got up and read, pleased with himself, an article that said China's gross domestic product is going to equal that of the United States in 2048, and China's on the rise and America's in decline. "What do you think about that, Senator Mitchell?"

I said, "Well, first off, if in fact their gross domestic product equals ours in 2048, that means on a per capita basis we're four times as large as them. It's the per capita GDP that really matters, so I'm not too worried about that. Secondly," I said, "I'm going to ask you a question in response to your question. Aside from a few North Koreans struggling to get out of the concentration camp they call a country, trying to get into China, have you ever heard or read of anyone risking their lives, crossing the ocean or crossing the desert or climbing a fence or burrowing a tunnel, to get into China?"



Have any of you ever heard of that? Last year, 500,000 Chinese left their country. Even with the restrictive out-migration rules they have there, a large number of them want to come here. They don't come here because they think we've got a good Patriot missile. Not one person has ever cited that as a reason to risk their life.

They come here because they know here they've got a chance. They've got a chance to get what human beings want everywhere: a decent job, good care for their kids, a good education to get their kids off to a good start in life. Isn't that what we all want? No matter the color of our skins, no matter what ethnic group we come from, no matter what religion we practice, no matter where we live — that's the basic universal desire.

We do know this: It's still an aspiration here. We're not perfect. And it is not true that every single American has equal opportunity. Working at that is something that we've been doing for 225 years and we have to keep at it. Don't ever forget that great as were the men who wrote the Constitution, and they were great in every sense, they were constrained by the society in which they lived and learned. And so the Constitution, which we revere in its initial form, did not consider a black person to be a whole person. And it restricted the right to vote to adult white men who owned property. It took 75 years and the bloodiest civil war in our history to extend the right to vote to persons who were not white.

It took another 60 years to extend the vote to women. Can you imagine, 60 years of ferocious political battle to extend the right to women? It's unimaginable to us now. That was the case. And then it took another half-century until we passed the American with Disabilities Act to extend to persons with disabilities the right to live a full, free and independent life in our open society. And

we’re going through the same issue right now with respect to sexual orientation. And there will be other issues in the future.

But what our history tells us is a people optimistic, hopeful, successful, willing to confront error, willing to change, willing to make things better for everyone — that’s freedom and that’s opportunity, and that’s America.

Thank you all very much.



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Q: You mentioned Monica McWilliams. I was wondering if you could tell us more about the role of women in the peace process in Northern Ireland, and how you incorporated lessons learned, best practices from that process into the Middle East peace process?

A: Women played an important role in the peace negotiations and the resulting process in Northern Ireland. I believe that among the many factors which contributed to getting an agreement was the increasing entry of women into the political process, not just in elected office but actively seeking peace — I think which arose out of exhaustion and frustration and fear of the continuation of the conflict. It was a very difficult atmosphere; fear and anxiety hung like a thick fog over the society. Women feared for their children's lives, for their husbands' lives, and so they became increasingly active in politics.

Then the election process — which we devised for delegates who ultimately became part of the negotiation — permitted the creation of a new political party called the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition, which Monica as a Catholic co-chaired with a Protestant woman named Pearl Sagar, also a wonderful woman. Though they got a very small percentage of the vote, they got into the talks and they played a very positive and constructive role during the process.

It was a little bit tough on them at first because many of the male politicians weren't used to having women in an equal role, and they were rude and insulting. But I had been a federal judge and had had some experience in trying to maintain order in a civil setting, and I was able to do that. They increasingly demonstrated their value and were in fact important to the process and have been since then.

With respect to lessons learned, there are surface similarities in those conflicts, but in reality the differences are much greater. While certain principles — the ones I discussed: you have to be open, you have to be respectful and so forth — are transferable, substantive solutions are not. There is no product you can put on the shelf that worked in one place and think it'll work in another. They're really very different and they depend entirely on the issues and circumstances. I do believe as I said that the situation in the Middle East is quite a bit more complicated and difficult, with many factors that weren't present in Northern Ireland that make it more difficult to achieve a result.

Q: Many of us are so concerned about the Palestinian-Israeli situation, especially related to women and children. When we hear about settlers abusing Palestinians, calling women "whores," children throwing rocks at each other, we're fed up with the fact that the Quartet has done virtually nothing to resolve the problem after 65 years. What can we do? It's obvious we need to push the leaders aside and let the people speak. But what is it we can do to really help the children of Palestine and the children of Israel?

A: I think in a democracy of course it is ultimately the voice of the people that decides things. We have the opportunity to vote in elections and to vote for those who we think represent the values that we believe in. That's historically what elections are about. Of course, for almost all voters, there are many more than one issue involved that people think about when they go to the polls. So the first one is to elect and support people whose views are closest to ours on issues that matter to us, including this issue.

Secondly, in both Northern Ireland and the Middle East there were and are, even in the darkest of times, vibrant local organizations who work cross-border on a wide range of matters, including those to which you referred. Supporting them is extremely important. It isn't very well-known, but there are many, many Israeli doctors who devote themselves to the treatment of injured or sick Palestinians, and in particular Palestinian children. There are reciprocal activities, although there's a huge imbalance of course in both authority and capacity — but on both sides there are people working.

There's an organization founded by two men who lost sons in the conflict, an Israeli whose son was a soldier, and a Palestinian whose son was killed in the conflict, who work side by side, publically, in encouraging their respective governments to move toward [a solution]. They are quite prominent and well-known, hugely articulate. Finding and supporting them and groups like them is important.

It's very important especially when conflict breaks out, because inevitably once people start dying — this is not limited to Israelis and Palestinians — people retreat to their kind, into their camp, and the cross-border activities tend to wither or to at least be temporarily halted. So I would say that's very important to do.

Third, there are many organizations that are devoted specifically to children's relief on both sides, because children do suffer on both sides. I've seen some horrific examples of injury and death on both sides. If you want you can find them and support, financially and otherwise, those organizations that are 100 percent helping children.

In the end, of course, the only real lasting answer has to be the creation of a Palestinian state that is viable, independent and contiguous, and reasonable and sustainable security for the people of Israel. What I said earlier is that I believe that states, like individuals, act out of self-interest, and ultimately they're going to come to realize that's the only way they can get what they want.



Q: I'm from the Democratic Republic of Congo. What is happening in eastern Congo is really troubling. What is the U.S. policy on Congo?

A: I met with a group of students earlier today. I was asked by a young woman why the United States has not intervened in Syria to prevent the kind of death and destruction that's occurring. In response I told the following story, which I will tell here in light of your question.

About a month ago, I was in London and I spoke to a large gathering. A man got up and made a statement which was a harsh condemnation of President Obama, because the United States had not militarily intervened in Syria to prevent what at that time was about 20,000 deaths. By complete coincidence the *Financial Times* carried a story which reported that in the Congo, more than 2 million people had died. I said to the man, "Before I answer your question, I want to ask you one. You're concerned, legitimately, about the fact that 20,000 people have been killed in Syria, and you demand that Obama intervene. Why aren't you asking me about the Congo, where 2 million have died?"

As soon as I said that, a citizen from Congo who was in the audience jumped up and said, "You're wrong, Senator."

I said, "How am I wrong?"

He said, "It's not 2 million. It's 5 million."

I pointed out that just a week or so before that, Nicolas Kristof, the distinguished columnist at the *New York Times*, had written a column sharply condemning Obama for not militarily intervening in the Sudan, because thousands are being killed in the Sudan.

The fact is, we've never had any realistic debate in this country on what are the terms, circumstances and conditions which would justify American military intervention in humanitarian causes. If it's the number of deaths, how many? 100, 1,000, 10,000 — what is it? There are no criteria. There is no basis for making a judgment, and it tends to revolve around factors pertaining specifically to national security issues and to treaties and other commitments that we have.

I must say to you — and I also said it to the students today — I think that we must act with restraint in terms of military intervention around the world. We've seen now, having just concluded a 10-year war in Iraq, trying to end a 12-year war in Afghanistan, that it is very easy to start wars and very hard to stop them.

Our policy in Africa has been to encourage, to help train and finance the support of a multinational military force under the auspices of the African Union, to enable intervention by African forces in circumstances that justify it for humanitarian causes in Africa. Unfortunately, that has not worked as perfectly as the plan suggests or as I've described.

I don't think the United States should militarily intervene in the Congo. I have to say that to you with respect. I do think we should do more to accelerate our efforts to have a meaningful and useful force which could respond rapidly to the circumstances that occur in the Congo, to prevent the kind of horrific killing and rape and other actions. That, I think, is a sensible policy we should undertake.

This is going to be an increasing problem. The 20th century and almost all previous centuries were marked by major wars: armies crossing borders, tanks, invasions. That's not likely to happen in the foreseeable future, primarily because of the overwhelming military dominance of the United States. There is no one country, no combination of countries, which represents a serious military threat.

But because of the explosive growth in population that's occurring in Africa and in parts of Asia, the absence of effective governance and a whole host of other factors, this type of atrocity will continue and we have to figure out ways to intervene other than our sending in an American army everywhere in the world, every time something bad happens. I think what we can do best there is to make reality what has so far been a plan and an effort.

Q: As you mentioned, the Middle East has very interconnected conflicts. Considering that Iran is supporting Hamas and Hezbollah financially and militarily, do you believe that involving Iran in peace talks between Israel and Palestine would affect the direction of the peace talks and the overall peace of the region?

A: No, I do not. I believe that Iran, if given the opportunity, would play a destructive and negative role. I can say that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority — that is, the executive branch of the Palestinian government — they're both very hostile to Iran and would not welcome or participate in a process in which Iran was involved. Hamas might be interested because of course Iran supports Hamas. But the Palestinian Authority definitely would not, and they are the governing entity among the Palestinians.

The Palestinian Authority won the presidential election. Subsequently, Hamas won the election to the parliament. But it's just like here: Bush was president, Democrats won control of the House in 2006. But that didn't change the fact that Bush was president. The Palestinian Authority controls the presidency; Hamas controls the legislative branch. So the executive authority is the one with which foreign entities deal. I think it's a virtual certainty that both the Palestinian Authority and Israel would strongly object to and would not participate in a process in which Iran was involved.

Q: I'd like to tie together the last part of your talk of the vision and ideals and culture in the United States, and the part about the Middle East. My perception is that the Middle East situation is dogged by some cultural situations. Particularly in the Arab world traditionally, from what I've read, it is not a culture of progress. It's not a culture that follows our norms here or the norms in the Western world. It just doesn't have that approach and therefore doesn't value or place value on the prospects of the children and the quality of life relative to other things. Related to that, the women do not have as large a role and are not able to exert a significant, moderating influence on these kinds of peace versus war decisions. In your work there, did you perceive that?

A: I respectfully don't agree with your statement or the premise of your question. Let's just think about something: Many of the great inventions of humankind originated in what is now the Arab world. What for a very long period of history, certainly the 415 years in which the Turks (non-Arab Ottomans) dominated the Middle East, followed by the dominance through U.N. mandate of the British and French, the Arabs have been a subjugated people, denied the opportunity for self-government and self-expression, and dominated by others who were not concerned about them.



When the British and the French during the Second World War reached a secret agreement to divide up the Middle East at the end of the war, and then when they got to Paris and the Versailles Treaty, in deciding what would happen to the Middle East they consulted with everybody except the people who lived there. No consideration was given to them.

So on a large conference table in Paris, a map was spread out and a British civil servant took a pencil and a ruler, and he created out of thin air countries which had not previously existed. So Iraq was created. Under the Ottomans for 415 years Iraq was divided into four semi-autonomous regions.

They created Jordan, where no country had existed. There was no consideration whatsoever for historical relationships.

A separate but parallel process occurred in Africa, when the colonial powers divided up the continent and created nations that were bound to engage in internal conflict. So I ask you this question, and this is serious, not to be insulting: If, for a period of 500 years, people of this country were dominated by others who had no concern for the self-interest of this country, how much progress would we be able to demonstrate at the end of that process?

I think that there clearly are cultural differences. But it's a matrix of comparison that induces the inevitable answer set forth in your question. Even if it were the case, shouldn't we allow time to see if they could sort it out?

Let me give you just one example of what I think imposes our views on theirs. I watched a television show the other day with one of the commentators complaining that they still haven't sorted it out in Egypt. "It's been 18 months since the revolution started. When are they gonna get their act together?" In the United States, in a much simpler time, eight years elapsed between the end of the American Revolution and the establishment of the United States government. In France, 50 years passed between the revolution and the establishment of a democratic government. In England, 200 years. There aren't more than five or six historians at Oxford who can follow the ins and outs of that. But now we expect the Egyptians to sort it out in 18 months.

I do think that there's plenty to be critical about. I don't want to stand here and suggest otherwise. A lot of the problems are self-induced. In 1948 when the war began, the Israelis were outnumbered by vast numbers. But Ben-Gurion was exuding confidence. A reporter said to him, "Why are you so confident?" He said, "I have a secret weapon." The reporter said, "What's that?" He said, "The Arabs."

True today. Disunity. Disagreement. Internal hostility. A family and clan-based society that has difficulty establishing allegiance to a national entity. All of that contributes to the problems that you described. But I do not think that it by itself equates to a cultural or other inferiority. I think it equates to a lot of factors, including the history that I just described.

Q: I'm sure you would agree that security for the Palestinians is just as important as it is for the Israelis. It seems to me that the violations of their security, in terms of lives lost and misery and property loss, have greatly exceeded what the Israelis have lost. Related to this is this power differential, and I'm wondering how you view negotiations, whether you see a way to peace when two groups have such an extreme difference in military and economic power?

A: To answer the last part of your question, those are the facts. If the implication is that there shouldn't be negotiations because there's an imbalance, then what's the alternative? I acknowledge the accuracy of the fact that there is an imbalance in military and economic and other forms of measurement. But we deal with situations as they exist, not as we wish they should be or as we think might be better to get a fair result.

Contrary to the view held by many outside the United States, particularly in the Middle East, I believe that the United States is capable and indeed is the only entity on earth that has the capability

of establishing a context within which a reasonable negotiation can occur. We can't ask the Israelis to disarm so that they can be equal to the Palestinians. We can't send the Palestinians missiles and rockets so that they will be militarily equal to the Israelis. What we can do is to ensure as best we can a fair and serious negotiation, and what I hope will be a good and fair result, albeit less than what either wants.

I don't know how else to approach the problem, because if you take the position that there's a huge imbalance so there can't be a negotiation, what is the alternative? Do we somehow militarily impose upon the parties a resolution? I think that's not feasible — not politically feasible, not militarily feasible, not otherwise feasible. That would have no support anywhere in the world.

It is a highly imperfect situation, I'm frank to acknowledge, and there is an imbalance. I would make the point to you, respectfully, that I made to Palestinians in encouraging them to get into the negotiations, and that is: the longer it goes, the greater the imbalance, the worse the position becomes. How does that cure anything? I just don't think it does. You have to remember that it has been American policy for 50 years, under every administration that has served in that time without exception, that the conflict should be resolved by direct negotiations between the parties, with the active and sustained support of the United States, and that both parties should refrain from taking actions which either have the intention or the effect, or both, of altering circumstances in a way that tends to determine them in advance. That is, parties should not try to pre-determine the issues. Both parties nominally support our position, but both of course think it should apply to the other.

That's the reason why President Obama opposed the Palestinian action at the UN, and opposed the Israeli action in response, particularly the proposed development and construction of the area known as E-1, which would be a critical turning point in trying to resolve the conflict. Both of them are attempts to determine, outside of negotiations, issues that the parties have already agreed and both say should be determined within negotiations.



I don't think our position has been perfect, I don't think our record has been perfect. We're all humans. But I think that the proposals made and the positions taken by President Obama represent the best available hope and possibility for achieving a resolution. I think that whatever others may be considered in a theoretical context, they suffer from infirmities or disabilities that make them far less likely to produce a desired result from both sides.

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