



ROBERT BLACKWILL

Senior Fellow & Senior Advisor to the President, RAND Corporation

- I. Let me start by having a look at the current record of global governance.
 - If by that we mean how the international community is performing in meeting the current challenges to the global system, the answer must be -- dismal.
 - Let's do a brief but grim inventory.
 - The recent global economic crisis was largely met through national efforts and minimal coordinated international action. The G-20 contribution was to issue generalized and vague communiqués. Nothing much more. We will hear more about that in our next session.
 - Progress in the Middle East Peace Process is the most unpromising in 25 years. It is difficult to see anything but increased tension and violence ahead. The Quartet's efforts have demonstrably failed. Many Quartet communiqués. No progress.
 - The international community mostly stands aside regarding the future of Iraq, even though its future will have a major impact on the Middle East writ large. Violence there is again rising (witness the terrible twin October 25 suicide bomb attacks in Baghdad that killed 150 people and injured hundreds more.) And there has been little actual political reconciliation among the Shia, Sunni and Kurds as we approach the January parliamentary elections, if they in fact do occur at that time. Except for the United States, the international community puts little or no political pressure on the Iraqi parties to deal with their differences.
 - Iran continues its nuclear weapons program with the UNSC Perm 5 Plus 1 divided on how best to persuade or coerce Tehran to cease and desist. An American or Israeli attack on Iran's nuclear facilities would in my opinion be a disaster. But so would Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons, either actual or virtual. The Perm 5 Plus 1 negotiations with Tehran have as yet produced nothing and we hear in the last day that Tehran has rejected the deal that its negotiators agreed to recently in Vienna to send three quarters of Iran's stockpile of 2,600 pounds of uranium out of the country to Russia and France for enrichment. The international community dithers, Vladimir Putin says crippling sanctions against Iran would be a mistake, and more and more centrifuges turn round and round in Iran. Many UNSC resolutions and debates. No progress.
 - The US and its allies are losing the war in Afghanistan and Russia, China and Iran all largely stand aside, even though a victory by the Taliban and the boost it would give to Jihadi terrorism worldwide would negatively affect their vital national interests. And many of the NATO allies avoid the fighting in Afghanistan and will start heading for the door in 2010.
 - Pakistan, the epi-center of global terrorism which possesses dozens of nuclear weapons, continues to implode, and only the United States appears to be willing to



make a major commitment to try to slow the Islamist surge in that country. How many EU Foreign Ministers have even visited Islamabad, as Hilary Clinton has just done? Most of Europe's policymakers seem to worry that if they involve themselves in Pakistan, the Jihadi terrorists will blow them up in European cities back home. And there is no current negotiation between Islamabad and New Delhi regarding their differences, because terrorism against India continues to emanate from Pakistan, as it has for 20 years. The international community stands aside in a perilous situation that could lead to the first war in human history between two nuclear weapons states.

- North Korea, isolated, desperately poor if not starving, year after year successfully defies the UN and the international community in acquiring increased numbers of nuclear weapons and ever more sophisticated and longer range delivery systems. The Six Party talks have failed. Many communiqués. No progress.
- The humanitarian tragedy in Sudan goes on unabated.
- Burma flouts international opinion.
- The Doha round remains frozen.
- The NPT regime could be on the edge of collapse.
- The Copenhagen meeting on climate change is likely primarily to be full of overblown rhetoric. And so forth.
- It is, of course, true that these issues are all intrinsically difficult in their individual manifestations. But should that not mean that the important but these difficult regional and global problems are exactly the ones on which the international community should effectively concentrate?
- In any case, I would suggest that the list I have enumerated represents a terrible record on the part of the global community – a series of stinging failures in global governance.

II. Why has the international community such a dismal scorecard in dealing with the challenges before it? Let me suggest a few reasons.

- Most important, there is no serious punishment for international bad behavior.
- Nation states, including the major powers, define their interests primarily as what they perceive is narrowly best for them – not what is best for the world writ large.
- In this context, often a nation's its broader strategic or economic interests trump its security concerns. In the first category, one thinks of Moscow's approach to Iranian nuclear weapons and in the second Beijing's policies concerning the same problem.
- This is, of course, nothing new. It has been true since the League of Nations, indeed since the Athenian League, and before. But today, in this globalized world, the penalties that ensue for the global peace, security and prosperity are more and more consequential.
- The great powers have no concerted collaborative strategy to deal with the problems I have enumerated above. Rather, they maneuver to gain tactical advantage while ignoring the systemic international deterioration occurring all around them.
- The UNSC Permanent Members are riven by differences and disputes. The UNSC is clearly broken.
- Try this parlor game. Think of a single issue in which the UNSC in the past decade has "solved" or even made major headway on an international problem. There have been



many empty UNSC resolutions but not much to show for all those speeches in New York. And the use of military force as an instrument of the UN Charter, principles and purposes seems as far off as ever.

- Many developing countries often seem to believe that lofty rhetoric and endemic criticism of the West is a substitute for compromise and effective cooperative action to address the world's problems.
- Rogue nations increasingly get the clear message that they can do what they want with no significant international penalties.
- In short, there is plenty of blame to go around.

III. What to do?

- First, I have to say that I am not optimistic that what I now suggest has much chance of actually happening. But I soldier on nonetheless.
- Most important, the great powers need to work much harder to find strategic convergence on the preeminent problems that face the international system – MEPP, Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan, non-proliferation, the global economy, trade, climate change, etc.
- Let me describe what this means in practice and let me address first my own country.
- It means a continuation of the current efforts by the new American Administration to reach out for partners to deal with global problems, as well as a sustained US recognition that in today's world, unilateral behavior by any one nation is almost always a major mistake. The US should also hold in check its long-time compulsion to design the domestic political arrangements of other nations.
- It means an across the board improvement in US-Russia and EU-Russia relations and a farewell by Moscow to 19th century balance of power concepts about how best to ensure its security. It also means a hiatus in NATO's efforts to aggressively project its power and influence into areas in the former Soviet Union
- It means further steady progress in US-China relations and strategic reassurance to the rest of Asia in concrete ways by Beijing that China is indeed embarked on a peaceful rise. It means an upward trajectory in relations between China on the one hand and Japan and India on the other. And it means after the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty a much more active and effective EU role in the world which would surely be to the globe's benefit.
- Next, it requires the inclusion of the most important emerging nations -- China, India, Indonesia, Brazil, Egypt, South Africa – in real global decision making and not just group photos taken at international summit gatherings.
- It means reform of the UNSC, with the addition of a handful of new permanent members. It is truly bizarre that 60 years after WWII, that war's victors are the only permanent members of the Security Council.
- It means a systemic strengthening of the power and influence of international institutions – those with economic, financial, trade and security missions. The IMF, the World Bank and the regional ILI's are good places to begin.
- The G8 has run out of gas, except in its issuance of communiqués that few read and that produce no serious concerted action. There should be continued development of



the G-20, although it is unlikely because of its size ever to an effective decision making body. But please forget the concept of G-2 global management by the United States and China. First, Washington and Beijing have too little strategic agreement to make that possible. And even if they did, it is a bad idea. It would alarm America's allies in Asia and beyond, and its very exclusivity would have the opposite effect of the broader global decision making we should be looking for in the years ahead.

- As I have indicated earlier, it is difficult to think of a more important existing institution than the UN Security Council. So what about the Perm-5 Foreign Ministers meeting over a long weekend in a remote setting without all their handlers, bureaucratic briefing books and canned talking points to try to think together on what they might do together to improve global governance. Perhaps the World Policy Conference should sponsor such an intimate private meeting.

IV. Let me conclude with a few cautionary notes.

- For all the activities of non-state actors, nation states will continue to dominate the international system for the foreseeable future. So the effort to produce systemic improvements in global governance must begin with them – with governments and not with NGOs.
- In the absence of strategic convergence among the great powers, it will be next to impossible to make long-term progress in improving the performance of the international system. The great powers need to work much more closely together.
- Enhancement in the quality of the global governance in period ahead is likely at best to be slow. There will be no big breakthroughs, no fundamental epiphanies in which nations suddenly abandon their historical perspectives and long-time policy inclinations. That won't happen.
- Rather, this is work that needs to be done with great patience and quiet refined diplomacy in a collaborative way, day after day after day. This will be a marathon and not a sprint. There is in my view no place for dewy eyed dreamers in this crucial endeavor to improve the character and accomplishments of the global system.
- Friends, look at the current dire international situation that I have briefly described. Bad news piled upon bad news, nearly everywhere one looks.
- And, colleagues, it is entirely possible that things will be substantially worse a year from today.
- Perhaps you agree with me that there is no time to waste.

Thank you for your attention.