The Role of Diplomacy in World Affairs: Past Lessons and Future Outlook

November 2019
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DISCLAIMER

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Cover Design by Alex Taliesen
A look at the Table of Contents, and at Yonah Alexander’s Introduction, reveal the richness and scope of his work and of this volume.

At a time when our country possesses unrivalled military power, it is of paramount importance to appreciate its use: the ability to pursue our aims through diplomacy, because of our might, must be the first and foremost. This in turn, means attention to the means of diplomacy, patient negotiation, bilateral and multilateral, and its personnel, our eminently qualified diplomats and other public servants. In many respects, the U.S. runs the risk of faltering in those respects, and we must not.

This volume arms the reader, to contemplate these matters, and with the necessary resolve. I commend it to you, and again thank Professor Alexander.
INTRODUCTION

Professor Yonah Alexander

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As the United Nations General Assembly’s 74th annual session began in New York City, the world’s body is facing global challenges such as peace and security, human rights, and sustainable development goals. The key question then is whether inclusive multilateralism, both universally and regionally, can advance current and future political, economic and social concerns that are based on the rule of law and justice.

The President of this gathering, Professor Tijjani Muhammad-Bande of Nigeria, in his opening address on September 25, 2019, urged the nations leaders: “... the need to join efforts in finding solutions to the untold hardship from violent conflict, terrorism, natural disasters, drug and sex trafficking, illiteracy, and so on, which millions of people around the world suffer from.” He also highlighted the value of pooling resources “to urgently address major global challenges confronting humanity,” reminded the assembled representatives that their task is “to debate how best to achieve the world of our collective dream,” and concluded that “there is great work to be done; we have no room for either cynicism or apathy; we should strive together, to deliver for all.”1

In this connection it is therefore critical to focus continuous public attention on the role of diplomacy in world affairs. Indeed, the literature on the nature of diplomacy is infinite. Consider the following selected examples cited by theologians, historians, philosophers, and practitioners from antiquity to modernity:

• “He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than that taketh a city” (Proverbs, 16:32).
• “If they desire peace give them peace and trust in God” (The Koran, 8:61).
• “Diplomacy without arms is music without instruments” (Frederick the Great, 1712-1786).
• “When my profession fails, yours has to come to the rescue” (Charles Maurice de Talleyrand-Périgord, 1754-1838).
• “Influence is founded on seven specific diplomatic virtues, namely truthfulness, precision, calm, good temper, patience, modesty, and loyalty” (Sir Harold Nicolson 1886-1968).

• “In diplomacy, the more powerful the nation, the more amenable it should be to reason and negotiations. Such an attitude would make for peace and avoid war” (Carlos Peña Romulo, October 24, 1949).
• “All diplomacy is continuation of war by other means” (Zhou Enlai, 1954).

Regardless of these divergent views on diplomacy’s characteristics, the indisputable fact is that the role of this statecraft’s tool constitutes a permanent fixture of national and international life.

The purpose of this Report on “The Role of Diplomacy in World Affairs: Past Lessons and Future Outlook” is to present selected American and international perspectives that are drawn from three academic seminars in this area that were held during 2019 at the International Law Institute in Washington, DC. The main focus of this publication is to consider whether the United States can maintain its global diplomatic primacy and leadership for 2020 and beyond, as well as to discuss past, current, and future African security concerns ranging from climate change, to natural disasters, and to violent extremism.

Academic Context

It is against this context that the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies (IUCTS) and its affiliated academic institutions, such as State University of New York, Georgetown’s Center for Strategic and International Studies, the George Washington University, the International Law Institute, University of Virginia’s Center for National Security Law, and the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies, have conducted numerous activities focusing on issues related to terrorism and diplomacy.

For example, since 9/11, the IUCTS has organized dozens of seminars dealing with diplomacy and international cooperation efforts to combat terrorism. Among the topics discussed, mention should be made of the following: European, Middle Eastern, South Asia, Latin American, African, and U.S. counterterrorism strategies and strategic partnerships; North Atlantic Treaty Organization, European Union, Organization for Security Cooperation in Europe, and other regional organizations; terrorism captives, diplomacy and force; diplomatic security; Weapons of Mass Destruction; insurgencies; and peace processes.
Additionally, research and publications relevant to diplomacy include topics such as: *International Technical Assistance Experts: A Case Study of the UN Experience* (1966); *Terrorism in Europe* (1982 and republished in 2015); *Governamental Responses to Terrorism* (1986); *International Terrorism: Political and Legal Documents* (1992); *Combating Terrorism: Strategies of Ten Countries* (2002); *Counterterrorism Strategies: Successes and Failures of Six Nations* (2006); “Partnership for Peace Review” journal; and “Terrorism: An Electronic Journal and Knowledge Base.”

To be sure, the forgoing selected academic activities could not have been initiated or implemented without the outstanding contributions of numerous ambassadors, both American and foreign.

Selected American participants have included Ambassador L. Paul Bremer, III (Ambassador at Large for Counter Terrorism, 1986-89); Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton (Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State); Ambassador Dell Dailey (Coordinator for Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State); Ambassador Gerald M. Feierstein (Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs and Ambassador to Yemen); Ambassador James Jeffrey (Ambassador of the United States to Turkey and Iraq); Ambassador Teresita C. Schaffer (Ambassador of the United States to Sri Lanka); and Ambassador Kurt Volker (Ambassador of the United States to NATO).

Among the foreign diplomats, contributors included Ambassador Said Tayeb Jawad (Afghanistan); Ambassador Anime Kherbi (Algeria); Ambassador Dennis Richardson (Australia); Ambassador Michael Wilson (Canada); Ambassador Zhou Wenzhong (China); Ambassador Luis Diego Escalante (Costa Rica); Ambassador Friis Arne Petersen (Denmark); Ambassador Mohamed M. Tawfik (Egypt); Ambassador Pierre Vimont (France); Ambassador Temuri Yakobashvili (Georgia); Ambassador Klaus Scharioth (Germany); Ambassador Béla Szombati (Hungary); Ambassador Arun K. Singh (India); Ambassador Sudjadnan Parnohadiningrat (Indonesia); Ambassador Lukman Faily (Iraq); Ambassador Sallai Meridor (Israel); Ambassador Erlan Idrissov (Kazakhstan); Ambassador Vlora Citaku (Kosovo); Ambassador Mohammed Alhussainei Alsharif (League of Arab States); Ambassador Al Maamoun Baba Lamine Keita (Mali); Ambassador Arturo Sarukhan (Mexico); Ambassador Aziz Mekouar (Morocco); Ambassador Roy Ferguson (New Zealand); Ambassador Zango A. Abdu (Nigeria); Ambassador Husain Haqqani (Pakistan); Ambassador Joao de VALLera (Portugal); Ambassador Adrian Vierita (Romania); Ambassador Zac Nsenga (Rwanda); Ambassador Chan Heng Chee (Singapore); Ambassador Stanislav Vidovic (Slovenia); Ambassador Javier Ruperez (Spain); Ambassador Bernard A.B. Goonetilleke (Sri Lanka); Ambassador Cecilia Ruthstrom-Ruin (Sweden); and Ambassador Namik Tan (Turkey).
Two recent academic reports are notable. The first publication on “The Role of Diplomacy in Combating Terrorism: Selected U.S. Perspectives” was published in November 2017. The purpose of this report was to focus specifically on the role of diplomacy in combating terrorism relevant to experiences of the United States and their implications internationally. The key question is whether the U.S. and the international community is capable of crafting adequate responses to terrorism, diffusing expanding conflicts regionally and inter-regionally, engaging in constructive peace processes, and striking a delicate balance between security measures and democratic value systems.

Contributions to this report were made by the following diplomats: Ambassador Charles Ray (former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs and ambassador to Cambodia and Zimbabwe, and served in the United States Army for twenty years); Ambassador Jo Ellen Powell (former career member of the United States Foreign Service who served as Consul General in Frankfurt, Germany and ambassador to Mauritania); Ambassador Edward Marks (former U.S. Department of State Deputy Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism and ambassador to the Republics of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde); Ambassador Robert Hunter (former National Security Council Director of West European and Middle East Affairs and United States Ambassador to NATO; and currently, Senior Fellow at the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS); Ambassador Marcelle M. Wahba (former U.S. Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates; President of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington D.C.); Ambassador Theodore Kattouf (former U.S. Ambassador to Syria and the United Arab Emirates; President and CEO of AMIDEAST); Ambassador Bonnie D. Jenkins (U.S. Department of State’s Coordinator for Threat Reduction Programs in the Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation); and Ambassador Ronald Neumann (former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan; currently President, the American Academy of Diplomacy).

The second relevant publication is “The Role of Diplomacy in Combating Terrorism: Selected International Perspectives” that was released in March 2018. This report highlights statements from foreign diplomats on threats and challenges to official and their missions, analysis of statecraft, and “best practices” responses to radicalization and violence.

Contributing participants to this effort include the following foreign diplomats: Ambassador Mohammed Alhussaini Al Sharif (Chief Representative of the League of Arab States), Pavel Shidlovsky (Charge d’Affaires, Embassy of Belarus), Ambassador Pjer Simunovic (Embassy of the Republic of Croatia), Ambassador Hynek Kmonicek (Embassy of the Czech Republic), Ambassador Mohamed M. Tawfik (Embassy of Egypt), Ambassador Haris Lalacos (Embassy of Grece),
As mentioned previously, the current report on “the Role of Diplomacy in World Affairs: Past Lessons and Future Outlook” that was released in October 2019 draws from three Ambassadors’ Forums during 2019. The first event, held at the International Law Institute, discussed the perspectives of three former American diplomats focusing on whether U.S. diplomacy in the current uncertain political environment is in danger of falling into a state of disarray. The participants included Ambassador (Ret.) Ronald Neumann (formerly Deputy Assistant Secretary and U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, Bahrain, and Afghanistan, and currently, President of the American Academy of Diplomacy); Ambassador (Ret.) Charles Ray (formerly Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for POW/Missing Personnel Affairs and U.S. Ambassador to Cambodia and Zimbabwe, also previously served in the U.S. Army for twenty years); and Ambassador (Ret). John Negroponte (former Director of National Intelligence and Deputy Secretary of State).

The second Ambassadors’ Forum on “The Role of Diplomacy in the World’s Future” held on May 14, 2019 at the International Law Institute once again included both Ambassador (Ret.) Ronald Neumann and Ambassador (Ret.) Charles Ray as well as Ambassador (Ret.) Lino Gutierrez (former U.S. Ambassador to Argentina and Nicaragua as well as Acting Assistant Secretary of State of Western Hemisphere Affairs); and Ambassador Rosemary Banks (New Zealand Ambassador to the United States). The panel considered whether diplomacy in the face of expanding national, regional, and global challenges such as outbreak of endemic diseases and migration are shifting the role of traditional statecraft to broader missions. Also participating in the event’s discussion was Dr. Mir Sadat (Director of Defense Policy and Strategy at the U.S. National Security Council).

Finally, the third Ambassadors’ Forum dealt with the case study of “African Security Concerns: Challenges and Opportunities 2020 and Beyond.” The contributors to the discussion included four U.S. Diplomats: Ambassador (Ret.) Charles Ray; Ambassador (Ret.) Jimmy Kolker (former Assistant Secretary for Global Affairs in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso and Uganda); Ambassador (Ret.) Edward Marks (former U.S. Department of State Deputy Coordinator for Counter-Terrorism and Ambassador to the
Republics of Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde); and Ambassador (Ret.) Steven McGann (former U.S. Ambassador to the Republics of Filji, Nauru, Kiribati, the Kingdom of Tonga, and Tuvalu. Overseas assignments also included Zaire, South Africa, and Kenya). In addition, Honorable Onofiok Akpan Luke (Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee for the Nigerian National Assembly) delivered a message on behalf of the Rt. Honorable Idris Ahmed Wase (Deputy Speaker of the House, Nigerian National Assembly and Deputy Speaker of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Parliament). This discussion focused on African security lessons and future outlook.

The following selected highlights of the aforementioned three 2019 Ambassadors’ Forums are noteworthy regarding current and future challenges of American diplomacy as well as African perspectives on their security concerns.

*American Lessons on Diplomacy*

1. Replacing the lost senior talent from the Foreign Service.

2. Building or rebuilding relationships between foreign actors and diplomats.

3. Withdrawal from international agreements (e.g. TPP, Paris Climate Accords).

4. U.S. diplomacy is incoherent and must get back on the right path.

5. The U.S. is currently too unilateral.

6. Diplomats must possess a deep knowledge of the local conditions and language.

7. “Intensify” the use of all available tools of modern communications.

8. Encourage diplomats to educate themselves with more technical knowledge and specialized training areas like climate change, cyber security, AI, etc.

9. Diplomats must be flexible and be able to expand their reach not just in diplomacy, but in other areas such as human trafficking, cyber warfare, narco-trafficking, etc.
10. The American public must also understand how diplomats are beneficial not just to the government, but to the general public, as well.

Selected American Perspectives on African Security

1. Current U.S. policy in the countries in Africa appear to be focused primarily on extremist terrorism groups and in competition with China for influence.

2. Countering terrorism and managing the risks of carrying out that task.

3. Diplomacy is an inherently dangerous profession. Diplomats often go into hazardous places on behalf of the nation and its policy goals.

4. The problems of violence and extremism cannot be solved using military means alone; there must be a significant diplomatic component in each solution.

5. Employment of diplomacy involves security and political risks. In both, unfortunately, American diplomats are undermined in their ability to work effectively because of the rise of risk-aversion at the U.S. Department of State. The reluctance to put people in harm’s way in any circumstance has rendered us blind to what’s happening on the ground. Traditional military assets and responses are not well adapted to the security threats and conflicts Africa faces.

6. Diseases such as the Ebola outbreak.

7. The long-running struggle for control between the State and Defense Departments.

8. Tactical tends to override strategic concerns.

9. The general level of competence of African governments. With some notable exceptions, many African governments effectively govern only their capital city. Much of their countryside is essentially anarchic, in the hands of anti-government forces of varying kinds. And there are governments as well that employ terrorism as a regular tactic.
10. We must understand the needs and requirements of the countries that we want to work with in order to match the appropriate programs and resources with those requirements. You cannot have a successful diplomacy without resources and programs.

Selected African Lessons on Security Concerns

1. Requirements of security today includes embracing protections of communities and individuals from internal violence.

2. Peace must mean: economic development, social justice, environmental protection, democratization, disarmament and respect for human rights and the rule of law, absence of insecurity or threat, and improved standards for the quality of human life.

3. Current examples of insecurity included poverty, lack or absence of rule of law, weak governance and institutions, unemployment, climate change, corruption, conflict, etc.

4. Climate change and natural disasters have increased: flooding, drought, desertification, creating new refugee populations, and catalyzing internal conflict and strife.

5. Increased regional and subregional cooperation for adopting base practices to suit security concerns. The maintenance of insecurity and violence have become more complex and organic. Therefore, the need to update our security policies to focus on networking, cooperation amongst regional and subregional government and people.

6. Embracing youth potentials. Africa is a young continent with the median age at just 19 years. The opportunity of the youth population to become an important economic group for the region. It could further increase the risk of instability and violence if young people are deprived of quality education, employment, and a political voice. Promote education system fit for the population with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and opportunity.

7. Catalyzing rapid economic growth requires consideration of the needs of the cities.
8. Putting into place policies for inclusive growth, investment in education and health, and providing public services to the poorest would improve social cohesion and harmony in African societies and ensure the economic allure of Africa as an area of investment for regional as well as external partners.

9. Sustainable management of natural resources. They have been managed irresponsibly, which has led to environmental concerns and inequality.

10. Africa is a part of more holistic global security potential, which also has its challenges. Therefore, opportunities for addressing these concerns will not be complete unless there is a synergistic collaboration amongst global players to address them.

11. If we are going to address the problem of countering violent extremism, then we have to also address the growing problem of income inequality.

Finally, the distinguished contributors to the three Ambassadors’ Forums in 2019 have each extraordinarily provided most insightful observations and recommendations on “The Role of Diplomacy in World Affairs” as well as the cast study on "African Security Concerns: Challenges and Opportunities 2020 and Beyond.” We hope that this report will stimulate further study in advancing the architecture of global peace and security in the remainder of the 21st century.

Acknowledgements

Some acknowledgements are in order. Deep appreciation is due to Michael S. Swetnam (CEO and Chairman, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); General (Ret.) Alfred Gray (Twenty-ninth Commandant of the United States Marine Corps; Senior Fellow and Chairman of the Board of Regents, Potomac Institute for Policy Studies); Professor Don Wallace Jr. (Chairman, International Law Institute); Professor John Norton Moore (Director of the Center for National Security Law and the Center for Oceans Law and Policy, University of Virginia School of Law); and Professor Robert F. Turner (Distinguished Fellow and Associate Director, Center for National Security Law, University of Virginia School of Law) for their inspiration and continuing support of our academic work in the field of global security concerns.
Thanks are also due to the graduate and undergraduate participants in the internship program in 2019 at the Inter-University Center for Terrorism Studies at both the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies (ICTS) and the International Law Institute. The group included Ryan Maness (Virginia Tech), Elizabeth Liebel (Virginia Tech), Carolyne Cruz Soto (InterAmerican University of Puerto Rico), Daniel Durgavich (University of Virginia), Emily Einhorn (Skidmore College), Devan O’Toole (University of Michigan), Daniel Ruiz (University of Central Florida), Daniel Stump (Suffolk College), Jesse Berman (University of Virginia), Parker Fisher (Grove City College), Dante Moreno (George Washington University), and Ashley Rodriguez (University of California, Berkeley).
Yonah, thank you for the introduction and for the invitation. It is a particular pleasure to be here, not only with my friend Charlie Ray, but Ambassador Negroponte. I still remember the first time I met him. It was on a telephone when I had staggered back to my trailer in Iraq in Baghdad at about 11 o'clock at night. I was approaching the end of my short sojourn to help out Ambassador Bremmer, after which I was supposed to go back to my post in Bahrain. Ambassador Negroponte explains how wonderful an idea if I would stay for another year as the political-military councilor. It shows you his capacity as a diplomat because I did. But he was a great ambassador and I didn't regret it.

Let me push on quickly because our time is limited. I always enjoy sessions where they say “We're really here to hear your opinion” and then they fill up your entire time with the speakers so that you might get a maximum of two questions in. We’ll try to do better. I think in reflecting just very briefly on the state of American diplomacy, I think it’s important to talk about two different, although overlapping, things. One is diplomacy in terms of policy, and the other is the conduct of policy, or how you get things done, which is the real area of diplomatic practice. On diplomacy as policy, I would say that we are not very good right now. I have three basic criticisms: we are too unilateral, we have conceptual problems of what directions we are going in, and in some cases we are incoherent.

We are overwhelmingly bilateral now in all our relations. There is an argument for that. There is an argument that sometimes you get things by being tougher, by pushing on individuals or countries. It is not completely without intellectual foundation, but essentially it is a very short-range approach which relies heavily upon beating people with a stick or threatening to beat them. We are particularly keen on using U.S. unilateral instruments for things like sanctions. That has the debility over the long term that you build up resistance, which at some point in the future may come back to hit us. For example, the biggest questions go beyond our policy toward Iran, but to how we are using our control of the banking system to force our will by sanctions on countries that don't agree with us. This is deeply disliked by all of our major trading partners. They don't agree with our pulling out of the nuclear agreement in the first place. Now we are creating a situation in which there is an incentive to gradually begin to look for how to build other systems. How do you step out of the larger U.S. financial control and major influence in the post-WWII institutions?
You've already seen a little of that. The Chinese put forward their idea for a development bank in Asia. We didn't like it. We wanted everyone to stay with the Asia Development Bank, and the result was that all of our major European colleagues ignored us and joined the Chinese bank anyway. Now you have these talks about setting up another financial system to bypass the SWIFT system. It's not going to happen fast; it may not happen at all, but it is symptomatic of the larger institutional breakdown which comes with being on this very short-term focus.

We seem to have a conceptual problem in terms of priorities. A lot of diplomacy is not about getting your priorities right but managing multiple priorities at the same time. When we're trying, as the administration is now, to organize resistance pressure on Venezuela, it doesn't seem to be the smartest moment to be going after Mexico on trade issues and narcotics. We are having multiple feuds at the same time we want people to support us. That is a conceptual problem of how one organizes for effectiveness.

Additionally, we have momentary periods of complete incoherence. I was just talking to a colleague on something to do with Libya the other day. He told me that basically, a large portion of our bureaucracy which deals with Libya is trying to avoid answering the telephone because, ever since president Trump's call to General Haftar, they don't know what the policy is. You can have an argument about whether the policy is good or bad. You can have an argument about whether it makes sense to support the UN process and the coalition government and whether that policy really has any chance of success. You can have that discussion, but to the best of my knowledge, we have not. We've had a telephone call from President Trump to the general who opposes the government we've been supporting. No one knows what it said or what its purpose was or where it is going. We are now incoherent in terms of advancing any policy because we can't describe it to anyone or get anyone to share it. It would be helpful if the senior leaders of the State Department and the White House could describe it to those inside the bureaucracy so that they might consider how they might share it.

But despite all these things, I would say life is not hopeless. When you get to the internal mechanisms, there are some positives to be said. On the side of personnel and administration, Mr. Tillerson is gone. I count that as a very strong positive because the gentleman did more damage to the institutions of our diplomacy in one year than I would have believed anyone would do in such a short period of time. His hiring freeze, kept in place for a year, caused all kinds of systemic distortions. This is kind of nerdy stuff, but here is one example. Due to the hiring freeze, when people left a position you could not move someone from another position even if they were already a State Department employee to a position where you needed them more. A special exemption was
required and few were given. That policy was kept in place for a year during which people retired, people quit, and by the end there were all sorts of structural problems in the system. Then, even when the hiring freeze was lifted, the Congress didn’t give State enough money and positions to just fill all the empty positions. The hiring freeze is off but they can’t put back all the people. So, now you take State has to take the money they have and the positions they are given and they try to allocate those across 50 odd bureaus and fill the priority positions. That is the kind of systemic problem that I am talking about, which is hard to unwind.

By the way, the government shutdown made it worse. For instance, at the Foreign Service Institute, where they have a lot of contractors, they lost a lot. A certain number of them decided, “I am going to go work for Defense where they can give me a paycheck,” and they didn’t go back. But that is a problem that can be dealt with. The hiring freeze is over, recruitment is beginning to pick up, and those are good signs.

So this is not hopeless, it’s just difficult. I would say that is true of policy too, and I will close on the note of one story. I remember that when I was the Deputy Chief of Mission in Abu Dhabi in 1987, shortly after I arrived, Washington made the decision to reflag Kuwaiti oil tankers and would escort them in the Persian Gulf notwithstanding the Irani desire to attack them. I remember when my ambassador and I called on the acting Foreign Minister in Abu Dhabi to tell him we were going to begin the escort operation the following day. This was a difficult period. We had recently withdrawn the troops from Lebanon after the embassy bombings. And we had responded to democratic protests in the Philippines and turned away from President Marcos; a decision that, Arab Leaders saw as abandoning a friend. These actions raised many questions about whether the U.S. could be counted on. I remember the discussion when we made called on the Foreign Minister. He was very polite to us, as we told him that: “we are going to start the escort operation tomorrow.” But it was very clear that he was in great doubt about how long we were going to be able to carry this out, and how long we were going to be able to show the will to maintain this. Well, we did keep it up. We had a small, undeclared war with Iran, and later the war with Iraq after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Then, U.S. prestige came way back up again.

I am just reflecting on the Arab world, not the broader world, but I tell that story just to end on a little more uplifting note. Just because you are down now doesn’t mean you stay down forever. And in fact, I would say that at the end of the Carter presidency, you had something similar. You had some real diplomatic successes in the Carter presidency with Panama, but overall in the Middle East there was a sense fairly broadly that the United States was unreliable and weak. Well, all it
took was the election of Ronald Raegan to change signals. Whether you liked the signals or not, is not the point. The point is that you can have one perception and you can move it.

That said, I do worry that if the perception of our unreliability grows among our allies, that it may not go away completely, even if we change policy later. I think we've now created a doubt that U.S. policy lines, which were pretty much stable for 70 years, have been brought into doubt. Hence, even if we change back, it begs the question of whether we are dependable in the long run. That is a lingering doubt that we will have to deal with. But I just close on this note: we have been down this road before, and we've come back up so it is not necessarily impossible. That is the most positive I can be.
Thank you Yonah, thank you for having me. I guess we do have a lot of ambassadors. It reminds me when I first joined the Foreign Service, to make me understand the true importance of diplomacy, a colleague sent me the page he tore out of a magazine. It was a page for a white owl cigar called diplomats, and it said you could get two for a quarter at your cigar store.

That has helped me keep to a certain balance since then. When I was asked to do this and I got around to looking at the program, it talked particularly about reflections based on our experience, which maybe was a caveat not to pontificate about things we haven’t experienced. In any event I’m going to follow those instructions or guidance. I’m not particularly looking at a whole range of issues from disease to cybercrime to things that other people are working on and I’m staying in the lane of my own experience.

My own experience is somewhat unusually tilted to conflict having served in Algeria during a very bloody period, in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in Yemen in a more peaceful period (even though we still had threats of assassination) and Bahrain, when we had mobs storming the embassy occasionally. So, it’s not quite the traditional experience. I would note one or two caveats. One is that I think diplomacy has long been adding to its kitbag besides traditional statecraft; that’s hardly a new change. But I would also note, less people get too carried away with what’s new, that we still have almost all the old responsibilities. We have turned in our electric quill sharpeners, but it’s very difficult beyond that to think what it is that the 19th century diplomat was responsible for, for which a 21st century diplomat is not also responsible.

Now there is a great deal for which 21st century diplomats are responsible for in addition to those 19th century duties. Lest one get too caught up in focusing on the new, it’s useful to remember how much the old needs to be done as well. Further, it is necessary in reflecting on my own experience to remember that there is always a danger in lessons learned that the diplomats and politicians as much as the generals may fight the last war. You cannot always trust the last lesson to be the right lesson. Nonetheless, since I have watched a lot of interventions over my period, in diplomacy and starting from experience of infantry in Vietnam, I would say my first lesson is that we are not done with war and we are not done with interventions. It is the mood of the country right now not to want to do these sorts of things and there is a tendency to say never again, which means for many that the answer of “how do we prepare to do things better?” is “no we won’t do it.” This is a profoundly
ahistorical view, as every administration since Truman’s has had foreign interventions. Since WWII, that an American administration has not had a foreign intervention. So, the idea that we are going to avoid it, as desirable as that might be, is misplaced. At the least it demands that history stop.

So, what are the lessons for diplomacy assuming you take that as a starting point? One is that, while you can make war without diplomats, you can’t make the peace. We have tried that in Iraq, which is a particular example, but let me give you two others.

We need allies even in war, which is a primary diplomatic task. You can threaten but it’s a lot cheaper not to fight which means diplomacy again is the essential tool of war prevention. Now Iraq is in many ways a poster child for how to mess up by making a war without making diplomacy. There was no provision for the aftermath. The planning done in the State Department, of varying quality was simply brushed aside and not utilized. Intellectually, it wasn’t really in the military lexicon, and I wish I had a dollar for every military briefing slide I’ve seen which has 4 phases from the preparation that goes up through phase 3, which is war and phase 4, which is afterwards and never detailed how that aftermath was to be done. In those days, the presumption was that diplomats would solve it. That has changed enormously. I don’t know any current senior officers who have that view anymore. They have quite gotten beyond it, but I don’t know that our politicians have. That’s not only a dig at this administration, because you know one feature of American politics is that in the decades since WWII we have only elected three individuals who came to office with any real knowledge of foreign affairs before they arrived in the presidency. That was Eisenhower, Nixon, and the first Bush. No other president had any real experience with foreign policy before they came to office, so we are not sure what will be known.

There was very little diplomacy in the run up to the Iraq war and one of the things you see is a war of the willing can lose support much faster than a war of allies. And all that tells you is that diplomacy remains critical. Interestingly enough, when ISIS broke out with a new insurgency in Iraq, we needed a lot of diplomacy to support the fighting. The news reports were all about sending troops and fighting the Islamic State. One of the things we do in my day job at the American Academy of Diplomacy is a number of podcasts. One is called the General and the Ambassador, and there are actually three different ones that deal with the phases of the Iraq War. If anyone wants to get deeply into how diplomacy and military work together, there is one of General Petraeus with Ambassador Crocker and another one featuring Ambassador Jeffrey with General Lloyd Austin who was CENTCOM commander at the time. Sometimes I think that one could have been retitled “together how we fought Washington and ISIS.” There is a lot about policy in it. And there is one that just went up a few weeks ago with the Ambassador Stu Jones and General McFarland and
that goes through an enormous number of political issues which went through how they worked together and how they could talk to certain Iraqi militia units and other units were off limits because of their terrorist affiliation and how the diplomacy had to maneuver with the Prime Minister to make possible many of our military arrangements.

I think there is a misconception in the minds of many Americans that you just send troops into a country and they go fight. In fact, that kind of fighting is enormously political and there is an enormous role for diplomacy in it. I think this is one of the lessons one can carry away.

One can look at two other experiences, and I won't go into detail because I think these things are pretty well known. Two contrasting wars and experiences are the First Gulf War and Afghanistan. In the First Gulf War, you needed an enormous amount of diplomacy in order to bring together a coalition, and it was also the last war America fought at a profit. We had a lot of allies who could contribute, and we actually had a budget surplus by the end of the war. The coalition put together NATO troops, allied troops, Syrian troops, and Egyptian troops, side by side with American troops, to launch the liberation of Iraq. It was a stupendous feat of diplomacy, and one that we have not equaled since, but it shows the difference in organizing.

Then in Afghanistan, one of the things I think is so interesting is that when we finally decided we needed allies, which was not at the beginning, NATO really joined us, and NATO has stayed vested. We are 18 years in and we have not had nearly as much donor fatigue as one might have expected to have by this point in the war. It's very interesting that in the lead up to the Trump Administration's major decision last year about staying in Afghanistan, you had countries like Germany and Italy pushing us to remain involved in Afghanistan because they understood the importance of it and were prepared to keep their own troops there. But they couldn't do it without us being there as well. So, when you have real alliances and real friends, you have more support. All those are requirements of diplomacy which I believe will continue to be requirements of diplomacy as we go forward in the world. There are a lot of other kinds of interventions that I haven't been so much involved with, such as those involving UN peace keeping, and I'll leave that for others to reflect on.

The conflicts of the kinds I've experienced don't have easy answers. We are still in Afghanistan, and I would say that, while diplomacy cannot substitute for a good policy, it can make a bad policy work much better. A bad policy without diplomacy will be doubly bad, and this comes back to the enduring question of what the future looks like. Based on my experience, there will be absolutely no shortage of the need for diplomacy, and employment is guaranteed. There really are no lanes. There are no modern examples in which military and diplomacy are separate. They constantly affect each other, and you can't intelligently or responsibly use one tool without the other.
I remember General Zinni who put this in a very simple way. He said, if I remember correctly, “My uncle Guido was a plumber, and if you asked him if you need plyers or a screwdriver more, he would have thought you were crazy.” That stuck in my mind as a pretty good example of the proper answer to that question of whether one needs troops or diplomacy more. There are no other lanes, and they are going to be bound together. So, we are going to need diplomacy. Since the subject is not well understood, I would submit that there is a huge need to educate the public. Thank you.
I'll stand because if I sit, I might put myself to sleep. Following on what Ron said, I will try to be very brief so that you can hear from people that really know what they are talking about. I would sort of like to address something he said about the short-term view of the world that we sometimes have. A saying my grandmother taught me when I was a kid is “when you can’t see beyond the end of your nose, you are always going to be banging your nose into something.” I throw that out because that sort of fits into what I have to say about the outlook for American diplomacy in 2020 and beyond.

You know, first of all, the loss of such an unusually large number of senior career American diplomats from government because of their disagreements with the policies of the current administration, the failure to fill many of our senior positions or to appoint ambassadors in a timely manner. All of these have received a certain amount of media coverage, albeit brief. But like so many things related to diplomacy, they’ve largely faded from the public view. And missing from this conversation, when the media was paying attention, were issues that were of equal, if not greater, importance. What are the long-term aspects and impacts of the current diplomatic and foreign policy disarray? What are the consequences, long and medium term, of such a loss of experience and expertise? In short, what is the outlook for the future conduct of American diplomacy? What is the landscape likely to look like to our diplomats in 2020 and beyond?

Now, may I venture to make a prediction? I learned when I was Ambassador to Cambodia never to make a prediction. A couple of my predecessors had predicted King Sihanouk's demise and been wrong. I made a mistake early in my tour when he had a little flu to say, “He's probably on his last legs.” He recovered and, when I left Cambodia three years later, hosted an all-night dinner for me and my wife which started at 7 o'clock and didn't end until 5 o'clock the next morning, so I learned not to make predictions. He danced, and he sang about 20 songs, and he danced about five times with my wife.

What I learned from all this is that making predictions is a risky endeavor, especially when you are dealing with the actions of people who are nature’s most unreliable creatures. So, I guess instead of making a prediction, what I would like to do is offer you some possible scenarios about what the conduct of diplomacy might be like in 2020 and beyond.
First, the big picture. As a nation, we are going to be facing a tremendous challenge; mending fences, rebuilding alliances, and restoring the trust our allies, such as NATO and the democracies of Europe, have in us. We will have to work hard to reassure these nations that we have slighted in so many ways, such as neglecting to appoint ambassadors, that they actually do matter to us. We are going to have to reset the dialogue to let other countries know that “America First” does not mean “America Only and the rest of the world be damned.” We’ll have to restore our concern as a nation for the values of human rights and respect for the rule of law and put them back where they belong as important pillars of our foreign policy. And this, just off the top of my head, is a preliminary list. But achieving this alone, as Ron has mentioned, could take years, and actually, I sound a bit pessimistic when I say it, but I think probably will take decades. Destroying a reputation is like demolishing a building: it can be achieved in a moment, but rebuilding it takes a lot of time and effort. That’s the big picture. As incomplete as that picture is, it is nonetheless daunting.

But along with the big picture, there are smaller issues that have not generated much, if any, media coverage or public discussion. Nevertheless, I think they are in fact quite consequential. Sort of like a burr under your saddle, it’s small and you don’t notice it, but your horse does, and after he’s noticed it for a while, so will you. These issues, small as they are, can cause problems because they are obstacles to achieving the big picture that I mentioned if left unaddressed. And, they can continue to negatively impact our ability to conduct effective diplomacy for many years to come.

Let’s take a look at just one of these: the loss of so much expertise and senior talent from our foreign service. As we are working to rebuild alliances, to restore trust, to reclaim American preeminence in the world, education, dedication, and competence, which all our diplomats have in abundance, will not be enough. These alone cannot replace the in-depth knowledge of systems, institutions, people, and places that senior diplomats have built up over decades of service, and which is now lost to us. Relationships built up over decades cannot be re-established overnight. The best educated and most energetic young diplomats will be navigating in unfamiliar waters without seasoned veterans to guide them. They will find themselves in an unmentored learning mode as they try to reinvent the wheel, lacking the contacts and relationships that were lost due to the untimely departure of so many senior officials. They’ll be starting at square one, and folks, square one is not where it used to be. It’s been pushed back. We are going to be building our diplomatic relationships in some cases from scratch. This takes time, and for some of these issues, such as dealing with the impact of climate change, I fear that we don’t have a lot of time to do something effective about it.
Fractured relationships, some of which took decades to build, will have to be reconstructed brick by brick. Trust will have to be restored slowly and patiently, and these are important. These relationships and this trust are the cornerstones of effective diplomacy. If you cannot be trusted, you cannot be an effective diplomat. You do not have to be liked, and in fact, you can be soundly disliked. But if your adversary trusts you, you have the basis of an effective relationship. Now I admit I have just painted a gloomy picture, but I remain a cautious optimist. I don’t believe that any of these obstacles are insurmountable, and that we as a nation will not be up to the task. Some of the threats we face in the future, such as climate change, are existential, so frankly we have no choice but to be up to the task. I think we can succeed because we cannot afford not to succeed. Thank you.
Current U.S. policy vis a vis the countries in Africa, from my outsider’s view, appears to be focused primarily on competition with China for influence, and on countering extremist and terrorist groups. While these objectives might not be precisely aligned with the policy of many, if not most, of the nations of Africa, as the kids in my old Baltimore neighborhood used to say, “it is what it is.”

It’s not my objective to discuss the wisdom or appropriateness of the policy. Policy is decided by our politically elected leadership, hopefully after taking into account information from practitioners in the field, and it’s the task of those practitioners to implement that policy in the most effective manner possible.

For now, I would like to focus on only one of these policies: countering terrorism, and managing the risks associated with that task. The U.S.–China competition in Africa, worthy of an extended discussion, has its own risks, but those risks are of a different nature.

Let me begin by saying that, despite how it's portrayed in popular media, diplomacy is an inherently dangerous profession. Like soldiers, diplomats often go into hazardous places on behalf of the nations and its policy goals. But unlike soldiers, diplomats go unarmed, and when they make the ultimate sacrifice, are viewed, not as heroes, but as victims who are soon forgotten by the next news cycle.

Unfortunately, though, the problems of violent extremism and terrorism cannot be solved using military means alone. There is, there must be, a significant diplomatic component to any solution.

But employment of diplomacy also involved significant risk, both security and political. And in both, unfortunately, American diplomats are in the words of four-time ambassador and former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, Anne Woods Patterson, in the September issue of The Foreign Service Journal, “undermined in their ability to work effectively because of the rise of risk aversion at the U.S. Department of State.” The reluctance to put people in harm’s way under any circumstances has rendered us blind in most cases to what’s happening on the ground.

When I was the number two officer in our Consulate General in Chiang Mai, Thailand, we heard rumors of clashes between the two major drug smuggling groups in the Golden Triangle. Some foreign tourists reported that stray rounds from the fighting had struck some of the restaurants and night spots on the border with Burma. A dangerous situation like this usually required what was called at the time a Travel Warning, cautioning people to avoid travel to the area. But doing so
based on unverified hearsay could have damaged our relations with our host country, Thailand, and could have had a damaging impact on that country’s tourism industry.

With the approval of the consul general and the embassy, I traveled to Mae Sot, a town in Northern Thailand’s Tak Province. I visited many of the establishments along the border, and learned that two of them had actually been struck by stray rounds; the bullet holes were still in the walls. But it had happened over a month before my visit, and had been quiet since then.

As a result of my trip, we were able to issue a detailed Travel Advisory, a step below a warning, which is now called a Consular Information Sheet, or something of that nature. In the advisory we described the potentially dangerous areas of the town, rather than advising people not to travel to Mae Sot, much to the delight of the Thai and the thousands of tourists who visit Northern Thailand each year.

This was but one of several forays I made to potentially risky areas of Northern Thailand during my assignment, but I can’t imagine an American diplomat today being allowed to do the same.

I realize that in areas where terrorists are active, the danger is far greater than those I faced in Thailand, but if we’re to be knowledgeable of local conditions and continue to be able to influence events, even in these areas, a certain level of risk must be accepted.

When I was deputy chief of mission in Sierra Leone from 1993 to 1996, large parts of the country were under the control of Foday Sankoh’s rebel force, while at the same time, the country was gearing up for elections to replace the military junta that had taken power in 1992. It was important that the Sierra Leonean military remain uninvolved in the country’s political process, and, through my connections with the young military men in the junta, I had convinced them of this. The junta head asked if I’d be willing to give that message to the battalion and brigade commanders and their staffs. The problem with that was that all but two of the units they wanted me to talk to were in areas where they were in direct, and often daily contact with the rebels, and involved in fighting as bloody and vicious as anything I’d seen in Vietnam during my two tours there. I felt, though, that this was important enough to justify taking calculated risks, and convinced the ambassador, John Hirsch, to approve my trip.

Over a three-day period, I flew from Freetown each day in an old Russian helicopter with a South African mercenary pilot, visiting two units per day. We frequently flew over rebel-held territory, and sometimes had fresh bullet marks on the fuselage to prove it. Each day I spent a half day with each unit, and the mere fact that someone from the American embassy cared enough to visit them ensured me a royal welcome.
Sierra Leone had their elections with only minor and easily-stemmed military misbehavior. In addition, we had a more detailed and accurate picture of what was happening in the war, the morale and efficiency (or lack thereof) of the Sierra Leone armed forces, and more respect from and influence over all parties in Sierra Leone – except, perhaps, the rebels.

This action alone was not the reason for the success of the elections, but subsequent events in the country after my departure at the end of my tour demonstrated the importance of being willing to go “where the action is,” and take calculated, managed risks in furthering American policy goals.

Diplomats buttoned up in a fortress-like embassy, with limited or no contact with the people of a country, are at best only marginally effective, and at worst, a total waste of talent, time, and money.

Wars aren’t won by diplomacy, but peace cannot be achieved without it. Terrorists can be killed by military force, but addressing the root causes of terrorism requires more than firepower. It requires knowledge of the environment that generated the extremist cause, and this is beyond the skill set of military organizations, or by diplomats confined to their fortified offices.

Doing this, though, requires taking risks. Not mindless risks. Managed risks. The benefits of a task must be carefully weighed against the associated risks, and in a way sought to accomplish the task while mitigating as much of the risk as possible.

The only way we avoid risk in a country is by staying out of that country. But in the words of Ambassador Patterson, “we have to be there.”
Ambassador (Ret.) John Negroponte

Former Director of National Intelligence and Deputy Director of State

Thanks very much to the International Law Institute for bringing us together. It’s a timely topic obviously, given what’s happened over the last couple of years. I’d also just like to note as, I don’t know if it is a coincidence or not, that all four of us served in Vietnam, which I think is interesting. And I think as a consequence, certainly speaking for myself, I am sure the others… I don’t think anyone’s going to violently disagree with me, we learned a lot about civilian-military cooperation during that effort.

There were some ambassadors that happened not have been career people, there was Henry Cabot Lodge, he served there twice while I was in Vietnam. There was Maxwell Taylor, who was Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and there was Ellsworth Bunker, who for many of us was perhaps the ultimate role model of how to be a United States Ambassador. These are all people who had come to their positions from other walks of life, although they had had ample experience in the international sphere. Lodge, of course, had been the permanent representative to the United Nations for eight years under Dwight D. Eisenhower. So anyways, it is an interesting coincidence, and for me, service in Vietnam was kind of a defining experience in my diplomatic career. It’s where I learned tradecraft, where I learned about political reporting. I was a provincial reporter, I was assigned to cover 7 of the 42 provinces in South Vietnam and assigned to go out one week and come back the next to gather political, economic, and security information. We didn’t have the Internet or anything else, so we had to come back and write up our reports on these yellow pads of paper. The secretaries transcribed them into telegram forms, and then the telegram form was brought to the code clerk and he transcribed it onto a tape that was then put in a machine and transmitted in classified form back to Washington.

That was how it worked in those days, so we lived in a very different time. I don’t think I ever made a phone call, an international phone call, from Saigon in my almost four years serving there just to tell you of one slight difference in the way we operated. It was considered extraordinary, it was almost unheard of unless there was a family emergency or something. You had to go down to the Post, Telephone and Telegraph (PTT) office of Saigon to book a phone call back then to the United States. So anyway times have changed, but I don’t think the tradecraft, the essence of it, has changed that much. I think that knowing the terrain, language and area expertise, those kinds of attributes which were useful then are equally important today. In some respects, they are almost more important because fewer and fewer people try to actually learn about reality. Everything is about virtuality and virtual reality so that people who, my way of thinking, actually have that field
experience have actually touched, felt and heard real people and real situations have a tremendous advantage in terms of understanding the reality in which we live and operate.

So I think I partially, maybe I would meet you halfway I think on your critique, Ambassador Ray. I don't think it is necessarily quite as dismal as you painted it, but I think you redeemed your message in a way by saying that in the future there are still great possibilities. And I would also agree with what Ron said that Mr. Tillerson just didn't understand the reality in which he was operating, and so for him, it was a matter of surrounding himself with a bunch of briefing books. I think he hired Mackenzie or someone to study the Department. Then he closeted himself in his office and read those papers. Meanwhile, there were dozens of people more than willing to brief him on any issue that he wanted to know about. The reservoir of expertise in this government, State Department included, is just so enormous, and the capacity of the Secretary of State to mobilize that expertise is almost unlimited. He or she can get pretty much any information they want, meet any expert they wish to, and so there was a real opportunity cost in terms of his tenure.

To make it worse, for some reason, he ended up supporting efforts to downsize the Foreign Service, somewhat in keeping with the notion that it was part of the deep state. The thinking was that one way we can really save ourselves from the deep state would be to cut annual recruitment of new Foreign Service officers to way below the attrition rate. The attrition is 400-500 people a year, from the Foreign Service ranks. So Mr. Tillerson thought we would cut it back to 100 the first year, recruiting 100 new officers. Thankfully when Mr. Pompeo came into office, with a broader background in government service, whether it was military or Congress or the CIA. He restored our normal recruitment levels, which is what we are at now in the Foreign Service somewhere around 400-500 people a year, which is about right. In terms of giving the personnel system hope and a sense of optimism, I think he is right. He uses a phrase that is a bit unusual, “give them back their swagger,” well, he has restored a bit of swagger to the Foreign Service, and that is good.

I would certainly agree with the comments that have been made about substance versus style. That is one of the reasons why it is hard to evaluate the diplomacy, the foreign policy of this administration. The style leaves much to be desired, and I think that error of style and tone and attitude can sometimes cost you big time at the margins and lose your important friends and influencers.

On substance, some of the issues that are so troublesome at the beginning may now look little bit less bad. For example, compare what Mr. Trump said about alliances during the campaign, and about how they were irrelevant, and how Japan might as well go and get itself nuclear weapons, and ditto with South Korea (the implication being they couldn't necessarily count on us). Those were all really very unfortunate comments, but I think he has gone a certain way towards restoring a modicum of confidence in America's commitment to its alliances. This has not been without hiccups along
the way, but you know we have deployed troops to the Baltic countries, we have reaffirmed Article V of NATO, and we have largely restored relations with Japan and South Korea. So it’s again the substance versus style. But there can be long term consequences to the things that we say, even if later on we show that we didn’t really mean them.

The last point I would make, and Ron hit this right at the beginning about bilateral versus multilateral diplomacy. I think we are not as good on the multilateral front as we are on the bilateral. I would just cite what I consider to be the two most significant errors that the President made, and he made them literally on the first day in office. One was to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) leaving us devoid of an economic strategy for that critical part of the world, and handing a gift to the People’s Republic of China on a silver platter. The other was withdrawing from the Paris Climate Accords, which I think was extremely unfortunate because it is one of the areas which most lends itself to international cooperation. We had some examples only a few months before, the summer of 2016, when President Obama met President Hu of China, and they reached some understandings about what to do about global climate issues.

We might come back to the Paris Climate Agreement one of these days, whether it will be in this administration or not I don’t know, I think that was a very important initiative. It is not clear what’s going to happen to TPP, but our withdrawal remains a serious problem.
Good morning! Ambassador Ron Neumann gave you the 30,000-foot view of our profession, and I'll try to give you a more personal one from the ground about my own experiences. This comes from my 29 years in the Department of State, service in seven different countries, working for six presidents, 11 or 13 Secretaries of States depending on whom you count, and a Secretary of Commerce.

During the 1992 presidential campaign, businessman/candidate Ross Perot said that embassies were a thing of the past: they had gone the way of the sailing ship, and if he were elected he would move to do away with them. Well, how would you communicate with world leaders, someone asked? Perot replied that he would do so by this new invention called email. All communication would be electronic, and there would be no need for embassies. Thankfully for us career diplomats, he was not elected, and I had a job for the next 15 years or so before I retired from government service. But, in fact, Ross Perot was wrong: you can never really know an opponent from afar. The State Department provides a service and a skill that no other agency can, and that is knowledge of foreign countries.

During the Clinton administration, then-Secretary of State Warren Christopher announced that he would undertake a reform of the State Department. Christopher was not the first, nor would he be the last, Secretary of State to attempt to bring change to State – in fact there was an effort to do so under this administration. But Christopher asked some of us – I was drafted to serve in this effort – to take a look from the ground up and to make recommendations on how to make the State Department more effective. We did a deep dive in trying to understand what was the Department of State's contribution to United States foreign policy? Where was our value added? Was it cooperating with our military or law enforcement? Was it in helping American citizens overseas or issuing visas? Fighting narcotrafficking? All of these tasks are important, but we found that what the State Department does that other agencies can't is to provide expert knowledge of foreign countries. Nobody else can tell you that, if you go to in Buenos Aires or Mexico City and you schedule a meeting, and your interlocutor is 30 minutes late, it's not that he's disrespecting you, and you should not take offense. Rather, it's called “hora Latina,” or a common practice in societies that are not as time-driven as our own. Or, if one wants to make a deal in the Middle East, methods and practices that work in the U.S., such as getting to the point and defining the bottom line, will be considered impolite, turn off your counterpart and will not work. No, first you have to ask “How are the children? What a sandstorm we had! And how about them Yankees (or better
yet, the World Cup)? After serving overseas in foreign countries for many years, Foreign Service officers know how best to achieve U.S. objectives in a foreign environment.

So, the State Department usually understands what will or will not work overseas. Unfortunately, at times in inter-agency meetings in Washington, State Department officers have developed a reputation of being the naysayers. It falls to the State Department representatives to tell their often enthusiastic colleagues from other agencies why many of their ideas will not work. This leads folks in the National Security Council or the military to at times get frustrated and say that the State Department officers aren’t with the program, or are not loyal to the president. But there have been countless times where the State Department has played a vital role in helping to avoid U.S. foreign policy missteps or embarrassment.

Let me give you just a few instances from my career of how the State Department knowledge of countries can provide key contributions to the U.S. effort. When I was a junior officer in the Dominican Republic, which is a country where we intervened militarily in 1965, the country was having a critical election. The Dominican president, who was pro-U.S., had been reelected three times and everybody assumed he would be reelected again. Before the election, I was given the assignment to go to the eastern part of the country to report on how the campaign was going. Because I was born in Cuba, I had no problem blending into the Dominican Republic: the culture was very similar, and the language was perfectly understood by me. I did a tour of the eastern part of the island talking to mayors, political leaders, businessmen, and others, and wrote a report saying that I thought the opposition was going to emerge triumphant in the next election in the eastern part of the country.

Well, the Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission (DCM), or number two, who was a 30-year veteran, read my report and essentially tossed it in the trash can, probably concluding that I was only an inexperienced first tour officer who did not know what I was talking about. Well, the opposition did win the election, and then some folks remembered the guy who wrote that report saying the opposition would win. (I did learn subsequently never to predict anything as a diplomat because no one will remember if you are right, and everyone will blame you if you are wrong.) But, by a diplomat who understood the language and the country going out in the countryside talking to people, and writing a report, you alert Washington to the fact that there may soon be a new government, which might require a new approach. I think that’s value added to the Department of State and for U.S. foreign policy.

When I was in Haiti, and this was a case where foreign policy intersects with domestic politics, we had what we called a boat crisis, as many Haitians started taking to the seas in record numbers and landing on Florida’s shores. Naturally, Florida authorities were yelling at Washington saying
“why can't you stop this,” and this exodus, of course, unleashed a number of other players like human rights activists who urged the U.S. to take these people in because they were fleeing a dictatorship where they were being oppressed. In contrast, local officials were urging us to send them back because we simply couldn’t take them in. That put the Reagan Administration in a big quandary.

After negotiating with the Haitian government, it became clear that Haiti had no interest in preventing the boat people from leaving the island. Haiti was the poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, so this mass exodus meant fewer mouths to feed. However, we were able to negotiate an agreement with the Haitian government that allowed the U.S. to return Haitian boat people to Haiti. At that time the U.S. Coast Guard had 17 cutters off Haiti and were ready to intercept migrants at sea. Under the diplomatic agreement signed with the Haitian government, U.S. immigration officials would interview the migrants who were intercepted at sea, find out if any had valid claims for political asylum, and bring the ones who did not back to Haiti. To satisfy human rights advocates, we would send Embassy officers to interview them in their homes in the countryside to make sure they were not being persecuted by the authorities for attempting to flee the country. So, without a diplomatic corps that was willing to look at all these aspects, to negotiate with this government of Haitian President Jean-Claude Duvalier, president for life, we were able to get to a win-win situation where we could satisfy human rights activists, Florida authorities, and the Haitian government all at once. This is something that you cannot do by gunboat diplomacy alone. You need people who know the country and who know what can be accomplished to get to a win-win for both countries.

I was also deployed to Grenada in 1983 shortly after United States military forces came in to save over 1,000 U.S. medical students during an attempted coup. I was given the task of negotiating with the Cuban diplomats who were still on the island and to help negotiate the return of the hundreds of Cuban construction workers/military reservists who were hiding out at the Russian Embassy and other places. In this case, my having been born in Cuba, and my knowledge of the language, history, and culture of that country, allowed me to establish clear lines of communication that facilitated coming to a solution. I delivered a very clear message to the Cuban authorities to let them know what the United States was prepared to do to ensure their departure from the island. I have to say that it’s easy to do diplomacy with the U.S. 82nd airborne behind you. Nevertheless, we worked out a compromise where the Cuban diplomats would agree to leave on U.S. military aircraft after being searched. Although at first they publicly refused to have their diplomats searched by U.S. troops, their options were limited and we both knew it. So, we had to engage in a little bit of guerilla theater, in that we would bring in trucks to transport them and their luggage, and they would make a speech saying, “No, we will never allow anyone to bodily search us.” So our trucks would leave, and then return the next day and we would search them.
The knowledge of how to know and deal with what the other party expects, I think, is something that a diplomat who knows a country and knows a language can do quite successfully. I will relate a couple more experiences in my career. When I was the U.S. ambassador to Nicaragua, we had Hurricane Mitch, which was the worst disaster in Central American history. It was a hurricane that stayed put rather than moving quickly, as most do. Hurricane Mitch stayed on top of Central America, and there was more rain in a short period of time than there had been in history. The hurricane washed away much of the infrastructure and killed thousands of people, particularly in Honduras and Nicaragua. Faced with this disaster, I requested help for disaster relief in the country. I called General Wilhelm, who was the SOUTHCOM combatant commander, to request his help. Although SOUTHCOM had its hands full with help to other countries, we were able to persuade them to send an Army construction team that would come in with U.S. troops to help rebuild schools, roads, and bridges.

This would seem to have been a win-win situation for Nicaragua and the U.S., but Nicaragua has a history of U.S. interventions and some anti-Americanism. The Sandinista opposition in Nicaragua was very anti-American, and was then led by the current president, Daniel Ortega, who is not a friend of the United States. The opposition mounted a propaganda campaign that claimed that the U.S. troops were the same Marines who invaded Nicaragua at the beginning of the 20th century, in the days of “Chesty” Puller when the Marines were chasing the rebel leader Sandino. Ortega claimed that the Marines were coming back and would bring an AIDS epidemic to the population. He also said our troops were going to map out targets to bomb later. This is the time when the U.S. was engaged in a bombing campaign against Milosevic in Serbia by the Apache helicopters. How could we counter such lies and propaganda?

To counter the opposition’s falsehoods, we turned to one of the weapons in our toolkit: something we call public diplomacy. How did we do that? Well, we had to ensure that we destroyed some of the stereotypes in the Nicaraguan population that the Sandinistas were trying to exploit. In order to dispel the notion that we were coming to invade, I negotiated with the military commander to make sure that, when the troops landed in Nicaragua, they would not get off the planes carrying their weapons. Instead, they would be unarmed and their weapons would come in crates. We also did everything possible to promote cooperation between our two militaries. The Nicaraguan Army agreed to provide perimeter security for the U.S. troops, which took quite a bit of negotiation. Also, we agreed to have U.S. and Nicaraguan helicopters work side by side delivering relief supplies. And in order to avoid negative incidents – this one may not have been popular with our troops – there was to be no liquor allowed in the country and our troops would not be allowed to go to local bars.
When the troops arrived, we gave the Nicaraguan press access to the arriving Soldiers and Marines, and they found that our guys and ladies were people just like them. The press had an image of 6-foot-tall blonde Americans who spoke no Spanish, but they ran into something very different. Our troops included many women and a rainbow of races: many Latinos, African-Americans, Arab-Americans, and whites who spoke Spanish. The reporters would ask, “Are you here to invade us?” or “Are you bringing AIDS?” and our troops would respond, “No, we’re here to help.” End of story. Ortega was not heard from again, and the troops were universally welcomed. This is where public diplomacy can be effective, and it can only happen when you have the experience and knowledge of the local conditions and language to make it work.

We live in a messy world today. When Ron Neumann and I came into the Foreign Service as young Foreign Service officers, our world was very black and white. You knew who the enemy was: they were the ones who had the missiles pointed at our cities. It wasn't the French, it wasn't the Germans, and it wasn't the Iranians at the time. It was the Russians, the Soviet Union. We lived in a bipolar world. Often foreign policy became a zero-sum game, which I think we probably took a little too far. But, after the fall of the Berlin Wall, Francis Fukuyama wrote his famous article, “The End of History” as he saw it. The world changed, and it wasn't the end of one history, but the beginning of another, and this could be called a messier and more complicated world. It is a world where there are not just two superpowers but one major superpower, although maybe with China creeping up behind us we can talk about bipolarity again, and a lot of independent actors. It is a world with less control, where nuclear weapons could be lost or not accounted for, and a world where issues like climate change are pressing.

In recent years, we diplomats have had to become experts on issues like human trafficking, cyber warfare, narco-trafficking, and others. Today’s diplomat must know a lot more than we did when we came in to deal with all the threats that come to the United States. In fact, I had to become an entomologist of sorts, an insect expert, a couple of times in my career. One time was when I was the Portugal desk officer, and we had a problem in the Azores, where we had a military base. Near our base, local farmers alerted us that they were facing a plague of Japanese beetles – which had never been found in the islands – which were all over the country. The Portuguese blamed U.S. military flights that came from places where there were Japanese beetles. While we did not admit that we had brought the beetles, we agreed to help in dealing with the problem. So, we had to negotiate an agreement with the Portuguese to see if we could get rid of the Japanese beetles. I had to learn not only how eradication by spraying worked, but we found it to be too expensive and it may not have solved the problem. The program that we finally agreed on was a “milky spore” program, whereby we would bring in sterile flies or insects that would mate with Japanese beetles and prevent them
from reproducing, and then there would be no more Japanese beetles in the Azores. We agreed to pay for the program, and that was a lot less expensive than spraying. So, there are the kinds of issues we must deal with.

Today we must do a better job of explaining to the American public what we do. When many of us go back home after service overseas, sometimes we get asked: “So you work for the State Department? What State? Alabama? Georgia?” Or, “You say you are in the Forest Service?” We have to explain what we do to the American public and why it’s beneficial to the American taxpayer. We live in difficult times for U.S. diplomacy. Many Americans fail to see the benefits of diplomacy and don’t believe it’s important. Some think that a military force is the best way to exert power overseas and get our way. When the administration proposed a pre-emptive cut of 30% to the Department of State, many people say, “Well, these people are just wearing striped pants and drinking tea.” I think we need to educate the public. We need to show them images of our embassies in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi when they were bombed, and show those diplomats underneath the rubble trying to save their local employees. Or show them in the jungle looking for lost American citizens. Or tell them that more Foreign Service officers have died in service than generals in combat. These are kinds of things the American public needs to know and we need to do a better job of telling them.

So, in conclusion, diplomacy is of paramount importance, and the United States needs diplomats to carry out its interests overseas. We must do a better job of explaining, and a better job at being adaptable. We must be ready for anything to face future challenges in the messy world we live in. I believe we can do this but we need your support. Thank you.
Ambassador (Ret.) Jimmy Kolker

Former U.S. Ambassador to Burkina Faso and Uganda

My 30-year diplomatic career included five posts and fourteen years living in Africa – Mozambique, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Burkina Faso, and Uganda. This was followed by another twelve years working fulltime on global health issues, such as AIDS and Ebola, that are of direct relevance to African populations.

In looking at challenges and opportunities on the continent 2020 and beyond, I am going to focus on two threats that Africa and the world are handling poorly now – insurgencies and outbreaks and epidemics. My theme is that traditional military assets and responses are not well adapted to the security threats and conflicts Africa faces. I want to amplify Ambassador Ray’s point that diplomats and American officials “have to be there” and connect it to a threat we are facing right now in 2019 – Ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

In 2015, the United States worked with African governments to set up a new model for response to outbreaks which threaten to become global health emergencies. From country offices in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to its headquarters in Geneva, the World Health Organization failed and underperformed in its response to the Ebola outbreak. The new model reorganized WHO for rapid response and established memoranda of understanding with national public health agencies, in particular the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC), to be able to surge and scale up quickly. This system worked in the Zika emergency in 2016 and in the 2017 Ebola outbreak in the central part of DRC.

Last year, however, when Ebola was detected in eastern regions of the DRC, the U.S. government prohibited government employees, specifically the CDC, from working in insecure areas, which included the provinces around Beni and Butembo, where the cases were multiplying despite WHO involvement and an experimental vaccine. That ban on direct CDC work on the ground has hampered the effort, raised levels of anxiety among Congolese and other responders and contributed to the reality that the epidemic is, 17 months later, not under control. I can predict with confidence that over the next 20 years, Africa is going to lose more lives and more value of economic activity to outbreaks and epidemics than to terrorism.

So let’s look at the response to Ebola from a security perspective.

In Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the outbreaks started in opposition strongholds, traditionally hostile to government. In Guinea, the government sent uniformed people – military and gendarmes – to “bring the situation under control,” but they had the opposite result. In an area to which the government paid no attention for years and the main source of income was smuggling,
the arrival of these troops asking [quote], “Where have you been in the past 21 days and who did you meet,” ensured that the contact tracing program got off to a terrible start.

There is a great group from Nigeria here today, and in the Ebola context, yours is the true good news story. The arrival of a Liberian traveler was appropriately handled and while there were tragically some deaths, risks to the general public in Lagos, especially, were contained. But there is a back story that you may not know. Because of a strike in the public sector hospitals, the Liberian was taken from Lagos airport to First Consultants, a leading private hospital. Within a couple of hours, a Nigerian-American doctor in my office in the Department of Health and Human Services was on the phone with the owner and head doctor at that hospital, whom he knew, and CDC immediately faxed a two page fact sheet on what to do if a suspected Ebola case arrives at your facility. It was only then that the patient was isolated. The hospital followed the guidance rigorously, saving dozens, and probably thousands of lives.

The national emergency operations center set up largely by the Gates Foundation to guide the polio eradication effort was mobilized to track the Ebola threat, centralizing data gathering and use and bringing government ministries, NGOs, donors, and the private sector together in a single operation. Public order was maintained because Nigeria was able to take full advantage of soft power tools that the United States helped provide.

The Global Health Security Agenda, of which the United States has been the driving force, is in place to provide that same preparedness and those same platforms and networks to all WHO member countries. Over 100 nations have undergone Joint External Evaluations to review their progress to deal with health emergencies through the WHO’s mandatory International Health Regulations. And about half of those evaluations have led to national action plans to address health security, for which the U.S. and the other members of the G7, along with WHO, have pledged to support.

**Insurgencies**

Turning back to DRC, what should people concerned about security be doing to help bring the Ebola outbreak under control? How could we manage the risk for our CDC experts, who are eager to go, so that they can reinforce the surveillance, detection, and treatment in the most affected, but dangerous, areas? We may have some lessons from dealing with the insurgency in northern Uganda when I was ambassador there in the previous decade.

When the National Resistance Movement took power in Uganda in 1986, numerous rebel movements fought the government in northern Uganda, which was the home to the leaders Yoweri
Museveni overthrew. By 2002, the only significant rebel force still active was the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA), which sustained itself by kidnapping young people from ethnic Acholi and Langi regions. The LRA’s ruthless leader, Joseph Kony, was based in Sudan with protection from the Sudanese government, as part of its conflict in South Sudan, where Uganda was supporting south Sudanese forces. In 2002, the year I arrived in Uganda, the Khartoum government allowed the Ugandan military access to Sudanese territory to attack and root out the LRA at its main base. Kony and the LRA were probably tipped off. The Ugandan Operation Iron Fist failed to capture Kony or his leadership and thousands of LRA insurgents fled out of Sudan and into Uganda, where they terrorized the population. The civilian population, who spoke the same language as the terrorists, were systematically suspected and mistreated by the Ugandan People’s Defense Force, the national army, who were not from that area, were horribly paid and poorly led and had no strategy to deal with the rebel force or protect the population.

Uganda adopted the understandable but rarely successful strategy of forcing the civilian population into protected villages and suspecting anyone outside the protected villages as an LRA terrorist. The weakness of that strategy was clear in 2003 when one of the villages Barylongo was sieged and occupied by the LRA. The handful of UPDF soldiers and local militia were overwhelmed. By the time reinforcements arrived, over 200 village residents had been slaughtered. The need for better intelligence and use of intelligence in deployment and operation of the Ugandan forces was obvious.

We set up an office staffed by less than a dozen U.S. and Ugandan military intelligence personnel. By analyzing overhead imagery, communications intercepts and real-time reporting of civilian and military observers on the ground and communicating that analysis to competent UPDF commanders in the zone, the UPDF rapidly became a more effective, risk-tolerant, and respected force. Many of the LRA leadership were killed or captured and Kony himself was soon neutralized, fleeing Uganda for Sudan, Congo and ultimately the Central Africa Republic. The protected villages were dismantled; the people went back to their homes and fields and shops, and economic development in northern Uganda is thriving. Defeating the LRA required security forces, but not a kinetic U.S.-troops-on-the-front approach. Uganda needed smart tools to make its military platform operational.

Now, back to Congo and health security: Why aren’t we developing the same intelligence fusion operation with the UN Peacekeeping Force in Eastern DRC, MINUSCO, to share unique American intelligence-gathering assets on a real-time basis with the people running the Ebola response? If we did so, couldn’t the Ebola responders have a much greater ability to manage the risks of saving lives in a conflict zone and get the A-Team, the U.S. CDC experts, onto the field where they are most needed? And couldn’t the same pro-active intelligence-sharing help the other
country where I served as ambassador, Burkina Faso, combat the terrorists now blanketing the Sahel region, by more judicious use of its own military, reducing hostilities between Fulani and neighboring populations, between Muslims and Christians?

Burkina, when I was there, was a haven of ethnic and religious harmony. Now, schools and public services are shut down in vast areas of the country and neighbors who have lived together for generations are killing each other.

To conclude, given the imperative of combatting disease outbreaks in areas secure and insecure, shouldn’t we be looking at integrating smart security management into our upstream operations? And doesn’t security in an African context mean building the skills of African governments to integrate security awareness and preparedness into the social and humanitarian services that will make their citizens secure over the long run?
The classic definition of government is that involving the monopoly of force. Only the government can legitimately employ force, in the form of armies, police, the legal system, and enforceable government regulations. In other words, there is no substitute for a functioning state. Therefore, one of the most important political distinctions among countries concerns not only their form of government but their degree of government.

It is this truism about government that terrorist groups or movements, along with many other rebel or insurgent groups, challenge. Terrorism “is not some vaguely defined clash of civilizations but rather the clash between established governments and rural peripheries or insurgencies – whether they be Islamic, Western Russian, or Chinese or American.” Political power is the central issue in an insurgency, and each side has this as its aim. Even small minority groups can wield significant influence when governments and civil society institution are weak. While the insurgent attempts to overthrow or subvert an established government or authority, the counterinsurgent uses all of the instruments of national power to support the government in enforcing the rule of law.

What the insurgents teach us is that everything is about governance. Therefore, counterinsurgency and counterterrorism involves the controlled application of national power in defense of the government. However, while this is an obvious and necessary first step, lasting success will often depend on the willingness of that government to undertake necessary political changes. In our global world, however, few governments are in complete isolation, and their insurgency/terrorist problem usually involves others. Especially major countries like the U.S. with its global relationships and interests. Nevertheless, however great its know-how and enthusiasm, an outside actor can never fully compensate for lack of will, incapacity or counter-productive behavior on the part of the targeted government.

USG CT policy in Africa has two broad program streams: Military security assistance and the civilian programs of the Department of the State. U.S. military assistance programs in Africa involves a range of coordination and training programs such as Foreign Military Financing (FMF) and International Military Education and Training (IMET). There are also programs designed to enhance African capabilities to respond to regional crises, especially in conjunction with the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and UN PKO. Finally the U.S. military has in the past four years ramped up its special operations forces (SOF) across Africa to more than seven thousand to counter growing terrorist threats, from jihadist groups in the Sahel to Somalia.
While the U.S. Defense Department conducts training programs for foreign military forces around the world, the State Department Bureau of Counterterrorism and Countering Violent Extremism focuses on local civilian law-enforcement agencies and counterterrorism authorities to build the civilian capabilities of foreign government partners to counter terrorism and violent extremism in an effective and sustainable fashion. Such as:

- Antiterrorism Assistance Program
- Countering the Financing of Terrorism Finance
- Counterterrorism Partnerships Fund
- Terrorist Screening and Interdiction Programs
- Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership

However there has been a tendency on the part of USG CT programs to focus on symptoms not the cause. And specifically to concentrate on intelligence operations leading to kinetic actions. In addition, these two sets of CT programs are implemented by two separate bureaucracies. The USG deploys parallel diplomatic or inter-government systems: the traditional diplomatic structure of the Department of State and U.S. embassies, and the regional military combatant commands. Each conducts CT programs. While they are supposedly coordinated in pursuit of the whole of government concept, we all know that such coordination has built-in tensions and inevitable controversies. At the heart of the controversy was and is the long-running struggle for control between the State and Defense Departments. Whether the State Department will retain its historic jurisdiction over security aid or whether the Pentagon, which Congress has bestowed with increasing autonomy and resources over the past decades, will eclipse Foggy Bottom in taking greater responsibility for engagement with allied nations overseas. The Pentagon has complained for years that the State Department, which lacks a vast staff to oversee aid programs, is not as fast or nimble as it might be in processing aid proposals. Robust and flexible funding for such programs, defense officials say, will not only help them combat global terrorism threats but will compensate for a shrinking U.S. force. Others argue that an expansion in Pentagon control over security assistance impairs diplomatic efforts and furthers the growing militarization of foreign policy. This struggle was exacerbated in Africa by establishment AFRICOM.

As Gordon Adams, a former White House budget official, noted, this seemingly arcane bureaucratic competition has wide-reaching effects: “Who owns the ball matters here because it colors the way the U.S. engages overseas. If American engagement wears a uniform ... that’s one form of
interaction. If it involves the ambassador and his or her people doing governance work, it’s a different set of missions and there’s a hugely different perception.

At the same time, as John Prendergast and Colin Thomas-Jensen asserted, “stemming the spread of terrorism and extremist ideologies has become such an overwhelming strategic objective for Washington that it has overshadowed U.S. efforts to resolve conflicts and promote good governance. CT consumes U.S. policy as totally as anticommunism did a generation ago” (Foreign Affairs March 1, 2007). As a third commentator, General Stanley McChrystal, put it: “You can kill or capture enemy leaders. You can set back their organization. But I found that these kind of blows were never decisive. The problem is they give you the illusion of activity and the illusion of progress.” In other words, tactical tends to override strategic concerns.

Proponents of SSA claim that it is a cost-effective tool for advancing U.S. interests on the continent while being welcomed by the African partners. Critics, on the other hand, contend that SSA has been at best ineffective, leading to brief but unsustainable improvements in security, or at worst detrimental by inflaming inter-communal tensions, undermining civil–military relations, or contributing to human-rights abuses.

A recent Rand Corporation report, “Reforming Security Sector Assistance for Africa” found that Security Sector Assistance has a mixed record in Africa.

1. In the Cold War, SSA appears to have increased the incidence of civil wars.

2. In the post–Cold War era, SSA appears to have had little or no net effect on political violence.

3. In peacekeeping contexts, however, SSA appears to have reduced the incidence of civil wars, terrorism, and state repression.

Regardless of this essentially internal USG argument, there is an elephant in the room, the general level of competence of African governments. With some notable exceptions, many African governments effectively govern only their capital city. Much of their countryside is essentially anarchic, in the hands of anti-government forces of varying kinds. And there are governments as well which employ terrorism as a regular tactic.

This returns us to the question of the importance of root causes of insurgency and terrorism. And if incompetent local governments are central to the problem, what does this mean for outside actors like the U.S.?
One answer is “nation building.” But the credibility of that approach has been badly damaged by experience. As some skeptics pointed out early, and were ignored, you cannot do nation building in somebody else’s country.

What is left is a concentration on diplomacy, in the classic, full meaning of the term. Not the occasional reference to diplomacy as something done before or after military action, but in the whole-of-government sense whereby military policy and action is a sub-set or instrument of diplomacy. As Clausewitz tried to teach us.

- Yes, U.S. counterterrorism policy must draw on all available tools to succeed. This includes combining CT programs with development, and humanitarian assistance when necessary to target environments that enable violent extremism to flourish.
- But, U.S. foreign development assistance can only effectively support counterterrorism efforts when supporting competent local governance.

There is a currently fashionable theory about the most desirable USG foreign policy called “off-shore balancing.” Stripped of its think-tank terminology, this means accepting that foreign governments exist, that they are the prime actors in their territories, and that the USG can most successfully deploy influence and protect its own interests by accepting this reality. And that includes combating terrorism as a component of a coherent diplomacy pursuing a realistic foreign policy.

As Kwame Nkrumah said “Seek ye first the political kingdom…. “
Good afternoon. One of the benefits of being the last speaker is that I also have the opportunity to draw from the comments of the previous speakers. I’d like to add though from the outset that one of the things that is really important about diplomacy and the Department of State is the fact that as you go throughout your career you have the opportunity to work with your fellow ambassadors at various ranks. Although only a portion of my career was at the Bureau of African affairs, where I met Ambassador Kolker, actually the bulk of my work with Ambassador Ray was at the Bureau of East African Affairs and with Ambassador Marks who we both served at the U.S. mission to the United Nations.

One of the things that was not really mentioned in the beginning was that yes, I served in Nairobi, Kenya from 1995-1998 and I left Nairobi just 3 and ½ weeks before the August 7, 1998 bombings. I knew everyone in the Embassy, but what was striking about that situation is that we had to remember that we were not attacked by Kenyans. In fact, while I was in Nairobi during that period those who wanted to demonstrate against President Daniel arap Moi’s government always chose to demonstrate in front of the American Embassy simply because the Kenyan army would use tear gas.

That said, I know firsthand of the effects of terrorism in Africa. One of the things that we did not mention in the introduction is that I spent the last five years of my career at National Defense University where I served as Deputy Commandant of the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. Prior to that I was the chancellor for the College of International Security Affairs (CISA), which focuses primarily on counterterrorism issues. Unlike most senior services schools, at National Defense University the majority of the students at the college of international security affairs were actually international students – international fellows.

I was fortunately able to convince U.S. African Command (AFRICOM) to allow the students at CISA to use their annual year-end exercise as part of the red team for helping to develop AFRICOM’s approaches in Africa. What’s important about that is that when we start thinking about diplomacy in Africa we have to start thinking about our African partners. That’s just the approach of the United States, because partnership, diplomacy, countering violent extremism all fail without reliable partners. But to have reliable partners, you also have to focus on the future of Africa and its needs in order to understand the requirements of the countries that we want to work with. And when we understand what those requirements are then we have to be able to match the appropriate programs and resources to meet those requirements.
I say that because you cannot have a successful diplomacy without resources and programs. And to Ambassador Marks’ point I think we have to be realistic and understand that the Department of State has already been eclipsed when it comes to assistance in Africa. The most important U.S. entity for assistance to Africa is actually the defense security cooperation agency (DSCA). Ambassador Kolker talked about the importance of pandemic control, but most of us tend to overlook the fact that it was DSCA as the executing agency that provided 1.2 billion dollars to USAID, AFRICOM, and other parts of the USG to essentially handle the Ebola crisis.

Then we also have to understand that as we go forward while Ambassador Marks mentioned that the Department of State has its counterterrorism bureau, the antiterrorism assistance program. INL has some programs mostly focusing on drug control, but for the foreseeable future the security cooperation programs of the United States funded largely by DSCA through the combined commands will make up the bulk of U.S. assistance overseas.

So as a result, if we understand how the DSCA works and the role it plays not only in security cooperation but also in foreign military sales, we can begin to start building a structure of cooperation between the United States and Africa that would support a reasonable framework for success.

Let’s talk about what Africa is going to need in combatting terrorism, starting with secure communications including secure broadband and facial recognition technology. Law enforcement cooperation and infrastructure security will be priorities. And of course, more cooperation regarding humanitarian assistance and disaster response will be high on the agenda.

We have to begin to look at how we use these resources that are available in partnership with African countries. Moreover, we still can’t forget that as economic growth dramatically increases in Africa, we have to continue to address the problem of income inequality in Africa. If we are going to have any structures that address the problem of countering violent extremism, then we have to also address the growing problem of income inequality. You can’t separate the two.

So again, for the foreseeable future, when we start talking about diplomacy in Africa, when we start talking about countering violent extremism. We have to start first with what are the needs or requirements of our African partners? Now what the needs of our African partners today, but what are they going to be in 2050? We can’t think in terms of all we need to do is provide assistance to African countries who can provide expeditionary forces to work in Northern Africa, or the Horn of Africa. We have to be prepared for growing urban crises as the result of moving from rural to urban areas in Africa and how that impacts income inequality, but most importantly how do we counter violent extremism. Once we have an understanding of what those future problems are going to be and how our African partners are going to address those problems, then we can forge together a reasonable diplomatic strategy to counter terrorism.
Ambassador Rosemary Banks  
*New Zealand Ambassador to the United States*

Our question today is what kind of diplomacy do we need for the future? Since the essential purpose of diplomacy in any age is to reduce the risk of war and to increase security, let’s look first at the nature of the risks diplomacy is expected to help reduce or resolve – now and in the future.

The World Economic Forum’s 2019 Global Risk Assessment identified rising geopolitical and geo-economic tensions as the most urgent global risks, followed by environmental risks and technological vulnerabilities – from fake news to loss of privacy. The report notes that “Global risks are intensifying but the collective will to tackle them appears to be lacking.” It saw the world as moving into a phase of state-centred politics where the idea of “taking back control” behind national borders resonates in many countries.

A symptom of this inward turning trend is a retreat from multilateralism; a loss of confidence in the global architecture we have built together over the last 70 years. These trends run contrary to the purpose of traditional diplomacy, which has been to draw nations into closer understanding of each other, to keep channels of dialogue open where there is the risk of conflict, and to create and keep in order an architecture of regional and international rules and norms.

There is a strong temptation on occasions like today’s seminar to be drawn into analyses of the known problems rather than grappling with the much harder question of what to do about it. Admiring the problem is the expression. So I shall make the possibly rash assumption that we all share an approximately similar analysis of the challenges ahead of us and move on to the contributions that we as diplomats can make – now and in the future. Before I set out down this path, and in the spirit of the Māori culture of New Zealand I shall share with you my whakapapa – that is, where I have come from and the life experience I bring to this discussion.

My diplomatic career began more than 40 years ago, after growing up in the country and attending Canterbury University in Christchurch and then London School of Economics. My previous postings as ambassador were to Paris and earlier as Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York. I have also served in Australia, the Solomon Islands and at the United Nations in Geneva. My views of diplomacy are shaped by my experiences representing a democratic country of now 4.7m people which has always had to win its place on a crowded global stage.

We are an open society, a country that despite our geographical isolation has throughout our history been ready to contribute to global peace and security. Our diplomacy has rested on our
reputation as a reliable country, on the leverage we have gained from our integration into global and regional architecture, and on our network of connections. Our diplomatic successes have come from our ability to be a bridge between cultures, regions and sometimes larger powers. Our diplomatic “brand” has been to be independent in our analysis, solution focused, and good at interpersonal relations.

These capabilities – of independent analysis, being solution focused and able to create trust through good interpersonal relations are timeless, and universal across countries and cultures. They are necessary, but not sufficient to bridge some of the most dangerous gaps in today’s world – growing mistrust within and between nations; how to deal with the existential threat of climate change and a lack of consensus on what kind of global rules we need.

What has already changed in diplomacy during my career has been the breadth of issues now considered to be part of diplomacy. When I began my career trade policy and economic issues were dealt with in other parts of government. We did not need to understand tariffs or global energy markets, or know what to do when phytosanitary problems held up a shipment of kiwifruit. All that changed for us in the 1980s when we recognized the inseparability of political and economic relations, restructuring and renaming our foreign ministry to take on responsibility for trade policy.

Then environmental issues came to the fore – oceans and fish stocks management, followed by climate change, which is now one of the larger teams in our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade. At the same time as the diversity of issues has increased, so has the diversity of our diplomats. When I joined I was one of only a handful of women diplomats. There were even fewer Māori diplomats and almost none from New Zealand’s other major ethnic groups – Asian and Pacific people. Today our diplomats look a lot more like the population we represent, and that is an intellectual strength, by bringing in different viewpoints and cultural backgrounds.

Diplomacy for the World’s Future

Now for the question of what ongoing changes and adaptation diplomats in all our countries need to make to help close those dangerous gaps I mentioned a minute ago. The basic structure of diplomacy I do not see as changing – in future as now we shall still need rules (to ensure that every country has a voice, irrespective of size and economic or military weight). We shall still need architecture – the forums at international, regional, and sub-regional level for our voices to be heard and our problems to be discussed. We shall always need relationships of trust, based on being on the ground, speaking the language, understanding the culture.
But within these unchanging parameters there are shifts of emphasis we need to make to adapt and update our methods of diplomacy. My first recommendation would be to intensify our use of all available tools of modern communication; to better explain the value we get from our political and economic relationships; to sell the value of the open and rules-based trading system.

My second would be to pay much closer attention to social change and the permission space that society allows for foreign and trade policy. The combined impacts of globalization, climate change and rapid technological change have produced uncertainty and anxiety in all our societies. To such an extent that for the first time the World Economic Forum (WEF) has identified as a global risk that people are feeling a lack of control and seeing the world as an increasingly unhappy and lonely place. In these circumstances people become suspicious – of government, of authority, of change. They are less likely than in the past to simply accept that “the government knows best” when setting foreign, defence, or trade policies. They need to be convinced.

In New Zealand our diplomats are now expected to conduct diplomacy at home as energetically as they would if on an overseas posting, establishing networks with civil society, advocacy, and ethnic groups. We are expected to engage actively, including through social media, with audiences whose views would have been ignored in the past. In the diplomacy of the future, diplomats will need a great deal more technical knowledge and specialised training, or self-education, in such areas as climate change, cyber security, alternative proteins, space, artificial intelligence, and robotics.

I revert one last time to the WEF Global Risks Report. It singled out the need to renew and improve our international political and economic systems as “this generation’s defining task.” The global architecture we have inherited is seen by many as too cumbersome and bureaucratic for the speed and complexity of our interconnected world. But the response should not be to seek to dis-credit or abandon what we have. President Macron in addressing Congress just over a year ago gave a similar challenge. He called for a “new breed of multilateralism, a more effective, accountable and results oriented multilateralism.” If there has been little take up it is partly because today’s global problems are seen as so complex that no one knows where to start. But the diplomats of the past managed to create global order out of the chaos of World War II.

Here political leadership is required, as well as diplomats working together, technical knowledge and the communication skills to “tell the story” of why action is needed. We can still learn lessons from the leadership of President Franklin Roosevelt and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, who had the courage and the optimism to inspire others to go beyond what they believed they could do. These qualities of courage and optimism, together with patience and persistence, are as old as humankind but will be needed more than ever by the diplomats of tomorrow.
I wish to thank the organizers of this roundtable discussion, for the opportunity accorded to me to make a few remarks on this occasion.

Security as a human need is very crucial to the existence and stability of every society. According to the Hobbesian social contracts, the very existence of organized societies and government was for the focus of securing human lives and properties. Before them, life was short, barbaric, and brutish. However, it is imperative to point out that the concept of security is ever evolving. Once synonymous with the defense of territory from external attack, the requirement of security today has come to embrace the protection of communities and individuals from internal violence. We must also broaden our view of what is meant by peace and security. Peace in this case means much more than the absence of war. Human security can no longer be understood in purely military terms. Rather, it must encompass emphasis on economic development, social justice, and environmental protection, democratization, disarmament, and respect for human rights and the rule of law. My own definition gleaned from them both is the absence of insecurity and threat, improved standard of the quality of human life: economically, socially, politically with access to resources and overall inclusion in policymaking processes of government.

Some topics of security concerns in Africa are poverty, lack or absence of rule of law, weak governance institutions, unemployment, youth restiveness, climate change, corruption, conflict, etc. Resultant effects of these issues are increased cases of corruption and corrupt practices that will have an effect on the economy and overall standard of living in any given state. Increased cases of violent conflict or clashes of banditry and kidnapping occasioned by the need for survival of the deprived or different host population. Mass migration and increased cases of internal and external displacement as a result of scarce resources occasioned by climate change, conflict, insurgencies, and extremism. Non-inclusion in the political, social, and economic policymaking process of the younger generation by the government ultimately leads to political apathy or decreased participation. With climate change, natural disasters have increased. Flooding, drought, desertification, especially in the Lake Chad region, which is in turn creating increased refugee population and catalyzing internal conflict and strife.
And now opportunities 2020 and beyond.

A. Increased regional and sub regional cooperation for adopting best practices to suit security concerns. The mentions of insecurity and violence have become more complex, flute, and organic. There is therefore the need to upgrade our security policies to focus on networking and cooperation amongst regional and sub regional government and people.

B. Missing youth potentials. Africa is a young continent with a median age of just 19 years. The protruding youth population could become an important economic boost to the region. Alternatively, it could further increase the risk of instability and violence if young people are deprived of quality education, stable employment, and their political voice is silent. It is also critical to promote an education system with a strong focus on entrepreneurship and technology to optimize opportunities and reframe narratives.

C. Next is catalyzing rapid economic growth. Economic growth on the continent is forecast to continue at the healthy average rate of 5 to 7 percent annually but there is an urgent need to ensure it raises living standards and more broadly to tackle extreme poverty and inequality across the continent. The rapid growth and uneven spread of foreign investment around cities and certain sectors is cementing this. The infrastructure needs to remain high and the importance of fully analyzing needs of cities and the environment are critical. Putting into place policies for inclusive growth, investments on education and health, and providing public services to the poorest would improve social cohesion and harmony in African societies and ensure the economic allure of Africa as an area of investment for regional and external partners.

D. Sustainable management of resources to avoid irresponsible use and exploitation. Africa is blessed with abundant natural resources and land but they have often been exploited irresponsibly. This has damaged the environment, widened wealth inequality, and increase fear and resentment and conflict. Increasingly problems with water distribution and population growth will put greater pressure on the need to modernize subsistence agriculture while climate change effect will aggravate the problems. Droughts, floods, or poor harvests may create new refugee populations and increase the need for our shared resources. Much would depend on how African countries mobilize to harness their human and natural resources and put them to efficient use in order to evade their aggravation of an already volatile continent.
On a final note, let me state that although this discussion may be focused on African security concerns, let me point out that Africa is a part of more a more holistic global security architecture which also has its challenges. Therefore opportunities for addressing these concerns will not be complete unless there is a synergistic collaboration amongst global players to jointly address them. Once again, thank you for the opportunity.
Let me start by thanking all the panelists. I couldn't help but think as I was sitting here that I wish we could have every senior class at every university in the country with us today because it would have been worthwhile. I'm wondering who the first ambassador is going to be who is going to volunteer to be the ambassador in space – I designate Ambassador Ray the Ambassador to Mars, and Ambassador Neumann, you can have Jupiter.

It's crucial to understand and appreciate the role of diplomacy and the role of the State Department in our nation and our whole national effort to survive as a nation. I have a unique advantage over my counterparts in the service because we have a long relationship with the State Department. It stems from the fact that Marines provide security at the 171 different locations around the world. When I was on my last tour, for example, I knew Secretary Baker and Secretary Schultz very well – they were both Marines. We had some problems, but more importantly, in every visit that I ever made to any country from the time I was a Brigadier commanding the 4th Marine Amphibious Brigade to the time I retired as General, I visited the embassies. We would exchange information and ideas when I visited the ambassadors and his staff of experts. They would teach me about what they particularly needed in the country that they were ambassador to. I think this is very important.

I remember dealing for a long time with Ambassador John Gunther Dean when he was ambassador to Cambodia and I oversaw planning the evacuation of Cambodia. Later, he was the ambassador to Denmark, and we used to talk all the time about how to get along in Denmark and how to get along with the people. Today, I noticed that we talked about great power competition. The United States, whether we like it or not, is a global leader because the people of the world of every country you will ever visit really expect us to help them. It’s always been my experience to never make more enemies than you already have and never do anything that hurts the people you are trying to help. So, for example, how could you have a conference like this today and not mention the importance of Latin America. It’s vital, and it’s part of the whole idea of globalization. Most countries want the same thing we do. They want to get ahead, they want security and
freedom, they want to have economic capabilities, and so on. So, I think that in all these domains of warfare and all this talk about what we are going to do, we must keep the whole picture in mind. So that’s sort of the simple message I have, and with that, thank you.
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Established in 1994, the activities of IUCTS are guided by an International Research Council that offers recommendations for study on different aspects of terrorism, both conventional and unconventional. IUCTS is cooperating academically with universities and think tanks in over 40 countries, as well as with governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental bodies.

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