CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

PALESTINE TO PUNJAB, BOSNIA TO BAKU: A TOUR OF SECURITY CHALLENGES FACING EUROPE AND AMERICA WITH CARL BILDT

WELCOME AND MODERATOR:
THOMAS CAROTHERS,
VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDIES,
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT

SPEAKER:
CARL BILDT,
FOREIGN MINISTER,
KINGDOM OF SWEDEN

TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2009
THOMAS CAROTHERS: Good afternoon, and welcome to the Carnegie Endowment. It’s my great pleasure and honor to introduce to you today Carl Bildt. For at least 20 years, Mr. Bildt has been a major figure – in some ways, a central pillar – in European diplomacy.

He’s done so first as Sweden’s prime minister in the early 1990s. He’s also done so as European Union’s special representative to the former Yugoslavia; United Nations Secretary-General’s special envoy to the Balkans; as the representative of the international community to Bosnia; co-chair of the Dayton Accords; and now, currently, as Sweden’s foreign minister.

In all of this work Mr. Bildt has brought to the task a notable moral clarity; sense of determination; level of energy; strategic insight; and accomplishment, that’s really notable.

I can tell you that quite a few times, in the last 10 years or so, I’ve been in meetings where, here in Washington, people are talking about European diplomacy. And I’ll confess to our European guests who are here in the room that, at times in Washington, people lament a bit about at least parts of European diplomacy. Not that Europeans wouldn’t ever lament a bit about American diplomacy, too.

CARL BILDT: I was going to say that. There have been –

MR. CAROTHERS: And we’ll be in the midst of one of those conversations, where things are going a bit downhill, and someone will pause – there’ll be a pause, and someone will say: Well, then there’s Carl Bildt. And people feel a bit better, because of the qualities that I mentioned above.

So it’s really a pleasure to have you back here at the Endowment, and we look forward to your remarks. He’s going to talk about what’s on his mind, and what’s on his mind are the most important issues facing Europe – and, in some ways, the world.

So, without further ado, I’ll turn it over to you. And then he’ll take questions and answers. And he mentioned to me that he really enjoys a good discussion, so he’ll keep his remarks relatively brief. But we’ll have plenty of time for comments and questions.

(Applause)

MR. BILDT: Thank you very much for those much too kind words of introduction. The only thing that was very true was that what I enjoy most is, really, Q&A. And whether I will manage to keep my remarks reasonably short remains to be seen. I’ve taken some notes, and tried to say some things on how I see the challenges that we are facing. Then I hope we can have a more or less spirited interaction. I see some faces that I know are capable of a spirited interaction, so I hope that you don’t let me down on that particular point.

Although we are used to say that all the time, we are at a critical time. But if you look at some of the challenges that we are facing now, they are really of an order of magnitude more challenging than we are used to.

And before going into the usual geopolitical and security challenges that I think preoccupies a lot of us, let me briefly mention two of them that are of a special dimension, concerning both the magnitude and the complexity of them.
The first one is fairly obviously: the economic crisis that we are facing. It is a unique economic crisis both because of the depth of it; because it is global; and because of the fact that it’s going to have major political ramifications, repercussions, in X numbers of countries around the world.

I’m not in the business of green shoots or black holes, or whatever we’re discussing the economy in terms of these days. But I can note, if you look at the prognosis for the global economy, it has been revised downwards by, on the average, 0.75 percent every month, for the past six months. That is, apart from everything else, the most dramatic downward erosion of economic estimates that we’ve seen not only in living memory, but, I do think, in human memory all together. It is an unprecedented slump, recession, that we are facing across the globe.

It might be that, at some point in time, we are beginning to see the bottom of that particular very dramatic slump in economic growth. But when we hit the bottom, we can’t be entirely certain of whether we’re going to get up from it, or whether we’re going to bump on that particular bottom for quite some time to come.

What we do know is that the political repercussions of the economic crisis comes somewhat later. I mean, first, to have a financial crisis that goes into an economic crisis – that’s where we are at the moment. After a period of spectacular growth – in trade; in investment; in FDI; and reduction of poverty; and increase in democracy by the way – everything of that has now gone into reverse.

But it’s only when the economic crisis turns really bad that we start to see the political effects of that: governments falling; weak economies under strain; fragile states perhaps tipping over. And we have to take measures in order to try to save them – help them bring stability to places that are then in dire economic and political situations.

If you look at the situation today, you have in the order of 20 countries that are in IMF programs of different magnitude. It wasn’t too long ago since there was a discussion of whether we really needed the IMF and these sorts of programs. Because everything was going so brilliantly, that, sort of, these IMF programs and helping out seemed to be a thing of the past.

Now we have roughly 20 countries in programs. We have roughly 20 countries on their way into programs. And if the trend continues downwards, we are likely to have a further batch of, say, 20 come into the necessity of going to the emergency financial ward at Pennsylvania Avenue in Washington.

We have, or are in the process of beefing up, the war chest of the IMF quite substantially – tripling their resources. And I call it the ability of us to go in – be that in the Ukraines, or be that in the Pakistans, or be that in somewhere else of the world – to help. But we have to be aware of the fact that, as these go on, there are new countries coming into the necessity of help, and there are new regions which we might not be focusing at the moment, but will also be in the need of this particular help.

I tend to focus, perhaps, particularly on the situation that we are facing in the East of Europe – and let me stress that is primarily east of the European Union. Or that we have a situation
in Latvia, the Balkan countries, that’s also fairly demanding. But east of that, Ukraine can be taken as an example of it. Also stretching down to the Balkans – western and eastern parts of that. It is a fundamentally different situation.

Here we had a belt of growth and progress – for the past, say, 10 years – that’s gone back. I mean, countries that go from plus-10-percent growth to minus-10 or 15-percent within one year. And what will happen remains to be seen. It’s going to be a question of whether it is the resilience of their societies or the weakness of their states that dominates. Resilience of their societies, because these are societies that have gone through hard times in recent memory.

I mean, it’s not a Sweden, where we haven’t had any sort of major problems for the past 200 years. Well, we had a million people leaving, because of poverty, to the United States – to America – a hundred years ago, but it was quite some time ago, to put it in those terms. But here, of course, we have societies where, in living memory, they have gone through difficult times, that might be somewhat more used to it than would be the case in our other society.

But also nations where the states are very much weaker, because states are a fairly recent creation – histories being somewhat different. So it’s a question whether it’s going to be the resilience of the societies or the weakness of their states that is going to dominate the political development that we see as a consequence of the economic crisis.

This is something that is very much on our agenda – on the European agenda – but, of course, the same applies to different other parts of the world. Pakistan is a case that could be mentioned, of course. They’ve had one IMF program; they have fulfilled the criteria – fulfilled what they were supposed to do. They’ve done it extremely well. But, of course, with the world economy being substantially worse, all of the figures are worse anyhow. There’s a need to pour another batch of billions of dollars into helping Pakistan. That story can be repeated in X numbers of places.

I said that this is a unique economic crisis, because of the magnitude; the geographic scope; and the nature of it. We haven’t dealt with anything of this within living memory. We had the Asian crisis; we have had X numbers of – but they were all localized. And they were all – they were difficult at the time, but they were easy in comparison.

So what we are facing here is, I would say, a once-in-a-generation challenge for the global economy, and for managing the global economy, and for handling the political repercussions in fragile states and weak economies of that once-in-a-generation challenge that we find in the global economy.

This we are supposed to handle at the same time – that we are faced with the need to handle the climate challenge. And I wouldn’t go into the science of this – that’s all over the media week after week, after month after month. So I think that is both well-known and fairly well-established.

We do know that we need to take action. And we do know that that action that needs to be taken is of a rather difficult nature. It is intrusive in the way in which we run our economies and our societies. It’s also more demanding, in that it requires global cooperation to an unprecedented degree.
I mean, normally – and I’ve experienced this very much inside the European Union over the last year and a half, when we Europeans have decided to take on the role of being sort of the global green leaders. In March of last year we said that: We commit ourselves to reducing carbon, or carbon dioxide, or greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent by the year 2020, and also to go for 20-percent renewables. And we said that: If the rest of the world is prepared to go along, we’ll do a further 10 percent – so we’ll go for a 30-percent reduction.

Well, these things are fairly easy to say. But what we’ve done since then is that we’ve gone through detailed policies how this should actually be done. And I can tell you, it is fairly easy to say that you’re going to reduce by 50 percent by 2050, or something like that – because it’s so distance, that you don’t really need to do anything now. But if you are going to do a reduction by 20 percent by 2020, that is, more or less, tomorrow, in terms of the lead times that – (inaudible) – is. And it involves painful and difficult things, that go directly into the way in which you operate your economies; directly into the way in which you operate your societies.

We have done that. We have taken the detailed decisions throughout the European Council; we’ve got them through the European Parliament. So we can say: We will, in all probability – there’s always some uncertainty – we will be able to deliver on our respective promises. But that has also made us aware of the magnitude of the challenge – when this exercise should be repeated on a global scale. And, hopefully, more than 20 percent. That’s why we have committed ourselves to the 30-percent goal for reductions.

It will require the Americans, the Europeans, the Indians, the Chinese, the Brazilians – everyone doing these particular things. We’ve taken the lead, or we took the lead from the European Union. So we are extremely happy that the United States will also take the lead. And if the Indians, and the Chinese and the Brazilians want to take the lead, as well, then it’s going to be somewhat crowded in the leadership field. But that is, essentially, something that we have every reason to welcome.

The challenge here – I said that the challenge that we have on the economic side is sort of a once-in-a-generation economic challenge. Here it’s, of course, more than that. Here, it’s a problem of a once-in-a-millennium challenge that we are facing in terms of our climate – and the implications of what needs to be done, and the implications of if we are not doing it.

And it’s not that we can choose to do the one and not the other. We need to do both of them at the same time, and to do it within a fairly short period of time. The global economic crisis is now – the necessity to take measures on the climate side is now.

And where we have done these things – the once-in-a-generation economic challenge and the once-in-a-millennium climate challenge – then, of course, we have to deal with the rest of the world, the different problems that are there. And those are not, necessarily, that much smaller, either.

I look at this, to a certain extent, from the perspective of the fact that Sweden’s going to assume the presidency of the European Union by the first of July. We’re going to be in that presidency until the 31st of December. And it is my sincere hope that we will be the end of an historical era – in the sense that we would get the Lisbon Treaty ratified; and we will hand over to this particular area governance structures for the European Union that are somewhat more
appropriate, if you look at the global weight and the global responsibilities that the European Union has today.

I’ve been foreign minister now for two years – or something more than that, I guess – and one of the things that has impressed me the most – if I compare it to previous times, when I was involved in international affairs – is the extent to which the world is really looking at the European Union. That doesn’t mean that they are not looking at the United States – they’re looking even more at the United States – but they’re looking far more at the European Union – as a model for integration and reconciliation; as a voice on certain issues – than they did only a couple of years ago.

And we have developed strategic dialogues with virtually everyone around the world, and they have a considerable depth; these dialogues, nowadays, very much different to what was the case before. If I look only at the calendar for the upcoming Swedish presidency, we’re going to have summit meetings with – and correct me now, because I might forget some of them.

With South Korea – a new free-trade agreement I hope we will be able to at least initial at that particular meeting; with South Africa – which is at a critical time, with the new president coming in, and all of the challenges in Southern Africa; we’re going to have a summit meeting somewhat later with Ukraine, and that’s obviously a country of some significance; we’re going to have it with Russia. That’s a relationship that’s had its different dimensions, but “challenging” is one of the words that could be used to describe it.

We’re going to have a summit meeting with China – and China has a certain weight and importance; we’re going to have a summit meeting with India. Whether that completes the list, I don’t know. And Brazil – which is another country of certain importance, not the least when we discuss the energy issue. So you can see the way the European Union is emerging as a global act.

Add to that, if you look at what the European Union has been doing in the last, say, two years, has been impressive from my point of view. We are not a superpower in military terms; neither do we seek to be, nor would we ever be. But I would say that we are a global power when it comes to stability operations. And we have demonstrated that in a number of challenging fields in the last few years.

We did deploy a stability operation in Chad and the Central African Republic, when there was a danger of the Darfur conflict spreading westwards in that belt of Africa. And that carnage being then destabilizing further regions, with the risk of further hundreds of thousands of people being forced to flee. That was not entirely easy. Chad is not a normal area of operations for the Swedish army. Particularly not for the Swedish amphibious forces, by the way, because we ended up sending amphibious forces, too. Someone didn’t look at the map, certainly. (Laughter)

But, at the end of the day, that particular operation succeeded. We prevented the spread of the Darfur conflict. We made it possible for some of the displaced persons to go back. We didn’t solve all of the problems of that part of the world, but we stabilized it, and we handed it over to a U.N. force. No one else could have done it, but we did it.

The Georgia conflict we can speak of for quite some time, and the implications of that one. One of the things that was needed was to get international observers and people on the ground, and do it fast, and we deployed 2 or 300 observers within a couple of weeks. And they are, today –
when Georgia is again in the news because of some new tensions – they are the force that we can rely on to give us objective knowledge of what’s actually happening. And they are the ones that we can rely on in order to refute allegations that are there, that there is the one thing or the other thing handling (ph). And we are the only ones that are there and are able to do it.

We have now deployed naval forces to the Gulf of Aden and to the Indian Ocean. It might not be much of a novelty from the perspective of the United States Navy, but I can tell you that the Swedish navy’s experience in the Indian Ocean is distinctly limited, but it will now dramatically increase. We are deploying European navies in that area, to help with safeguarding food supplies for the World Food Program to Somalia, and then helping, also, with combatting of the piracy that is such a menace, also, to international trade.

Each of these missions is something that was virtually unthinkable for the European Union a couple of years ago. Take them together and it adds to what I’ve said – that we are also emerging as a global stability power not to be discounted.

I think I can say that, if you look on the global scene, the European Union is among the emerging powers of the world. Not in the United States league, but significantly more important than it was before. Indeed, you can say, if you look on the big Eurasian continent, that, in its East, you have the rising power of China; in the West you have, in these respects, the rising power of the European Union; in the South you have the rising power of India. And, of course, the interaction of these three, as well as their interaction with the United States, is going to be very important for the development of that rather central part of the entire global equation in the years to come.

We have, from the EU side in the last year, decided on some new projects of some significance, although some complexity. Last year we launched something called the Union of the Mediterranean, that is a deeper engagement with the countries of North Africa and the Middle East. And not only political engagement, but trying to help them with economic and structural reforms; develop the rule of the law; and reform their societies and their economies.

We do it for them – but, in all honesty, we do it for us, as well. If you look at these countries taken together, and look at the demography there, they are likely to increase in the next 10 or 15 years on the order of 150 or 160 million people. That means that we, on the southern shores of the Mediterranean, are adding two Egypts to the population. And, of course, there are two different scenarios for what happens: either growth, rule of the law, stability – or crisis, desperation, fundamentalist developing.

We have a profound interest, but that’s also why we are becoming engaged with it. It has its complications, to put it very mildly. It is completely deadlocked at the moment over the ramifications and the aftershocks of the Gaza War, and the divisions between Israel and the Arab states. And exactly how we'll maneuver that particular minefield remains to be seen, but maneuver it we must – because if we don’t deal with these challenges, they are bound to deal with us, in a way that certainly is going to be important.

On Thursday there is in Prague the summit that is officially going to launch what we call the “Eastern Partnership.” That is a partnership between the European Union and the three countries of the Southern Caucasus – Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus. It, to a certain extent, is our answer to
their wish to be closer to us, and to integrate. We have somewhat of a debate with our Russian friends sometimes who say: This is spheres of influence that you are establishing.

No, no, it’s not – it is they who want to come to us. And we are offering them what we can offer, in terms of free trade; integration in different aspects of our different structures – because they want it. It’s not that we are sending people there to say, You must. On the contrary, those who have the fortune, or misfortune, to listen to the internal debates of the European Union knows that enthusiasm for further rapid enlargement is not some of the characteristic aspects of our discussions at this particular period in time.

But, of course, what happens in these areas is important to us. I mean, you can even argue that we have, between the European Union and China, we have 12 states in the post-Soviet space. Russia being the largest of them, but you have the five of Central Asia; you have the three of the Southern Caucasus; and you have the three immediately in between Russia and the European Union.

What happens there is not written in stone. Things will happen within the next five, 10 years in this vastly important area, and we need to be engaged in order to give them the possibility of developing in a stable, and decent and good way, for their sake and for our sake. And that is the Eastern Partnership.

Another of our main challenges is, of course, back to enlargement – the roughly 100 million people of Southeast Europe that is knocking on our door. That’s the countries of the Western Balkans, and that’s Turkey. And I belong to those Europeans who agreed very much when President Obama, when he came to Europe and said that the strategic significance of Turkey joining the European Union is vast: it’s vast for the European Union; it is vast as a symbol of reconciliation, and solving and overcoming old divisions; it sends a very powerful signal to the rest of the world.

That being said, we know that it’s not an entirely easy thing to do. The same applies to the countries of the Western Balkans. They come from a level of development, apart from their own conflicts, that makes it somewhat challenging to meet the increasingly high standards of membership of the European Union. But were we to just close the door in the face of these nations, and ask them to go somewhere else, the risk is, of course, that they will go somewhere else. And if they go off in that direction, of nationalism, or go off in another direction of something else, the only thing that we can be certain of is that the security ramifications of that would be negative for us, apart from them. So we have a responsibility to move forward with them, recognizing all of the difficulties that are there.

The single most important political process on the Continent within Europe this year is, in my opinion, the peace process in Cyprus. We have a precedent in Cyprus, Mr. Christofias; we have a leader of the Turkish Cypriot community, Mr. Tallot (ph). They are both personally committed to overcoming the division of their island. And, of course, 20 years after the fall of the wall in Berlin, it is a shame that we still have a divided capital. And that division of the island of Cyprus is, of course, profoundly negative for the island of Cyprus, primarily.

But for reconciliation, integration and cooperation, not only in the entire Eastern Mediterranean area, but we also see it impacting on things like the possibility of the European Union and NATO working together for state-building and stability in Afghanistan. So overcoming that
particular division, and having an agreement – supporting that agreement – would be of immense importance also for the long-term Turkic accession process, and also for showing that we are able to overcome the divisions of the past. If we don’t overcome those divisions of the past, we are bound to have major problems.

That area, of course, leads us directly into the Middle East. And I’m not going to spend too much time on the issues of the Middle East peace process, just saying that there is a solution. And it’s not only a solution, it is the solution. Everyone knows that the solution is a two-state solution. And everyone knows that waiting doesn’t make things better – waiting makes things worse. There are important, crucially important details to be sorted out.

But it’s only by moving forward to that two-state solution that we can secure the long-term security and peace of Israel, and the long-term justice, and stability and prosperity of the Palestinians. And we can achieve that peace between Israel and the entire Arab world that will be profoundly positive for Israel and for the Arab world. Just think about the productive potential that would be in such a peace agreement for everyone concerned.

So the longer that is delayed, the more difficult will it be – and the more will it play into the hands of those who have somewhat different interests in that particular region. And there are those other actors that have another agenda – that want to do something different. And by delaying work on the two-state solution, we play into the hands of the ones that we should not really be playing into the hands of.

That being said, another of the challenges that we face is, of course, relationship with Iran. Iran is there, and Persia has been there for a couple of thousand years, and I would dare the prognosis that Iran will remain there for hundreds of years to come. Accordingly, we need, at some point in time, to find a modus vivendi with this country, that sort of respects the fundamental interests of the different sides of that particular location. We don’t want an Iran that sort of upsets; that develops the military nuclear capabilities that would be profoundly dangerous – not the least in terms of proliferation.

But, at the same time, it is in the interest of each and everyone not the least to overcome the decades of mistrust that is there. Justified, to some extent – but not, necessarily, to the full extent – between the United States and Iran. To overcome this will not be possible in a week’s time, if possible at all. But to make the effort is, I think, very much necessary. And we support and salute the efforts underway from the Obama administration. It would, of course, be enormously positive if we can bring that to a fruitful conclusion, in addition to dealing with the Middle East process.

Beyond that, we are, of course, very much consumed by the challenges in Afghanistan; and, nowadays, Pakistan is very much in the focus, as well. There is no quick fix in a country like Afghanistan – and it’s not possible, either, to have only the limited objective of some security and then leave. We must see that there is some sort of functioning and self-sustaining state in Afghanistan, that can guarantee that stability, for years and years and generations to come.

That’s not impossible – it has been achieved before. But we must understand that state-building of this sort requires a wide coalition of efforts; that it requires a large amount of what we can call “strategic patience”; and it requires a coordination of efforts of all of the major actors, be that regional and be that global. The European Union is certainly making its efforts – be that on the political side; be that on the economic side; and be that, also, on the stability, the rule of the law and
the military side. Although the brunt of the military effort is borne by U.S. forces, primarily in the difficult South and the difficult East of the country.

Pakistan is, needless to say, a challenge – and you need to look at the fundamentals of that country, as well. It’s 170 million people, as we know – growing, growing fast. They require, in order to have unemployment stay roughly the same, they require 1.5 million new jobs every year.

How do we help them with that? Well, that’s a question of the trade, and their possibilities for developing their economy. Otherwise, it’s not going to work. That is not going to be possible without the rule of the law; that is not going to be possible without democratic institutions. And here we must note that, for all of the negative news that we have about the security situation in Pakistan in the media – not least these days, and not least on this side of the Atlantic – Pakistan has been making progress in the last year.

It now has a democratic governance; it has restored elements of the rule of the law that weren’t there before. These are not things that, short-term, sorts out the security situation – they don’t. But they pave the way for the long-term stability that is fundamental to having an economy that works; that gives employment; that gives prospect; and gives the possibility for stability in the future.

Without that, nothing is going to work. And here, also, the European Union is deploying more of its diplomatic, and political and economic activities. We have a summit meeting with the Pakistanis coming up. There’s one coming up here in Washington tomorrow; there’s another one coming up in Europe, on the 17th of June, following a series of meetings that we have had in the last few months.

Well, I said that I was going to be short. I violated that severely, but let me blame that on the world. (Laughter) Because, as I said, there are challenges out there, but they are, really, of a magnitude beyond the usual. All of this between sort of Palestine and the Punjab are difficult challenges that need to be dealt with. And add to that the once-in-a-millennium challenge of the climate issue – and add to that the once-in-a-generation challenge of the economic crisis and its political ramifications – and we can be fairly certain that those of us involved in international and economic affairs, that we are not the ones that are going to be hit, primarily, by unemployment in the years to come. Thanks.

(Applause.)

MR. CAROTHERS: Perhaps you’d like to remain seated during the questions – it might be more comfortable. And would you like me to call on people, or would you prefer to do it?

MR. BILDT: No, you can do it.

MR. CAROTHERS: Yes, why don’t I do that – yeah. Let’s just start right here in the front. And if you could identify yourself, please, there’s a microphone coming around.

Q: Carl Hirschman (sp), from the National Endowment for Democracy. Thank you for talking about so many issues, but I want to raise two additional ones that are on your plate and that you didn’t mention. One being Bosnia, which has a whole process of constitutional reform coming
up, to be succeeded by an election. And the second being Zimbabwe, which also has a process of constitutional reform coming up, to be succeeded by an election. Both by troubled situations that, really, the EU has a big role in, and I wonder if you could comment on both of them.

MR. BILDT: Well, I could comment on Bosnia. Bosnia has a number of challenges, and will have for a long time to come. This is a complicated place. It’s been for a long time – will remain for a long time. It is one of the most complex multi-ethnic societies that we have in Europe. And while others are complicated because you have two nationalities, it becomes particularly difficult to handle when you have three, and where the size difference between them is of the nature that we have in Bosnia.

Add to that that you have the legacy of war – and add to that the fact that, even if you could go back to medieval times and say there was a Bosnian state – we really haven’t had a Bosnian state for half a millennium. And so trying to set up that state to operate – in a challenging environment, of a very difficult war. And with a complexity that we are grappling with in places like Belgium and others, without any sort of smashing success there, either.

That being said, we sort of gave them, or negotiated with them, a constitution in Dayton. That’s not a perfect piece. Those of you – and there are some here who were involved in that process and remember the views I had at the time concerning their constitution – concerning that constitution – might remember that I was not one of the enthusiastic supporters of it.

But that was what was possible at the time. And then what we said to the Bosnians – and I think we should still say to the Bosnians: Now it’s your country. It’s not our country, it’s your country. And in much the same way as we have a difficult process of constitutional reform in Sweden – or the United States, and whatever – and they tend to be rather long-term and complicated. You need to find your own compromises – and you need to find them.

And I think we should, perhaps, have been somewhat clearer on that message in the past few years. There’s been a tendency among Bosnians to talk more to foreigners than to Bosnians, because they believe that foreigners can rewrite their constitution, because they can’t rewrite it on their own.

Well, that’s not going to work, because that’s not the way you build a state. So I have a somewhat sort of hesitant attitude to go into too much of dictating a new constitution to the Bosnians. There are limits to what we can do.

That being said, they are likely to seek membership of the European Union. Membership of the European Union, as I said, a fairly demanding thing. Decisions are taken in Brussels, on a large number of areas – increasing number of areas. There needs to be the mechanism that translates these decisions into sort of actual things that are happening in the country in question. And we need to be assured that there are those structures in Bosnia that makes it possible for them to fulfill obligations of membership.

So I think when we go into the process of screening for membership – before we go into the accession negotiations; that might take some time – we will start to identify the different issues that need to be resolved concerning the Bosnian constitution. I think that would be a more constructive way of approaching it, because at the moment you have sort of the different Bosnian factions.
If I take two of them, one is framing the constitutional debate and says: Abolish the republic of Serbia. And another one is framing it in terms of abolishing Bosnia. I mean, these are the unrealistic options that is not going to happen. They know that, but they are playing that for the respective audience, nationalist audience, when they are approaching elections. And elections are something that, with all of the drawbacks associated with elections, we are basically in favor of. So that’s why I sort of favor this particular approach to managing the constitutional evolution of Bosnia in the years ahead.

Zimbabwe is, of course, a very tricky case. I mean, there are two countries in the world that really stand out in terms of politics destroying societies. The worst is North Korea, by a dimension; the second, a strong candidate, is, of course, Zimbabwe. It’s been thoroughly destroyed by the politics that have been pursued by the Mugabe regime. Whether the new coalition arrangement can work? I don’t know – I think it’s still early days. But I think, from the European Union side, we are discussing whether we should make certain movies, and certain openings, and see if we can help certain of them to make this work, one way or the other.

If that is on the constitutional side, or if it’s on the economic-management side, I don’t know. But the humanitarian implications of the continuing collapse of Zimbabwe are, of course, grave. But, at the same time, we have reason to be rather cautious, as long as Mr. Mugabe’s there – because he’s not proved to be too constructive a partner, to put it mildly, in the years past.

MR. CAROTHERS: We have a question here, and then I’ll come to the other side in a minute. Yeah.

Q: Thank you. My name is David Nikuradze – I represent Georgian Television Network, Rustavi 2, in Washington, D.C., Minister, you’ve been involved in Georgia-Russia issues in the very beginning. How do you command the latest developments in the region? It seems this very agreement is not fully implemented. And, also, I’d like to ask your commentary about the internal problems in Georgia. It’s been extremely difficult to start negotiations between the opposition leaders and Georgian government. Thank you, sir.

MR. BILDT: I agree with that. I mean, there are two aspects to that question. I think, as was stated by both the United States and the European Union the other day, what happened with the sort of agreement, or whatever it is, that Russia had with South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and taking over the border-management function, or the border-control function, that was clearly a violation of the agreement of August of last year. It wasn’t the first, but it was a violation. And it was said very clearly, by both the European Union and the United States, that that was the case.

Then Georgia is a democracy, with all of the divisions, and disputes and debates associated with that. Its economy is doing better than a number of countries in the vicinity, it has to be said, so that aspect is among the better. Then there has been sort of the divisions between the governing majority and the other parties.

I think they should be able to sit down and agree on the things they can agree on – how they should operate the political system, until such time as elections are going to be held. You can’t have elections every month, or every year. I’m in favor of elections, but an amount of stability, according to the constitution, should always be there.
But we have been trying to say, to both of them, that they need to sit down, and there should be room for the dialogue. And those are the means that you use in any society for resolving the difficulties that are there.

MR. CAROTHERS: (Inaudible.)

Q: Thank you. Andre Sitova (ph), from Tass, the Russian news agency. Sort of a follow-up. I guess the implication in the previous question – one of the implications – was that the situation is tense enough, and I understand there is a military maneuver being planned – which probably will not contribute to an easing of those tensions. So if you could comment on that in a couple of words.

But my real question is about the Eastern Partnership that you mentioned. I would say that the previous American administration was pushing the Europeans in a particular direction, in terms of the Eastern European regions – a sort of NATO-centric direction. What are you hearing from the new team – from the Obama team? What are you expecting from them? Is there a division of responsibility of sorts between you and the Americans, in terms of taking care of that region? Thank you.

MR. BILDT: No. I mean, there’s a partnership and there’s a dialogue on virtually every issue. I mean, we are in a phase of a very close and fruitful transatlantic dialogue on virtually every issue. I mean, I’ve been around for some time, and this is the most productive period in transatlantic relationship that I can remember. I haven’t been there forever – I wouldn’t put that out – but for some time, at least.

The Eastern Partnership, I think, I said is driven primarily by the wishes of these countries, themselves. Ukraine, for example, would like to go for membership of the European Union as fast as they could. That is not possible, for a number of reasons. The countries of the Southern Caucasus – notably, Georgia – want to go very fast in relationship with the European Union.

And we’re also negotiating a number of arrangements with them. We have a negotiation with Ukraine on an association agreement – a deep free-trade; we have the visa-liberalization issues; they will be part of the European Energy Community; they will be part of our transport community, within the not-too-distant future. This is our way of answering their wishes to be part of our structure of integration.

And we do that both bilaterally with the different countries. And we now do it within this multilateral framework that is the Eastern Partnership. So if there is something that drives this development, it is the wishes, the aspirations of these nations, themselves – of course, believe it or not, by the attractiveness of the European Union.

Q: (Inaudible.)

MR. BILDT: Ask them. I mean, this is not something driven by Washington. This is something driven by the wishes of these countries, themselves. That’s already in offing – that they’ve been knocking our door – knocking, knocking, knocking. They’ve not always been satisfied with the answers we’ve been able to give them.
I wouldn’t say that the Eastern Partnership fulfills all of their aspirations and wishes – it doesn’t. But it’s a further step that makes it possible for us to more effectively answer some of the wishes, and needs and aspirations of these countries.

I don’t think it’s the last step. Whether Ukraine will be able to move toward membership or not, I think that’s into the future. But we have in the Treaty of Rome Article 59, which says that membership is open to every European country that is a democracy, and that fulfills the criteria. And there is no sort of big line drawn on the map of the east of Europe saying that beyond that line Article 59 of the Treaty does not apply. Then, as said, membership of the European Union is more demanding nowadays than it was before because it is much more – I mean, we do very much more – integration has progressed. So it takes its time. But Article 59 applies to each and everyone, not to the United States, though.

MR. CAROTHERS: Come here. I see you in the back; I’ll get to you, but first here, yes. Sir, yes.

Q: Thank you, Minister, for your remarks. I’m Bruce Maloveich (ph), private citizen.

The subject of Tehran, you touched on it earlier, but if you were President Obama, how would you approach reengagement? I’ve read debate between the gradualist, low-key approach or a dramatic breakthrough. What would be your approach if you were the president?

MR. BILDT: Well, I mean, everyone is in favor of the dramatic breakthrough, but no one believes that’s possible. As said, I mean, you three decades of deep mistrust. Some of it is well-founded by the way. And whenever you are in discussions with Americans, Iranians, I mean, the American discussion goes back to the U.S. Embassy and what happened there. The Iranian discussion often goes back to ’53 and Mosaddeq. And sort of history has its role. And then you have – on top of that of course you have the important issue for the day: I mean, you have the nuclear issue, and you have the support for terrorist activities of different sorts. And you need to address both the mistrust and the actual issues.

And as I said, I don’t expect this to be possible over a weekend. I think it will take some time. For known reasons you can’t go on forever. But I do think that some of the initial steps that I have seen taken – I mean, the address bar – the letters and the address and whatever of the president have been sort of an extremely sort of inspiring start to what is bound to be a very difficult process. And I think it is really overdue that effort is made.

MR. CAROTHERS: Yes, right there in the back. Right behind you.

Q: My name is Don (inaudible) Croatian News Agency correspondent in Washington.

May I ask you as a member of European Troika and future European president to comment today’s decision of Croatian state leadership to accept the latest proposal from a European enlargement commissioner, Olli Rehn, for settlement of its border dispute with Slovenia. And second, what will be the priority of the Swedish presidency toward this issue? Would you support the speeding of accession talks with Croatia so they can be finished by the end of your term? Thank you.
MR. BILDT: No, this is a complicated issue. I’m not quite certain that everyone is aware of the details of it, the Croat-Slovene border dispute. But we have on the table – that’s by Commissioner Rehn – very much supported by us and by the French and the Czechs – the trio – a compromised proposal which we think is constructive and good and would allow resolution of the dispute, and would allow, which is also very important, that we go on with the Croat accession negotiations. I welcome everyone supporting and adhering to the proposal of Commission Rehn, but beyond that I don’t want to go too much into the details of it.

On the second part of your question, yeah, I mean, I think the accession of Croatia is of course important. It’s important for Croatia but it’s also important for the rest of the region. It demonstrates the European path for Central Europe. It’s only there for the other – for the countries of the Balkans, and there are some other issues that need to be dealt with. So it’s not only this particular one; there are some substantive issues.

I would hope that if we get a resolution of this, that it will be possible to speed up. And I would wish that it was possible to conclude the accession negotiations by this year. Whether that will be possible or not, I don’t know, but I would hope it would be possible.

MR. CAROTHERS: Let me just take the prerogative of the chair, if I could maybe ask you two questions, one I think probably relatively easy, maybe the other one a little bit more awkward.

The first one, I wonder if you could talk a bit more about the Swedish presidency that’s coming up, and give us a sense of the framework and the priorities that the Swedish government hopes to put forward, and in particular my own area of interest, there’s been I know a lot of preparation within the Swedish government on the issue of democracy and a European approach to democracy, and I wonder if you could comment on that.

A more difficult question might be, from the Swedish perspective, or your perspective, is you said the world is turning to Europe in many ways, but watched here from Washington, as you say, this is a very productive period at least of dialogue trans-Atlantic. But Europe still faces the problem of Britain, France, and Germany speaking with three voices in the world. And to what extent do you think as the world looks to Europe more and the United States opens up perhaps more productive lines is there some prospect for this changing.

MR. BILDT: For what?

MR. CAROTHERS: The tendency of Europe to speak with multiple voices on foreign affairs?

MR. BILDT: Well, I think there is some prospect. And that goes also to the question of the Swedish presidency. If you look at it from the perspective of Europe, one of the key issues that we have to deal with is the transition from the Nice treaty to the Lisbon treaty. Now we go into constitutional issues again, although of a European nature.

I mean, the Lisbon treaty means a couple of things. In terms of justice and home affairs, it’s another step of integration, which I think is necessary in view of the fact that we have no abolished all border control – (inaudible) – one – it’s an integrated economy; it’s an integrated area where you
move around. The court of justice and home affairs needs to be somewhat more coordinated and integrated. We hope we can take some not insubstantial further steps in that particular area.

And then in terms of foreign and security affairs, to have a de facto European foreign minister, and to have an elected president of the European Council, and to set up what we don’t call a diplomatic service, but we call it a European action service. We’re not allowed to call it foreign minister; we’re not allowed to call it a diplomatic service, but it is de facto foreign and it is de facto diplomatic service.

By merging all of the activities of the commission and of the council, and then adding elements from the national diplomatic services, these are huge steps that are going to be taken. Does that mean that everyone, 500 million people in Europe are going to say the same thing on every international issue? No, it does not. And it sort of might also happen that in Washington you hear different voices from – even from the same administration on an issue. But we move towards a more coherent common foreign policy.

Then the different countries are going to have their different national aspects of it. I mean, we – as said, we’re always shaped by history, and that Portugal looks somewhat – looks with different eyes at Brazil than Estonia does is fairly obvious. And that would sort of color the input that each of the nations give to the common policies. But there will be more of common policies.

Then we have special roles for certain nations. I mean, the U.K. and France are permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, and I don’t see them giving up that. So they will operate in that capacity and that fora. And others might have other roles. But the direction of change is very clear.

But, as you know, the Lisbon treaty we don’t really know. We’re going to vote in the Czech senate I think tomorrow on the Czech ratification. I hope that will pass. I think it will pass as a matter of fact. There are some outstanding issues with the German constitutional court. Democracy, as I said, is a complicated thing. We await the signature of the Polish president, and we’re going to have a referendum in Ireland. And that I would guess will happen in sort of mid-October, in that timeframe, and then we will have the somewhat complicated task of managing the institutional transition.

And we also have the other transition, which is fairly normal. We have the election to the European parliament on June the 7th, and then we’re going to set up a new commission. Well, that’s going to be somewhat complicated when we don’t know the treaty basis for that particular commission because that determines the size of the commission. And it will be difficult to start to nominate a commissioner when you don’t know how many commissioners you are going to have. So I would say that a lot of the political – a lot of oxygen will be consumed by the handling the treaty succession or treaty transition issues in the European Union during the – (inaudible).

Then on the presidency otherwise – climate obviously. The European Union has a big role to maneuver the world towards a global climate dealing – Copenhagen in December. That is going to consumer a lot of political energy as well. We have to manage the economy both in terms of the G-20 global context, in terms of the internal European issues, and in terms of what I would call the financial political crisis management that I think will consume a much larger percentage of our energies than people are aware of at this period in time.
Add to that the enlargement issues that we touched upon, bet that Turkey, be that Croatia, be that implications of the Cyprus negotiations. Then we have our role in the Middle East peace process, and then we have all of the other issues that are on the agenda that we’ve been discussing with our American friends in the last few days.

Democracy promotion is part of the DNA of the European Union. I mean, there’s been a debate in this town where everything was democracy for a while, and suddenly the democracy debate has gone somewhat silent. We’ve also been sort of something in between in the sense that it’s always been part of what we have been trying to do.

When I talk about the rule of the law, I de facto talk about democracy as well. We do understand that sort of the evolution of countries towards more of the rule of the law and democracy and representative government is not over-a-weekend thing, but it’s really an evolution. And when I talked about the – you know, the Mediterranean, when I talk about the Eastern partnership, they all include instruments that we devise in order to try to promote that sort of development. So democracy promotion is sort of the part of the DNA of the foreign activities of the European Union.

MR. CAROTHERS: Okay, good. Thank you. Well, we have lots of questions and only a limited time, so let me see what I can do here. Let’s take two or three, and then we’ll go on. I’ll come here and then here and then here, and I’ll work back to there. Yeah, right here, on your left. Keep your questions relatively short, and remember to introduce yourselves.

Q: I’m Mike Nelson. I’m a professor of Internet studies at Georgetown.

When last we met in Stockholm, we both had different jobs. You were working as a BC in the IT industry, and yet in your talk you haven’t talked about the impact of these new technologies. We’ve seen over the last five, 10 years, a total change in e-commerce, in e-government. The media now is in a complete phase change. In general, we’ve seen the cult of the professionals challenged, as the Internet allows the wisdom of crowds to share their information and to come up to conclusions.

One place we haven’t seen a lot of change is in diplomacy and intelligence gather. And I’d like to know your thoughts on how you think the Internet, cell phone technology could change the game in the next five or 10 years, both enabling more people to talk to more people across boundaries, and also allowing more collection of open-source intelligence, collecting information on everything from corruption to security threats to the impacts of global warming by citizens rather than the professionals.

MR. CAROTHERS: Thank you. Then we’ll come here, just behind you.

MR. BILDT: Well, I just –

MR. CAROTHERS: Hold on, we’ll take a couple of them, and then if you could just make a note – yeah, go ahead.

Q: I’m Mike Holtz, Johns Hopkins, SAIS, and McLarty Associates.
I’d like to get back briefly, for the third time I guess, to EU constitutional issues. I’m going to be optimistic and say that I think that Lisbon will be ratified. Even if it is, however, if we look upon enlargement as to some extent a foreign policy issue – I mean, it’s obviously a domestic EU issue, but it has foreign implications – what do you think about the fact that France and Austria have laws that say that it has to go to a referendum in each country before they could vote for Turkey’s accession? I mean, is this going to continue after Lisbon, and wouldn’t that set a – or doesn’t it set kind of a precedent that’s dangerous for a common policy, the EU?

MR. CAROTHERS: And one more. Just behind you. Could you hand the microphone to this woman? Thank you.

Q: Hi. (Inaudible) – Georgetown University. I would like to know if there will be some ASDB priorities for Swedish presidency, and if – in order to improve trans-Atlantic relations, do you think it is possible to get the European approach for the review of a strategy concept of NATO?

MR. CAROTHERS: Why don’t you go ahead and take those in which ever order you prefer?

MR. BILDT: Well, the strategic council of NATO will be revised. I’m coming from a country that for historical reasons is not a member of NATO, so I have to limit myself in terms of commenting on the internal workings of what is still a rather friendly organization from my point of view. (Laughter.) And I noticed that I was in fact invited to a conference in NATO when they’re going to launch the debate about the strategic council.

But let’s see. I mean, we face – NATO is an organization in transition as well. Although there has been – while, if you remember, the focus has been a lot of out-of-area, to go in the phrase of the old debate. There’s been, I understand, an area – the area the – sort of the treaty areas can back into focus to some extent doing the last year. Which implications that will have remains to be seen. But from the EU’s side, of course we see NATO as a partner when it comes to stability operations in different parts of the world. That might be Afghanistan, but it’s also Kosovo, to take on example. It has been Bosnia in the past; I don’t know why it’s got to be in the future.

And I have the situation of course, if I look at it in my national capacity that Swedish forces operating abroad, they operate under the flag of the United Nations. Sometimes they operate under the flag of the European Union, as I indicated, and they operate under the flag of NATO. We now have a situation where we have the largest number operating under the flag of NATO. So NATO is evolving in a sort of direction.

Well, enlargement – enlargement is a controversial issue, as I indicated – we all know that – and has always been. Remember that the first enlargement debate, the first big enlargement debate was in the early ’60s when the Brits for some reason wanted to join. And there was someone of a nationality that I will not disclose who said no – (laughter) – for 10 years and blocked that entire process for 10 years.

Every single enlargement since then has been characterized by two things. It’s been opposed inside the union. There have always been those saying don’t dilute. These other people are
not real Europeans; they are not going to be like us; it’s more cozy, and the translation booths are going to be too many at the meetings. I mean, there has been all sorts of arguments of that sort.

I mean, that – I vividly remember this. When we, Sweden, small, harmless, peace-loving nation – (laughter) – when we applied for membership, together with the Austrians and the Finns and the Norwegians – and I had to sort of go to the European Parliament X numbers of times and say that – blue eyes, nice, blond, all of that – (laughter). At the end of the day, there were still 80 members of the European Parliament that did not vote for the accession of Sweden to the European Union, primarily because of the dilution argument: stay where we are, not others. So that’s the one thing that has been there. It’s always been those that have been skeptical.

Second, that is to characterize every single enlargement has obviously been a smashing success afterwards. I mean, every single enlargement has in fact made the European Union stronger, more relevant, and more attune to the needs that our – of our different societies. And one might also note that it hasn’t necessarily been – if you look at the fears that whether it was that we the old ones, the six, we are the ones that are going to drive everything and the other ones are going to dilute it, that’s not been the case. Go back to the treaty debate when we had the constitutional treaty. That was turned down in France and the Netherlands. It was the original six that that particularly politics failed; it wasn’t in the nuance. So that’s to sort of just note the historical context.

That being said, the Turkish issue is a more difficult one. Go back in history and history accounts – you can argue that to some extent Europe was defined by the battle with the Turks and the Ottomans. I mean, the siege of Vienna is not in living memory but still in memory. So to overcome this, it’s going to take quite some time. And you have the debate in France, you have the debate in Austria, you have the debate in Germany, you have the debate in – (inaudible) – countries.

A lot of the argument, in my opinion, against the membership of Turkey, when they point out all of the complex problems associated with the membership of Turkey, are correct. But I would argue that the arguments in favor are even more correct, but the fact that we have strong arguments on both sides testify to the magnitude of the issue that we are facing there.

Now, they have decided to have referendums. That’s their choice. I wouldn’t favor it in my country. I think parliamentary democracies overall are a rather good concept of governance. But you see, what would happen if arrival – when we arrive I hope at that particular stage is that the referendum will be over a treaty that has been signed. And a treaty will not be signed unless signed by all of the 27. So that referendum can by definition only happen when the state leadership of the countries that are going to have the referendum have committed themselves to that particular treaty. Whether one has thought through exactly how that is going to operate at that particular period in time, that remains to be seen, but we are not there yet.

The Internet and IT – yes, I didn’t touch upon that; I’m sorry about that. But I do think it has had profound implications already as a matter of fact. I know it is one of the funny things I noted yesterday that was one of the new bloggers on the political scene is President Medvedev. Yeah, well, he’s a blogger, and he’s not only – what he’s done lately is to open up two things. He’s opened up a video blog, and he’s opened up – even more important, he has opened up for comments on his blog.
I have a blog as well, and it happens that I take away the one comment or the other because they are sort of racist or something like that, but otherwise to have open comment possibilities on your blog is a good thing. And the fact that President Medvedev does that is I think a good thing, and the fact that he does it is a sign of something, both the power of the Internet, the need for politicians to be more open, and the willingness to open up to criticism. So as I greet him welcome in the global community of bloggers.

I think the Internet and new technologies have already had a profound impact on international diplomacy and intelligence. Most of the information that we get now we get through what you’d call open source, and it’s enormously different. The fact that we can sort of on our fingertips, we can access news and information instantly from all over the world and we can do it directly makes a huge difference. We do respect both media and the diplomats that we depended upon on the past. We can now access directly, and we can also get our message out directly in a way that was not the case. So the impact is I think huge.

And also it makes it more difficult to run authoritarian societies. I think one of the biggest blogging societies in Iran, if I remember it rightly, with a huge number of people blogging, and accessing blogs all over the world. China, they are trying to sort of stop this. Good luck to them. I think they would fail because the power of people on the net when it comes to their wish to access information is so large, and that will have a long-term effect on the possibilities to effectively run authoritarian societies and we have all reason to welcome that.

MR. CAROTHERS: Okay, we’re really short on time. I’m just going to take two. This gentleman on the aisle and you there – well, there’s two of you both nodding your head, but we’ll see. (Laughter.) Please keep your questions short because we need to finish up.

Q: Jack – (inaudible) – German Studies Institute.

Can I ask you once more on Iran? We have I think had some competition here next door with the president of Israel who had made it patently clear at an APEC lecture yesterday that he would not tolerate a nuclear Iran. Is it your feeling that we can stop Iran from getting to a nuclear threshold, and if so, how, and if not, can we tolerate a nuclear Iran?


Q: I’m – (inaudible) – from APEC. And my question is also about Iran. It seems that the administration – the U.S. administration’s strategy is to start with a good-faith but time-limited dialogue with Iran to try to get Iran to stop the enrichment of uranium. But if the time they – time period elapses in Iran – does not stop the enrichment, then the United States I think prepares to get into much tougher economic sanctions against Iran and would try to seek the help of the Europeans and Russians and Chinese and others to make those sanctions more effective. I was wondering if, in your belief, the European Union would cooperate with such a strategy and would try perhaps also to help persuade the Russians and Chinese to join as well.

MR. CAROTHERS: We’ll consider this one and then take the gentleman right in front and then that will be it.

Q: John Roberts with Platts.
You did put in your title that you drop in a mention of Baku. Have you any concepts or thoughts on what might come out of the Prague meeting at the end of the week concerning energy transportation from the Caspian, Azerbaijan and to Europe?

MR. CAROTHERS: Okay, that will be it. Thanks very much, and then we’ll finish up with your remarks.

MR. BILDT: I will unfortunately not be at the Prague meeting on the southern corridor, but it is a priority. There are somewhat different options on how to do it both in terms of actually how you do the corridor and how we access the gas and from where the gas comes, and I’d not like to go too much into the details, but it is a priority, and that meeting is obviously an important one when it comes to the energy security of Europe long-term, primarily I would say the gas security of those countries that are gas-consuming. I represent one of the few countries in Europe that have virtually no consumption of natural gas, but that is for historical and other reasons.

The Iranian issue I don’t pretend that I have any solution to it, but I fail to see that there is any solution that is not in the one way or the other diplomatic and political. You can’t think away Iran from the map, and I don’t – I’m not aware of any methods by which you can take away Iran from the map. And accordingly at some point in time, we need to have some sort of modus vivendi with that nation. Whether that is achievable in the short term or in the somewhat more medium and long term, I don’t know, but I think we have really to try. And the United – Europe has been trying for some time with the EU-3 negotiations. But with due respect, it’s about the United States.

That being said, I think it requires the support of a somewhat wider array of other international players in order to give the message to Iran, both on their nuclear program or the military aspect – or the potential military aspects of their program if we face it like that, as well as on the role that Iran, we see Iran playing in the future. That applies to the Europeans, it applies to the Russians, it applies to the Indians, it applies to the Chinese, it might apply to the Gulf countries that are important players. It might apply to the Brazilians to take another sort of emerging powers of the world. I think all of them must be somewhat closer engaged in the diplomatic efforts.

The sanctions – there are sanctions that are related to the non-respect when it comes to enrichment and to the effect that some of the historical issues, so-called, have not been cleared up to the full satisfaction of the IAEA. I think one should be aware of in Tehran that if there is not the possibility of moving forward on this sort of benevolent, the diplomatic power, so at some point of time the question of further sanctions will be on the table. That will not be an easy one in the Security Council. And in my opinion, all of our historical experience is that when it comes to international sanctions of that sort, it’s only when they’re sanctioned by the Security Council that they really work. If we sort of replace the trade of one country with the trade of another country, you can debate who sanctions is really against.

So we need to as much as we can work through the Security Council. And that only underlines the point that I made, the need to build a wider international coalition on this particular issue. Can we tolerate – do we wish – we don’t wish a nuclear – military nuclearized Iran, needless to say. I sometimes make the comparison – and I know that is a wild one – with Sweden and the evolution of our nuclear program. Now I’m back in the ’50s and the ’60s. I mean, there was a time in the late ’40s and the early ’50s when the entire security establishment of Sweden was absolutely
convinced there was no way in which we can safeguard our independence without nuclear weapons. And we launched a fairly impressive program to that effect. And we built up – we did an expensive one.

And you know how these things work. I mean, you have the one installation built and another installation, and you add your capacities, and you became more capable, and you can say that we had a buildup of our nuclear – military nuclear capability that went on for more than 10 years until, say, in the early ’60s. By that time, we had more of a debate on some of the strategic options for our country.

There has been a shift in some of the security establishment because some of them were saying what on earth should we use these weapons for, and how should we pay them? They had been looking at the details of how we use nuclear weapons, and they had been sort of scared by some of the implications of the nuclear program. There was a shift in the international atmosphere, and accordingly we started to see the shift in the debate in Sweden. That did not mean that we relinquished the military nuclear option immediately, far from it. But what happened also was that we stopped funding some of the things that had been necessary to go into full production which was planned for ’63 or ’64 if I remember. We should have sort of a production of sort of 60 or 80 nuclear weapons at that particular time, but we stopped funding some of these things.

And then our civilian nuclear energy program took another – we went from heavy water to light water, and you know the implication of that, which mean that sort of lead times – for 10, 15 years, lead time for producing nuclear weapons shortened all of the time. And then for a number of reasons, lead times started to increase again. But it was not until the late ’60s then we said that, no, we commit ourselves to not developing Swedish nuclear weapons, but it was a 20-year evolution of that particular program. I’m just saying that I think this tells you some lesson in how the nuclear issue is dealt with within countries.

South Africa is another example that has gone through sort of an evolution where they debated and debated. They went to develop nuclear weapons but they also took the decision then to get rid of them. If there are lessons in this, our handling of the Iranian issue, I don’t know, but I wouldn’t exclude it. And I do think it could be useful to look at the way in which we have been dealing with other cases, also to make clear that this would be to the detriment of the security of Iran in different ways. I mean, we don’t want to take away from their security, but we would try to explain to them that to go forward this particular route would be to the detriment of their security, and you can point at examples in other countries.

Then it might be that we need to look at the sort of the broader issues in the broader NPT issues, in the broader NPT framework. We need to look at the entire Middle East in one way or the other probably. We need to look perhaps and what we can do in terms of the nuclear fuel cycle, in terms of international arrangements for that. So it is an issue of extraordinary complexity in my opinion and of extraordinary importance as well.

MR. CAROTHERS: And as promised, the foreign minister has taken us on a tour of the world, stopping in many important places with characteristic insight and honesty. We thank you for that. And it is a busy time, so we appreciate your coming to take the time with us. We wish you well in this important period, and we look forward to having you back.
(Applause.)

(END)