

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

**IS A LEAGUE OF DEMOCRACIES A
GOOD IDEA?**

MODERATOR:

MORTON H. HALPERIN,
DIRECTOR,

U.S. ADVOCACY FOR THE OPEN SOCIETY INSTITUTE

SPEAKERS:

THOMAS CAROTHERS,

VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDIES,
INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE,
CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

IVO DAALDER,

SENIOR FELLOW,
FOREIGN POLICY STUDIES;
SYDNEY STEIN JR. CHAIR IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

TOD LINDBERG,

RESEARCH FELLOW,
HOOVER INSTITUTION, STANFORD UNIVERSITY,
EDITOR, POLICY REVIEW

THURSDAY, MAY 29, 2008

*Transcript by
Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.*

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

MORTON H. HALPERIN: All right, we're about to begin so if any of you see the two other speakers, if you would ask them to come up here, we're about to begin.

Well, let me welcome you here on behalf of the Carnegie Endowment. I'm Morton Halperin. I'm the director of U.S. Advocacy for the Open Society Institute. And in the current spirit of full disclosure about everything, I should say that I have been associated with and continue to be associated with the Community of Democracies. And at some point I will take the prerogative of the chair to offer yet a third explanation of why it has not been successful and why I still think it can be successful.

But I want to begin by telling a story which I think for me sums up this whole meeting, and it's the story about the debate which was raised in a small town in czarist Russia. It was a Jewish town, and there was a beautiful young daughter of the rabbi. And the debate was about whether or not she should marry the czar's son. And in the one hand it was argued that she should marry the czar's son because then she could protect the Jews. And on the other hand it was argued that she should marry a rabbi and give birth to more Jewish children. And this debate went on and on and on. And finally the father of this young woman said I have decided she should marry the czar's son. He said now we only have to persuade the czar. (Laughter.)

And with that, I am pleased to introduce Tom Carothers, who, as you all know, is the vice president of studies of the Carnegie Endowment and directs their work on democracy.

TOM CAROTHERS: Thanks very much, Morton. Since I recently set out my views on the subject of the League of Democracies in a couple of writings, I'm just going to summarize them very briefly in order to give as much time as possible to Ivo and Tod to come back and also Mort.

When a new president takes office next January, he or she will face quite a daunting set of foreign policy challenges. Just to name a couple, there will be the question of how to continue the path with North Korea, them giving up their nuclear weapons. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict will almost certainly still be festering. We'll have to face what to do about Iraq. The question of Iran's quest for nuclear weapons will still very much be on the table. We'll still be in Afghanistan in a very difficult war. Climate change will be ever greater and ever more difficult to solve, and those are just to name a few.

Now, if we suppose that the next president decides to launch a big new foreign policy initiative focused on the creation of a league or concert of democracies—we put aside for a minute the difficulties in establishing such an organization and imagine that it has been set up—I think we have to ask ourselves how would it help with any of these particular challenges. On North Korea, for example, China is crucial to progress in that domain. It would not be part of the association. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it's a little bit hard to see the relationship between the League of Democracies and the particular issues at stake there, with respect to Iraq, we'll probably be looking for more cooperation from various Arab autocratic allies, as well possibly as from Iran. On Iran, we'll probably be trying to work closely with Russia as well as with some of the Gulf states. On climate change, the U.S.-China relationship will be essential, or the question of whether the United States and China can move together on climate change and so forth.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

If the League of Democracies wouldn't be useful on these, then why would we go through the trouble of trying to set it up? This, I think, highlights the first central problem I'd like to mention about the idea, which is that most of the serious international problems facing the United States require cooperation with non-democratic countries. And creating a League of Democracies I think would actually render such cooperation more difficult.

Imagine, for example—just take one region, the Middle East, and in particular the Arab world. The Arab world is vital to U.S. security in various ways with respect to oil, with respect to counterterrorism, and so forth. And I would say that the Arab world, or at least the Arab political elites, are eager and in fact straining to see a new U.S. policy in the region; one that is more realistic and more effective. If among the first steps a new U.S. president were to focus on was a League of Democracies and say, this is of central importance to me, and by the way, none of you are invited to join except perhaps Iraq, there would go the chance for a new Middle East policy in the United States government.

The second problem I'd like to highlight is going back to the problem of establishing the league. I think the basic problem is that the world has absolutely no interest or appetite for a U.S.-led ideologically based multilateral initiative. It was hard enough in 2000 at a much better period both with respect to the U.S. position in the world and with respect to the state of democracy to try to get the Community of Democracies going, and no one knows that better than the man at my left.

It's a much less propitious set of circumstances right now for such an initiative. I think that pushing a league would seem not like relaunching democracy promotion and relaunching multilateralism, but rather a failure to listen, a failure to understand the most basic outlook of many other nations. Many people in the world are ready to work with the United States in existing multilateral institutions, but they do not want the United States going around those.

I was in Europe last week in a fairly large conference in The Hague on promoting democratic governance attended mostly by senior European officials, and while I was there, I went around to people from Norway, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and elsewhere, and talked with them, and I must admit shamelessly handed out copies of my recent policy brief on the League of Democracies, and I could not stir up or detect a trace of interest in the idea. And in fact, when I sat with one friend of mine, a very senior Dutch colleague, who's quite active in democracy circles, and very pro-American, extremely engaged in these issues, and he, I would say, reads a lot of things that come out of Washington, he looked at my policy brief and he said, I don't mean to be rude but why did you waste more than five minutes on this idea, which is a complete non-starter and it's not worth the sort of attention. And I said, well, that's what we do in Washington. (Laughter.)

The third point I would make is that unfortunately I don't think in many areas we share as many interests with other democracies as we might initially think. Even a relatively compact grouping of democracies like NATO struggles very much to agree on issues within its basic mandate. On the war in Iraq, NATO was deeply profoundly divided, or at least NATO members, not NATO itself, but obviously key NATO members. NATO didn't agree last month on a key issue with respect to membership for Ukraine and Georgia.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

So if we try to take such a compact and expand both the membership and expand the range of issues on which it would deal, I think we would end up with a very low level of unity that I think would be ineffective.

And I think there is a serious under-appreciation in Washington for how strongly many democracies in the world, especially in the developing world disagree fundamentally with the U.S. outlook on interventionism. And this disagreement is profound. It's lasted for decades and I think will continue to last for decades. And the idea that the United States could legitimate its interventionism or future interventionism by going to an association which was made up of countries that include these developing country democracies is wishful thinking. Yet if we exclude India, Brazil, Mexico, Argentina, South Africa, and so forth, such a league or association I think would lack credibility.

Moreover, differences between the United States and many developing country democracies are not just about interventionism, they are about all kinds of things. Yesterday Michael Gerson wrote a piece in the Washington Post about how objectionable he finds South African foreign policy, and he called South Africa—a rogue democracy is the term that he used. I would wager, however, if you took a poll in the world among democracies, and certainly if you concentrated on developing country democracies, of which there are at least 50, a majority of countries would feel more at home with South Africa's foreign policy than with U.S. foreign policy at this particular moment in time.

As a result, I think we'd end up in a situation either of pushing for a very inclusive league, which included India, Brazil, Mexico, and so forth, in which there would be a very low level of agreement, or we would have to push for more exclusive league, in which we had a higher level of agreement, but that would send the signal that the core principle behind the association is not democracy but rather countries which agree with the United States.

Then there is the question of the experience of the Community of Democracies, and I'm looking forward to hear Mort correct me or at least illuminate me as to what I may be misunderstanding about this because I think the community is a more limited effort. It is really primarily focused, at least initially, on countries, on democracies getting together to focus on how to support democracy, not about peace and security generally. But even this limited effort has been very difficult.

A lot of time and energy has been spent on the Community of Democracies. There has been a lot of squabbling over the years about who gets in or who gets invited and who doesn't, and that issue isn't easy to solve. And there has been I think relatively little results in terms of actions. There is a strong disinclination on the on the part of many democracies to criticize others, particularly those outside the community, but those within it as well. There has been a bit of technical assistance carried out under the auspices of the community, but it pales in comparison with the technical assistance on offer elsewhere.

And in general, there is just I think a deep lack of enthusiasm for it among many democracies. There are some small countries that have wanted to be engaged and have engaged. And Poland, which is not a small country but an important European democracy is now quite engaged. But most European democracies have expressed over the last eight years a continued lack of interest about it. And over the last eight years, I have time and time again asked European

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

diplomats what they think about the Community of Democracies. They roll their eyes and they wish it would go away.

And this community has not taken hold. And I don't think a larger idea based on similar principles would. Now, one could argue, just to conclude – well, okay, the idea is not perfect, but why not give it a try? Why be so negative? I think there are several reasons why I'm concerned. The first is I think it would be a major distraction for a new administration. A new president has very limited political capital both internationally and domestically and needs to husband it and use it very wisely. And I'm not sure this would be a good expenditure of that capital. Secondly, I do think it would hurt important relationships that we have with non-democratic countries that we need on specific issues. And thirdly, I think it would send a signal to the world that we don't really get it, that we don't really understand where we are in the world today in respect – with respect to how the world views us as a democracy, our policies with respect to democracy and our policies with respect to security and interventionism more generally.

I'd conclude by saying that although – obviously I don't think the idea of a League of Democracies is a useful one, I do appreciate that it stems from an impulse and, I think, desire to find ways for the United States to move away from unilateral instincts and to work more closely with other countries. I think it's also driven by an impulse to do better on promoting democracy and find new ways to strengthen that.

And so I know we will have disagreements here today. It wouldn't be any fun if we didn't; that's why we're here. But I think the disagreements are actually more about tactics than about strategy, or at least more about means rather than ends. Without speaking for my fellow panelists, I think we all share a strong desire for the United States to find ways to build its legitimacy and build its international support, to be more multilateral and productive in important ways, and also to make democracy promotion an effective part of U.S. policy. So the only question really is how. I happen to believe a League of Democracies is not a good first step. Thank you.

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, I think we'll give you some time later to make clear exactly where you stand. But first, Ivo Daalder is a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute and has been writing about issues like this for some time.

IVO DAALDER: Thanks. Thanks, Mort. Let me just say in the beginning, since this is a political season that as it lists on the program here, I am a senior fellow in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution and therefore only speak for myself and no one else, nor should anything I take be taken to represent ideas, thoughts, or even concepts, endorsed by any campaign—just necessary these days in Washington or indeed anywhere else in the world, particularly when one speaks on the record, although in some cases even when one speaks off the record, to make that clear.

And I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this issue in part because I think there are nuances and differences among those who support either a league or a concert or democracies that I think may spring out of different desires and needs, though I also think that there is more commonality among those who believe in the concert of democracies and those who believe in the League of Democracies, as I think will be clear by the time both I and Tod have finished.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Let me try to make the case of why we think – and when I say “we” this is a joint project that I started with Jim Lindsay, now at the University of Texas at Austin, then at the Council on Foreign Relations, something that we have jointly done from the very beginning more than four years ago when we first published a piece in the Washington Post arguing for what we then called an alliance of democracies. We expanded upon that in a piece we put in the – published in the FT in late 2004 and wrote a longer version and more substantial article in early 2007, copies of which have—if we’re going to be hocking materials, copies of which are available in the back in the American Interest.

Tom’s op-ed in the post and policy brief, more so than his discourse today emphasized the importance of democracy promotion as a reason for this concert or league. That is not what animated me or Jim Lindsay. It is something that we would like to occur that indeed American foreign policy from 1789 has tried to promote, which is democracy around the world, and the fundamental liberal belief that the more democracies there are, the more secure and more safe the United States will be.

But that is not what animates fundamentally the idea of a concert of democracies. What animates our thinking is how do we enhance international cooperation in an increasingly globalized and interconnected world. And we believe that a concert of democracies, that is cooperation among democracies, is one way in which to stimulate that kind of international cooperation, certainly not the only way, but it is one way.

Let me try to summarize it in terms of six points – logical step of how we think you get to a concert of democracy. First, we live in a globalized interconnected world, in which the developments very far away can have immediate and sometimes even devastating consequences here at home. Think about 9/11. Here you had Saudi citizens trained and indoctrinated in Afghanistan hatching plots in Hamburg, driving airplanes into buildings in New York. That is the globalized world we live in. Think about SARS, a not terribly effective killer, though it killed 700 people, but this was a bug that one doctor in Hong Kong—one doctor in China took to a hotel in Hong Kong, and from that particular person spread it to five continents and killed a hundred people. A more dangerous disease, be it avian flu or whatever could do this in globalized worlds. That is the world we live in.

Secondly, given that in this world, no country, not even one as powerful as the United States will be able to deal with these threats by himself or itself. So in that sense international cooperation is an absolute necessity, and in that sense, to paraphrase Richard Nixon, we are all multilateralists now. That debate about unilateral versus multilateral is a debate that is over. And the proof of the pudding is the last four years of the Bush administration, which, if you were to be able – if you were able to split it off of the first four years, it was a traditional American multilateralist foreign policy geared to working with Europeans and allies around the world dealing with North Korea through a multilateral framework, with Iran to some extent, and a multilateral framework, et cetera, et cetera, the kind of foreign policy Americans have pursued for a long time, except that you have the first term that made the credibility of the second term less. But there is now a conviction, certainly a conviction in the campaign on the Democratic and the Republican side that working with other countries is a necessity.

Third, the existing international institutions of international cooperation, whether they are regional alliances like NATO or organizations like the AU or the OAS, as well as global

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

institutions like the UN are falling short in meeting the demands for increased cooperation, and this is a statement, I think, a fact rather than an argument, but we can argue it if you want. Therefore, the reform and adaptation of these existing institutions is absolutely critical in order to enable international cooperation to deal with the problems that we face today, particularly with regard to the United Nations, a pre-Cold War institution, let's remember, operating in a post-Cold War world.

Figuring out how to adapt reform and change that institution to make it relevant and effective in a post-Cold War period is going to take much effort, and I submit, unlikely to fulfill all our desires and all our requirements for the kind of international cooperation that is both effective and legitimate that we need.

Fourth, because the existing international institutions are likely to some extent at least, and in some areas at least, to fall short, we will need to find additional forms of international cooperation. And for the United States, the logical partners, as it has been for the last 60 years, will in the future be democracies—democracies not only in Europe and Asia, but democracies around the world because they are the natural partners of the United States. They have been and will continue to be.

Fifth, the world's democracies together represent the vast majority of the wealth and military power in the world. So getting the world's democracies to cooperate is a powerful instrument, potential – and I stress potential – but a potential powerful instrument for international cooperation. These are countries that share critical values on how society needs to be governed and how sovereignty resides in the people and not in the regime, a not unimportant concept in international politics, and indeed in how human rights must be protected and indeed advanced.

And crucial, this is where I think I start departing from Tom, crucial, all other things being equal, democracies will have more interests in common than democracies do with non-democracies. Now, I stress all other thing being equal, that all other things being equal, democracies are less likely to have common interests with non-democracies than they are with democracies. And the alternative to democracies cooperating is democracies working with non-democracies. And the notion that somehow we are likely to have more cooperation in a larger framework where values are less shared and interests, all other things being equal, are less shared, strikes me not only as wrong in practice, but wrong in theory. In fact, this is one of the cases where practice and theory coincide.

So six, while democracies will disagree on a host of issues, and I think Tom does a nice job of laying out where those disagreements are, the interests can realign because we have an institutionalized form of cooperation. Socialization is one of the aspects that institutions bring about, socialization in the value of the institution and in the value of cooperation. It is a central tenet of why you have institutions and why you have cooperation molded by institutions. Crucial, the United States might have decided—might decide to forego particular actions because others disagree. I don't think that the case of Iraq proves the problem with a concert of democracies. I think the case of democracy proves the potential of what a concert of democracies could do, had we had democracies sitting together and debating this issue. It might well have been the case that the United States would have changed its mind because the pressure it was getting was from democratic countries.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Now, it's true that that didn't happen when it was democratic countries like France and Germany, but if it had been within a context that the United States regarded as more legitimate, it might have worked. It might not have worked, but if it hadn't worked, the consequences would not only be for the United States to engage what appeared, in my view, a failed policy, but more importantly, it would have negative consequences for future cooperation down the road with these very countries. And indeed, others might agree to step aside when the vast majority of countries believes that some action is necessary. And we have plenty of examples.

NATO is a great example of exactly such a socialized organization. The Greek government was fundamentally opposed to NATO's engagement in Kosovo. It didn't think it was the right thing to do on principle. It didn't think it was the right thing to do in practice. And yet, it wasn't willing to torpedo the NATO alliance over this one issue. It is willing, by the way, to torpedo the NATO alliance on the issue of whether Macedonia ought to be a member, but there are limits to the degree to which countries can be socialized, though I would argue if you pushed the Greeks hard enough, you would be able to get even agreement on that issue.

But the important point is that institutions socialize, so when I go to do a talk to the British government, they say, well, the South Africans and the Indians will never agree to anything we have to say because they don't agree now. Well, that depends. What is the benefit they get out of participating in a cooperative structure? And over time, that benefit means that people will be able to compromise in order to maintain the benefit for the future. So you cannot assume and you must not assume and it is a fallacy to assume that the current position on particular issues are going to be there, are going to be the position down the road, that behavior is not going to change by the nature of the way in which you cooperate. And that, in the end it seem to me, is the reason why you need to have cooperation among the democracies, because as we have shown in NATO, indeed as you show in the EU, it is the way in which you advance agreement and cooperation in international affairs.

Now, let me conclude just briefly by saying what this concert, which is what I would call it, of democracies is supposed to do, which is a frequent question aside from generalizing enhancing cooperation. I think it's four things, and in fact, it's four things that come out of a meeting that Tod participated in Florence where we had representatives less skeptical than the ones that Tom met in Europe from Japan, from Brazil, from India, as well from Europe and the United States. And the four things that we thought usefully could be done by this kind of group, is first, is for the democracies to work together to help reform and adapt and change international institutions, starting in the UN. It would be a good thing for the democracies to work within the United Nations to promote reform, particularly starting on the issues of democracy and human rights and in fact to start displacing the regional blocks that are one, archaic, but two, have so prevented needed reform.

Wouldn't it be a good idea, for example, if we are voting for membership at the Human Rights Council that the democracies vote as a block, just to put it bluntly in those terms, but more generally, that the democracies work together on the reform of international institutions, in order also to demonstrate that this is not about taking over or supplementing international institutions, but it is to enhance international cooperation at large?

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Second, it should be about enhancing and promoting democracy, but not in order to be an assertive block that tells other people how to govern, but rather by being a block enhance and attract people to want to become members of the block. The EU, as Javier Solana has rightly said, is the greatest engine of regime change the world has ever seen, and it doesn't do it by exporting democracy, by invading countries, by telling countries what to do. It just does it very simply: if you want to be a member, here's what you need to do. That's how you change regimes, by having benefits of membership.

Third, it should be about strengthening the coordination of economic development and it's the same with all development. The democracies are responsible for the vast majority of the economic assistance in the world. If they were to cooperate in a better way than they are doing so, if they had not only a Western perspective but a Southern perspective to be part of how to think about development and sustainability strategies. They are likely to be more effective.

And finally, it should be an organization that could discuss and have a dialogue on security issues, on the issues of terrorism, on the issues of proliferation, and yes, on issues of when and how to use force, not as a necessity—certainly not at the outset when there is no agreement as a legitimizing instrument for the use of force, but as a body that can actually discuss the question of when and how to use force. We have rules, written in 1945, that believe that the fundamental problem facing international security was war among states. We haven't had a lot of wars among states; we've had wars within states. And how to address that problem is one of the fundamental questions of international security in the 21st century and we ought to have a dialogue about it. And probably we should have a dialogue about – among those people who are more likely to agree on the issues of sovereignty than they would be if it were a larger group that included many non-democracies.

So with that, let me end and I look forward to debating these issues with Tom and everyone else.

MR. HALPERIN: Before I turn to Tod, I cannot help but note that with the exception of proliferation and security, what Ivo has laid out is the agenda of the Community of Democracies as laid out in the Warsaw Declaration. So I think one question we need to ask and that people in other countries would ask, if you want an organization to do these things and there already is one that you created, why are you proposing to start over and create a new one? And I never had a satisfactory to that question, and it seems to me, laying out this agenda enhances the mystery of that question, but let me move on to Tod Lindberg, who is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution and we're delighted to have you aboard.

TOD LINDBERG: Well, thanks, Mort. I will enter the same disclaimer as Ivo: This is speaking for myself, not for any campaign. We've heard the case against from Tom; I think Ivo has made the case for, in a way in which I'm in substantial sympathy practically to the point of dotting I's and crossing T's. So maybe I could just spend a minute or two engaging with some of Tom's criticisms more directly in order to lay the groundwork for what I hope will be a really interesting discussion.

In the first place, this room is rather full, which suggests to me that it is indeed time to have a serious conversation about this proposed addition to international institutional architecture, namely a global values-based institution and obviously it's not something that has had a lot of

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

attention paid to it so far, mainly articles and publications, the occasional research paper, but it's clearly going to be with us in one way or another as a subject of discussion, and so I welcome the opportunity to get that.

I guess, let me quote something that Tom has written, which is the notion that a democracy's foreign policy will be primarily defined, on a wide range of issues, by its status as a democracy is a misleading and possibly dangerous form of foreign policy reductionism. Well, I think one can certainly agree with that statement up to the point of saying that everything does not follow from your domestic political arrangements and whether or not they're democratic, but something fundamental does follow from your domestic political arrangements and whether or not they are democratic, and that is the widely accepted democratic peace, which is that mature, stable democracies do not go to war with each other; they find other ways of solving the conflicts and differences that arise between them. This is a, I suppose, I think Frank Fukuyama has called it one of the indisputably correct conclusions about the international system and on this fundamental insight, I think that a concert of democracies or a League of Democracies is built.

It is a little different, shall we say, from the Kellogg-Briand Pact of the 1930s, in which nations renounced war. This is a ratification of something that is existing now and it is the conclusion that these countries have reached that they can settle their differences in peaceful means. And I think that as a starting point is something that's very important to remember. It's not that democracies don't cooperate and therefore an alliance of democracies or a Community of Democracies or a League of Democracies or a concert of democracies therefore ought to be conjured up in order to get them to do something that they are not already inclined to do; it's that they are already inclined to do such things and are in fact institutionally underserved by the limitations of current institutions. And I'll talk about them for a moment.

There is of course the United Nations and there's things that one will only do at the United Nations and that one can only do at the United Nations. The advantage of the United Nations is it's a universal membership body. The disadvantage of the United Nations is that it's a universal membership body. There are certain kinds of issues that you can only effectively address there and there are certain kinds of issues that you can never effectively address there because of the limitations that universal membership imposes on the nature of the dialogue. It's extremely difficult to have a conversation about values and such, as we know from our experience first with the Human Rights Commission and then with the Human Rights Council.

So I think the basic point is that there is a will already among democracies to look at matters in like fashion. Does that mean they agree? No, I mean this is not a concert that will be similar in style to a musical performance of an orchestra. It will in fact be, rather I think, cacophonous if not indeed dissonant in terms of its engagement on a variety of issues. That's, I think, what we're going to expect, but there will be I think a fundamental and indeed fundamental, contra Tom, perspective on these matters, which is about the ability to work cooperatively on matters of mutual concern in a fashion that does not resort to the most extreme means of the international system.

Tom also writes—and I want to spend a minute on this because I think this is a criticism that is important and is stands for a larger set of criticisms—and he's talking about Zimbabwe and South Africa. In fact, South Africa, a country routinely mentioned as a valuable potential member

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

of a league, has persistently resisted calls from the United States and Great Britain to join them in being tougher on Zimbabwe and President Robert Mugabe.

Well, that's true, but it's not the whole story. And in certain respects, I think one of the more interesting things is that ship filled with weapons of China actually got turned away—and not without difficulties. Obviously, other local sensitivities and local issues that are very important and certainly, that's absolutely the case on the African continent, but what one – I was recently was in Addis talking to some African Union folks related to another project, and what I will tell you is that things are changing. And the African Union is not the Organization of African Unity. The Organization of African Unity was an institution that was dedicated to the protection of the sovereignty of its member states. It was not interested in exporting arms or adjudicating SP-20.

The new African Union under Konare has been a very different place. It's been one where the principle, similar to that articulated in the Responsibility to Protect in the UN outcome document, is taking root. The African elocution for this is the principle of non-indifference to what goes on in the states around you. And also the preference for, in the African Union, ensuring that political change is constitutional, which is to say that it is not extra-constitutional, which is to say that it is not in defiance of existing constitutions. Now, these are not giant steps, but they are steps, and it's the sort of thing, I think, that can be encouraged.

The fact that the United Nations is often dominated by regional block voting is not an argument against a concert of democracies or a League of Democracies. It's actually, I think, an argument for because how best can you acquaint democratic governments with the value of working together and taking such things as human rights into account. I think if there were a forum in which democracies were routinely getting together and talking about these matters, then I think it would be possible to make, perhaps, a greater degree of democratic solidarity and therefore, human rights solidarity possible among the countries participating in it.

Now, the fact – and it is true, as Tom says, that the concert of democracies or the League of Democracies can't do everything. But it does not follow from its inability to do anything that it can't do anything, and I think that's the real difference in perspective here. If we have a global organization united by its essential affinity over the answer to the question of how best to organize domestic political arrangements, and how best to cooperate with others similarly organized, what can it do. And it seems to be that that would be an interesting thing to find out.

Just to make a point in response to Mort, you know, I anticipate, I suppose, your bigger comment. I think the Community of Democracies was a superb initiative, and I would welcome the possibility of moving the Community of Democracies into black-letter treaty law. That is what I think is necessary, and nothing less will, I think, be sufficient. And we need an institution with a secretariat, which is now acknowledged in the Community of Democracies, as well as a treaty council that will serve as a decision-making body. I've given a lot of thought to some of the architectural questions about how one might design that, and I'll be happy to get into that if that becomes relevant in the questions and answers.

I think, you know, just as a very preliminary point, that the closer you are to a consensus-based decision-making process the stronger the institution will be, not the weaker. It is about this pursuit of agreement, and it should not be trying to force decisions on minorities of its membership; I think that would be a way in which you could crack the organization in pieces

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

rather quickly. But if there are areas in which the like-minded, like-valued democracies of the world can agree, I think that will prove to be a very powerful force.

And let me end—since the subject is so much on everyone’s minds, as it has been for many years—with Iraq. I don’t know if, had there been an alliance of democracies or League of Democracies, concert of democracies, it would have talked the United States out of going to Iraq. Obviously, we’re dealing an alternate history here. But I expect that if there had been a dialogue on that question, that one element of it would have been what can we do short of taking military action against the Saddam Hussein regime. And I think that that dialogue would have led in the direction of a more rigorous containment of Saddam Hussein. In other words, it would not have been a question of what would the United States give up, namely, its prerogative to invade. It would be a question of what can we do collectively to ensure that Saddam does not become the security threat that we have every reason to believe he might wish to be.

Now, and I say this as someone who supported the Clinton administration’s policy of containment of Saddam during the 1990s, I was not a march-to-Baghdad guy. But it was clear that the sanctions policy was eroding, and the support for sanctions in the Security Council was eroding. And it seemed to some that the trajectory of that was quite bad, me included. And what, then, can you do? Well, it seems to me that if we had had a more vigorous body for the discussion of such matters, in which we actually looked at the real alternatives, that if one of the options had been a very vigorous containment policy going forward, well, that might have been consequential in the decision-making about whether to go to war, and under what circumstances and on what timetable.

MR. HALPERIN: Well, thank you. Let me abuse the prerogatives of the chair just to say a few things.

I find myself in the funny position of agreeing with most of what the second and third speakers said, except for their support for this new idea of a League of Democracies. (Laughter.) I agree; I think there is a fundamental factual question that’s in dispute here, and that is Tom’s assertion that the majority of people in most democratic countries agree with South Africa on what a democratic foreign policy should be rather than the United States. I think that’s wrong; I think it’s even wrong for South Africa. It’s interesting that the ANC charter actually promises a democratic foreign policy, and that Zuma ran for the presidency complaining that the current government had not carried out a democratic foreign policy. And I do think the fact that the ship was stopped and it had support is a reflection of this.

This is a fight that is going on now; I think it’s actually the most important fight that’s going on now in the world. It’s a fight within democratic countries as to whether they should have a democratic foreign policy. It’s a not-unimportant debate in the United States, which I think we will win going ahead, regardless of who gets elected, but it’s a fight that’s going on in South Africa, in Brazil and other countries, and I think can and will be one, on behalf of the people in those countries who believe that a democratic country should have a democratic foreign policy.

But I think if you try – if the United States now called together a convening meeting of a League of Democracies, or whatever one wants to call it, and explicitly said that one of the functions of that is to discuss issues of war and peace and security, that the Canadian government

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

would probably show up, if the old Australian government was still in power it would have shown up, and nobody else will come. Absolutely nobody else will come. It is, as we've been told, difficult to make predictions about the future, but I would make that prediction with absolute confidence. No European country will show up, no Latin American country will show up; they are simply not interested in supplanting the UN as the forum, the only legitimate forum for the discussion of security questions.

Now, that is not true of everything else on Ivo's list, including terrorism. It is worth noting that the Warsaw Declaration called upon democratic countries to cooperate in fighting terrorism consistent with respect for human rights values, and that after 9/11 the community issued a similar statement, and that John McCain has said that we need to set our terrorism policies right by cooperating with democratic countries because that is an issue on which democratic countries have a different view than non-democratic countries, which don't believe in the right of access to the courts, which don't believe that torture is a bad idea.

We need, in fact, to set our terrorism policy right by adopting a policy that has the support of the democratic community in dealing with threats to democracy, in dealing with democracy assistance, and in the UN. Again, it is worth noting that on the eve of the most recent vote at the UN General Assembly on the Human Rights Council, the Community of Democracies issued a statement from its governing body, the convening group, calling upon its member states to take account of the human rights records of their countries in deciding how to vote. And if you look at the vote, if you look at the feed of Sri Lanka, if you look at the order of the returns in most areas of the world, it is clear that they took that seriously and the votes reflected that view.

So if the United States—if one persuaded the next president that he should be interested in having democracies work together, I would submit that the way to go is to strengthen the Community of Democracies, to be open to proposing that it have a formal treaty, to move ahead with the decision that's already been made to create a secretariat, to discuss eight of the nine or seven of the nine issues that Ivo listed, which are already agreed to be discussed. The community has failed so far not because of who it invited, because it decides every two years who to invite; not because there has been resistance to it in Western Europe, although to be sure there is; but because the United States has not given that organization the leadership that it should, and it's not been clear about what it wanted the body to discover. It is not an accident that Konare, who was the leader in this African Union movement, was also a leader in the creation of the Community of Democracies and it was clear that it could be an important institution.

But with that neutral perspective from the moderator – (laughter) – I'll give Tom – (inaudible).

MR. CAROTHERS: If I'd wanted a neutral moderator, Mort, I would have invited somebody else. (Laughter.) Thank you. Well, thanks, Ivo and Tod, for your very thoughtful comments. And I appreciate what you said in the spirit of the kind of exchange that we're having here because I think we're all struggling with this question of how the United States can best move forward in the world, in a more cooperative way.

I guess I'd just highlight a few points in response. First, I don't think either of you have yet addressed the question of whether or not—if the United States did push to band together more tightly in some way, or in a more systematic basis with democracies, whether that would hurt

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

our relationships on a number of other issues in which we really do need to work with non-democracies. You said, Ivo, that the natural partners for the United States are democracies. I mean, I guess it depends on how you define the word natural. When it comes to energy security we have other kinds of partners, and they're natural because they've got oil. And so, it sort of depends. It's natural in a values sense, but unfortunately our foreign policy isn't just about values.

And it's not a coincidence today we have two television cameras. We have one from Carnegie and you'll see we have another one which is from Russian television, which is very interested in the League of Democracies because Russians are very interested in the League of Democracies because they're concerned about what is this really, and what does it mean. And you could say, well, of course it's nothing against Russia, and NATO isn't against Russia and you know, the United States just would like to increase the ideological definition in the world for certain reasons and so forth, but that does trouble other countries.

And I'm worried about climate change. I don't think China is any less a natural partner on climate change with the United States than India is; in fact, China's probably more important. And so I'm concerned about this idea of natural partners, given the reality of the configuration of issues and interests that face us.

Secondly, you said that international institutions have the power to realign, through socialization, countries' behavior and their own conception of their interests. I think that's a powerful and important point, and I agree with you. And one of the hardest questions here is what's the best way to do that. I guess my instinct is that I think it's most effective when you can try to realign interests and outlooks within an inclusive organization rather than an exclusive organization. And in fact, Tod, the example you used of the Organization of African Unity, what's been very good about it in the last 10 years is this is an inclusive organization, in which all African countries basically have a role or at least most, democratic and non-democratic alike. And it's the evolution that you're talking about is so encouraging precisely because non-democratic countries are part of that and therefore benefit from this process of socialization.

And I think when we look at, you know, how Robert Zoellick, for example, talks about the role of China in the 21st century, an inclusive idea about the alignment or realignment and socialization is much more through inclusion in international institutions. And I'm puzzled why, given that, you would want to define the United States the same way, of natural partners and these people are out, and they can only join if they adopt the kind of political system we approve of.

Third, what would be the benefit that will make South Africa change its basic view of its international economic interests, for example, or changes, basic long-held view of, say, the Brazilian government about interventionism in the world, or one could name a number of other countries or issues. What is the benefit that's going to be offered by a League of Democracies that's going to make countries that really feel—that have fundamentally different both philosophical and practical views from the United States change to align with the United States?

Now, you said well, the United States can change, too. We could be a kinder, gentler United States and so we might have decided not to invade Iraq if we'd been part of such an association. I like that approach, although I'd say that I wonder whether Senator McCain and his enthusiasm for a League of Democracies has the idea of curtailing America's appetite for certain kinds of assertions of national strength and national security. But I like the spirit of that.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

But I really don't think the comparison to the European Union is very effective, in that sense. The European Union was offering something profound to countries that the League of Democracies—there's nothing even slightly comparable that one can imagine that the League of Democracies would be offering countries. And I disagree a bit with the idea that the European Union was an agent of regime change. Regimes collapsed in 1989 because of the collapse of Soviet power. After they changed, the European Union was a powerful magnet that helped shape the direction of post-regime change political evolution in Central and Eastern Europe. But it was not the European Union that brought down the Berlin Wall.

Fourth, I still feel the two of you – and I guess I'd have to include Mort here – the three of you have not, in your remarks today, come to grips with the failures and shortcomings of the Community of Democracies. I think you're passing too lightly over the fact for eight years, the United States has been hitting its head on the wall about the Community of Democracies. Very little has been accomplished.

And Mort, friends that we are, we just have to disagree here. I wrote down your words, the community has failed because the United States has not given the leadership that it should. I don't think that's why it's failed. I think it's failed because other countries are not interested in the United States exerting the kind of leadership that you're talking about in aligning with the United States, whether it's France or Argentina or one could name any other countries aligning with the United States in the ways that you're imagining. I think, in fact, if the United States had shown even more leadership, it probably would have driven some of the countries out of the Community of Democracies. And so I think there's a fundamental problem with the experience of the Community of Democracies that you're not grappling with.

Fifth and finally, with respect to South African policy and the quest for a democratic foreign policy, it isn't that people around the world would agree with South Africa with respect to its treatment of Zimbabwe, but they would agree with South Africa with respect to its policies in the last 10 years on Iraq, U.S. interventionism, the general spirit of the war on terrorism and America's human rights approaches therein, trade policy and so forth. What's attractive about South Africa, why it's a rogue democracy, to some people here in Washington, unfortunately those are precisely the issues on which many people in the developing world agree.

So I think they might lament a bit the particular sort of I would say the number of liberation leaders have in southern Africa towards certain kinds of issues in their local region, but it's South Africa's basic global stance that I think would find a greater congeniality among most developing country democracies than the United States' stance, at least, in the last eight years. Thanks.

MR. HALPERIN: I want to go to the audience, but I want to ask if either of you has anything sort and –

MR. DAALDER: Just a couple of points, if I can, on the issue of natural partners. Of course, on some issues, you have to work with people who are not democracies. By definition, we've been doing it for 200-plus years; we're going to do it for the next 200-plus years. One does not exclude the other. We've been cooperating with democracies for 60 years. It's called NATO.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

That has not prevented us from having arms control negotiations with Russia. Indeed, it deepened enduring dialogue. One, it's not an alternative; you can do both.

So I find the notion that you can't have cooperation among democracies because it prevents cooperation with non-democracies to be spurious. That's what we do, that's the business we're in; that's what diplomacy is about. It's dealing with countries whose interests may have to be aligned in order to advance the goals that you have set yourself. And times that will be among democracies, there are times that will be with non-democracies, whether it's climate, energy or whatever else. I mean, that's the most important issue. It is spurious to argue that if you have an organization that brings together democracies, by definition you can't work with non-democracies. We've had an organization that is composed of democracies, largely. Most of our alliance relationships and most of our important relationships are with democracies, and yet we've been able to cooperate, whenever we find necessary, with other countries.

On the issue of incentives, what's the incentive to change. And here, it depends on who you are, and it may be that basically just Senator McCain and I would disagree. But I think the most important incentive for other countries to join us is to get influence, a say, and a voice in the policy that the United States pursued with regard to the rest of the world. It's an extraordinarily important incentive, and it can only be an incentive if it's real.

MR. CAROTHERS: One that Tony Blair is still hoping to achieve.

(Laughter.)

MR. DAALDER: But Tony Blair did it differently, and if Tony Blair had united with the French and the Germans and others, he would have achieved it. So it was, in fact, the lack of this organization and the lack of a structure within which to do this. And the unwillingness of—and you know, it doesn't mean that the United States will follow. By definition, the United States could have done the Afghanistan operation within NATO; it didn't do it. An extraordinarily foolish thing to do and we're still paying the price. So no organization can guarantee wise policy, but organizations can have influence over policy. That's the socialization effect.

And the third point I would ask is, it's always easy to tear down ideas, new ideas. But unless you offer an alternative how to resolve some of the issues out there, unless we figure out how you make the UN a more effective organization, unless you figure out how you're going to have this wonderful partnership with non-democracies on issues of common concern, we're not getting any farther; we're just saying no to something that's new and different, but we're not proposing an alternative. And I don't see the alternative. It is as if the problem we are trying to solve, which is how to enhance international cooperation, isn't the problem — and I think it is.

To the issue, I may be evolving on the Community of Democracies. I mean, my problem with it is that its membership was too large, that it included countries that I don't regard as true democracies and I don't think that you would regard as true democracies and that there is this tension. This is a tension in our proposal, too. Who do you invite and how do you make sure than you — that those who are invited are the right countries and those — that neighbors — you know, it's very difficult for a neighbor to say, I want to go in, but I want my neighbor to be in here even though it's not a very good, a very strong democracy. This is a fundamental issue and it may

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

be because you have a Community of Democracies; it's easier to start there and to evolve that organization in the way that Tod suggested and that you suggested.

The second reason is a serious one, which is – and I think Tod and I disagree on this. I do think that the United States is not in a particularly strong position to be a leader on this issue, in part because of what has happened in the last eight years and that – which is why, for example, Jim and I suggested that the leadership has to come from, for example, the G4 or make it the G5: India, Brazil, Japan, and Germany.

In fact, I'm spending a lot of time trying to talk to these kinds of people to see if there's any interest—not much is the answer, in part because there is this distrust of the United States. And, in that sense, having an existing organization from which to start that process – build the process I think is the better way, to build on what already exists, may be a more effective strategy for the United States to follow than it would be to announce a new organization the day after January 21st. And I think you're right. If you were to do that, I'd be surprised that even Israel would show up, but that's about it.

MR. LINDBERG: I just – what's the benefit for other countries? Well, you know, right. I think you'd have to create some benefits for other countries to be associated with it. And that's the whole point in a way. It's not just that you join, you want to join the EU and get into a membership process with the EU because it's a nice organization. You know, it's because there are tangible benefits that come with this process. And I – this institution, I think, would have to create those kinds of structures, whether that's aid to new democracies in terms of bringing their electoral systems up to snuff or working on the corruption issue, et cetera. And all of these are familiar problems from the EU accession process and the NATO membership-action-plan process. We know what they are. What we don't have is a global institution that can incentivize them outside of the regional areas in which we already have these robust international institutions. That's what we need and that's what this is meant to address.

You know, Ivo points to – and, of course, Tom, in his critique – yeah, I think that, you know, it would be terrific if others were willing to take the lead on this project. But, you know, as a practical matter, it seems to have American origins and I don't think it's going forward without very consequential support from the United States. I agree with Mort, you know, on the community question. Could a more robust level of engagement on the part of the United States government turn the community into the – yeah, I think so. And I also think that if, for example, the Community of Democracies, with appropriate encouragement from relevant members convened a committee of it's members – a small committee – of indisputably well-qualified democracies to begin the process of drafting a treaty that might well be – that might be a very good process for advancing this discussion.

And, by the way, let me just say, you know, the one thing that we need to take into consideration also is, you know, if you don't like global NATO, which a lot of people don't, this would probably be a pretty good place to step back to because the pressures are there and, you know, I think what's important about this institution is that it will be a broad forum, not a narrow forum. This institution is not going to have a security conference every February in Munich in order to discuss the items on its table. It's going to have discussions across a much broader range of issues. And I think that there's a lot in it for like-minded countries.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

The capacity to influence the United States, in general, I think, is underestimated because it is precisely a matter of argument and persuasion and not of effective counterbalancing. Although there will be instances in which the United States will behave like the United States has behaved, you know, for more or less a couple of hundred years, there are also plenty of examples of ways in which the United States has been influenced. And the people who actually do have the most influence on the American position are people with whom Americans have a certain sort of affinity based on, I think, political relationships and also peace.

MR. HALPERIN: I'm going to turn it now to questions from the audience. Let me make one more comment. I think the Portuguese are now the president of the Community of Democracies. I think they are eager to find ways to strengthen this. I think if the potential next presidents of the United States all indicated that they were open to attending a summit of the Community of Democracies countries to talk about an agenda for strengthening the community in the areas in which it has agreed to work, I think people would come and it would be a way to move this agenda forward.

Let me now open for questions right here in the front. I gather somebody has a mike?

Q: Thank you.

MR. HALPERIN: Identify yourself and – briefly, please.

Q: Yes, sir, Raghubir Goyal, India Globe & Asia Today. It's a great discussion you had. My quick question that Chinese influence of its Maoist ideologies are on the rise around the globe, including in Nepal, namely, in India and Latin America and Africa. My question is that we still have so many monarchies and kings and also communist countries and military dictators. Yesterday, officially, Nepal abolished its 240-year-old monarchy. Do you see anymore things or they are just going down and becoming a democracy? And, also, you have a large democracy, India, and then you have next-door neighbor, largest communist country, China. Do you see any conflict there because of Chinese Maoist ideology?

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, why don't we take a few questions and then I'll let the panel comment. Yes, right here.

Q: I'm Stacy Pestrato from the Egyptian embassy. I understand that some of you may not want to talk about the campaigns too directly, but the reason this idea is kind of gaining traction right now is because John McCain is pushing it. So I'm wondering, specifically for you two who are proponents of the idea, do you think McCain, the things he said, do you think they're in line with what you agree with about the League of Democracies and do you think he has a good kind of plan for moving forward with it? Is he the person to make this happen?

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, we'll take – yes, sir?

Q: Lane Green with the Economist. I want to push a little more on the EU analogy because you mentioned that, Tom, you've argued that the EU and the proposed concert don't have much in common. If you ask the average Central European, someone who is floating between a grouchy, nationalist government vote and a pro-EU accession vote, if you're making the case for the EU, they would probably say what they look forward to is free movement of people,

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

being able to work in the rich countries of the West, the incoming EU subsidies, the channeling of development aid and investment and so forth.

What concretely would you tell a wavering country and the voters of a wavering country to support democracy? What are they going to get out of it?

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, in the back? Another one? There's a union here, so you need to be brief.

Q: Jeff Goldstein from Freedom House. I have a question for Mr. Daalder. Given views in the United States in organizations like the UN and the ICJ, if you're selling a concert of democracies to other countries as a means of constraining U.S. policy, how then is it politically feasible for any U.S. government to agree to join?

MR. HALPERIN: All right, let me give the panel a chance to comment on any or all of those questions that they want to. Well, since you got a direct question, I'll start with you.

MR. DAALDER: I wouldn't sell it as the wonderful organization that's going to prevent the United States from what it's going to do. I would point out the reality that when you are a member of an organization, that organization will be a factor in how you decide. That's how it's been true for 60 years with regard to both the United Nations and NATO, that is to say we, in fact, make any argument, including the argument on whether we should invade Iraq or not, on the basis of whether is it admitted under the UN charter, that is there are rules and regulations that influence the behavior of states. And there are going to be rules and regulations that are going to be influencing the behavior of states if you have new rules and regulations of new systems.

I mean, that entire history of NATO is a history of cajoling, persuading, working together to come to a common agreement. And there are many times in which the United States has decided to forego for certain policy options that it thought it supported and decided not to, I mean, most obviously you just take one, the neutron bomb, which was decided to be cancelled in part because of European opposition, the Zero Option, which was a proposal put forward by the European peace movement, embraced by the Reagan administration in part in order to diffuse the peace movement but then implemented by the Reagan administration. You can go on and on and on and on; the reality is when you have like-minded countries working together, just if you had like-minded political parties working in a particular political system, there's going to be a give-and-take. And I think everyone understands that if there is a give-and-take, there's going to be sometimes give on our part. But that comes with the major benefit that there's going to be give on the part of other countries, more effective, and more legitimate action.

Let me just take one other issue, the issue of incentives, which goes to the larger question of how you might incentivize – I hate that word – how you might provide incentives for countries to join. I mean, one very simple not unimportant issue is visa regulations. And if everyone had a 9-94 capability who is a member of this organization, the Poles would be particularly happy, not to mention a variety of other countries. It's a small little thing, but there you can actually go from regulation to regulation to regulation, their policy. Wouldn't it be nice, which would make sense from a climate change perspective in any case, to abandon our sugar tariffs on the import of sugar ethanol from Brazil at writ-large and not to Cuba until they change, maybe that gives an incentive, or not to Egypt, take another sugar-producing country, until there is greater change.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

So there are ways to do this. And Tom is right that the big regime change in Eastern Europe came with the collapse of the Berlin Wall, but I'd make two points. One is the collapse of the Berlin Wall had something to do with the attractiveness of the West as a power as opposed to just its military strength. I mean, even Henry Kissinger admits that the OECD was fundamental to that process, that is the attractiveness of the alternative model had something to do with the collapse of the regime.

And secondly, as I think Lane rightly pointed out, there were fundamental choices that each country faced once the regimes had collapsed, which is do you go a nationalist authoritarian strong arm way or do you a democratic, open, political way. And the fact that the EU had set standard for membership and indeed had incentives, large ones, that came with it was one of the major reasons why these countries changes, adopted the choices that they did. So I would – I think – I'll take salon as regime change. That's the kind that I like. And I think if we can have an organization that encourages that in other parts of the world, so much the better.

MR. LINDBERG: Well, I think I'll come in on the McCain question, obviously being on the rather long list of his informal and unpaid foreign policy and national security advisors, and again not speaking for the campaign. Yeah, I think Senator McCain has made very clear that this is a major foreign policy priority of his.

Now, I would expect and hope that this not become a kind of partisan issue, and in fact there is, as noted, I think if you look at the early catalogue of endorsers of this idea, there are actually more Democrats on the list than there are Republicans on the list, and I would hope that maybe we could keep it that way so that whoever becomes president in January, and I have my preference, and I think Ivo has a different one, would nevertheless be able to move forward on this.

Whether or not this is possible is something we are going to find out by trying it. And I do think that there is a will to try at this point. Now, if the pushback is too great, if the difficulties that Tom and other critics have articulated are so embedded in the international system that they cannot be overcome, then that will be a revealing moment about the characteristics of the international system at the moment, but I think certainly in the McCain administration, this is not campaign rhetoric. This is something that is meant to have an outcome.

MR. CAROTHERS: I think this presidential campaign represents an opportunity for both political parties to come to some consensus on some basic issues, which they did in a small but a very significant way with respect to Darfur among the presidential candidates. On this issue, however, I'm a little bit wary about such a consensus because there are still two underlying conceptions or at least spirits behind the idea of the League of Democracies.

One which Ivo describes, he really emphasizes the idea of some, as he put it, give on the part of the United States in terms of constraining itself for the sake of creating such an institution and allowing others to have more influence over you as policy. I think that's quite different from at least what I read in the conception that Senator McCain puts forward, which is more about, as he put it, recreating the democratic solidarity the United States enjoyed during the Cold War, which is very much about the assertion of U.S. strength and leadership. And so when he talks about how the League of Democracies would impose sanctions on Iran, would help marginalize

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Hugo Chavez in Venezuela, I don't think he's talking about give. So I think there are two different conceptions here and it's good to have bipartisan consensus in Washington, but we have to be careful of the way that we use a concept like the League of Democracies and go behind it and realize there are sort of two different potential avenues down which it might go.

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, back, anyone – yes? And then we'll go back there.

Q: Thank you very much for meeting, personally, Morton Halperin. Bernardo from the Embassy of Portugal, I'm a diplomat. And now, since everybody had disclaimers, I also disclaim in this sense I will not be speaking by the convening group or any organization from the Community of Democracies or my own embassy, but only for myself, so that's an important point because otherwise we would not be able to discuss those important issues I will discuss.

I am very pleased to meet you because you are the persons who are behind the Community of Democracies and it's a pleasure to have met you personally. But in other ways, there are so many interesting ideas here, but that's – there is also some conceptual gray zones that I think should be, you know, a little bit more deepened. For instance, the question of Iraq, everybody speaks about Iraq. Why is everybody speaking of Iraq in terms of a democracy interest and not a national interest? I think Iraq was – I mean, the United States – it's very interesting to observe the United States from outside because of course the idea of the intervention was to restore democracy in Iraq.

But there were other several countries that could have been chosen to install democracy. And the reason why Iraq was chosen was because there were national interests of the United States in choosing that country. So I think it is very healthy to separate national interests from democracy interests. And so, this is the first idea I would like to throw around.

The other one was that I don't think the Community of Democracies is a failure. On the contrary, because there may not have been many countries issuing declarations; there may not be many highlighted media statements. But there is an immense job on the protection and on the upholding of democracy, which is by its own reason a very fragile system. It can be destroyed from within. That's what happened. Hitler went to power through an election.

And so, there is this whole important field of actuation, of creating a civil society that upholds democracy, which I think is an enormous job that has been done. And, okay, it's not on a central stage. But it's fantastic work that has been done to strengthen democracies all around the globe, not only through the countries that are in democracy but also the ones that are outside and whose civil society organizations find help from the Community of Democracies. So there is this whole immense action, which I think is fantastic.

MR. HALPERIN: Can I ask you to wind up?

Q: Okay, so I will restrain myself. But there is another thing. I think that the conceptual problem I'd like to hold – this is my last comment.

MR. HALPERIN: Please, just very briefly.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Q: Okay, one minute. The question is that we have this dialogue between democracies and non-democracies. We have the dialogue between democracies and non-democracies in the UN. And this is an established institutionalized dialogue where we have the Security Council with the right of veto. And we have the council of democracies. So, and this is an incredible opportunity to face people with the candidacies.

So what I would like to in personal terms try to show around is the idea, why do we have the consensus rule in the Community of Democracies and not the democracy rule, not the majority rule? I think if we could expand and change the rules within the community to a majority rule, we could probably have a more intervening Community of Democracies. Let's say they would like to –

MR. HALPERIN: I think there's somebody in the back there. Woman on the aisle, sorry.

Q: Thank you. I'm Alicia Phillips Mandaville from the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and I'll follow my colleague's lead on making all the standard disclaimers that nothing I say reflects –

MR. HALPERIN: We'll stipulate that for all people.

Q: Reflects anything at all. But actually, I wanted to ask, if you would talk a little bit more about how you would see a membership or invitation process actually working. Being somewhat familiar with using democracy criteria, there are a lot of difficulties with trying to achieve both something like institutional stability that you would want for a League of Democracies that functions smoothly but then also being sensitive to the way things move and change over time.

So I just wondered if you recognized that that would be an issue going forward? But I wondered if you'd talk just a little bit more about it. Thanks.

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, in the front here.

Q: Marc Plattner, Journal of Democracy, and I make no disclaimers. And I wanted to ask that you address directly the question of NATO. It's come up in many different contexts. Ted suggested that the League of Democracies is an alternative, a preferable alternative to a global NATO, which some people have spoken about. I wonder if you could just clarify what the relation is to NATO. Is this a step on the way toward a global NATO and the like?

MR. HALPERIN: Ted Piccone.

Q: Ted Piccone – is it working – with Brookings and for many, many years closely associated with the Community of Democracies from its inception, so I speak with some experience on this question. And obviously, it's been a fascinating discussion. I just want to make some very quick points.

One is on the question of incentives. I think this is the remaining big question that the Community of Democracies has to deal with, which is that there has to be a serious amount of financial and other kinds of incentives put forward in order for the members who are coming into

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

the community to stay part of the community and to bring new ones in according to the criteria for participation.

The second point is on the invitation process, we've talked about it. The question keeps coming up. But there is an invitation process that the Community of Democracies follows that, Ivo, has gotten better over time. And there's an independent body that is been created to advise the governments on who should be invited based on a huge amount of research that integrates indicators and qualitative and quantitative data from around the world. And they mostly got it right on the last one and it's getting better.

The galling question for me, and I think you put your finger on, well, what's the alternative is that the non-democracies have continued to show a lot of solidarity among themselves, and particularly on the question of human rights. And this remains, I think, the reason the Community of Democracies has to exist. I mean, it's going to take time. But there has to be an alternative voice, particularly since it's so well grounded in international human rights law of states that are aligned with those interests and will stand up in an organized way to push for them within the UN

And my last point is, let's try and see what happens. And if they get pushed back, I think that's a real mistake. I think you want to do something that's going to work. And if the sound advice from those who have done it is that this won't work, then we really ought to think twice about it.

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, yes, in the front here.

Q: Hi, Gerry Hyman at CSIS. It seems to me that the strength of the argument of the proposal is also in the narrowness to some extent. And in your original article or in your article in *American Interest*, you talked about a, quote, "framework of binding mutual obligations" – binding mutual obligations.

I wonder if you could, number one, expand that, because it sounds to me today as though they're both positive and negative – positive in that if it's binding and the group goes forward, you're in it; negative is if the group doesn't agree, you're out; you don't go forward. That sounds like the binding nature. Secondly, that the proposal will create legitimacy in action that it undertakes because it's a community of—it's a democratic organization, or an organization of democracies.

And then thirdly, the question of then who is in that and who is not in that becomes critical as to both of those issues, both as to the obligations, their bindingness and the legitimacy of it. And I wonder if you could address those issues as to those people who are not in this organization. What's the inclusion? What's the binding obligation, positive and negative? What's the legitimacy?

MR. HALPERIN: Okay, I think that's going to have to be the last question. I'm going to give the panelists, in reverse order of speaking, a chance to make final comments. Start here.

MR. LINDBERG: Okay, well, there's a lot on the table here; very interesting. I guess going first I get to pick. Specifically, the NATO question – question of NATO and its relation to

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

this institution—well, look, I don't know of any other non-European countries that have currently expressed an interest in joining NATO, so therefore I can duck that question in that respect.

Now, the broader question is do you want a global Article V-based organization? I think that if you tried to cue up this proposal with anything like an Article V in it, you would not get anywhere for reasons that we have been discussing. It would not be attractive to a lot of the people who think that the United Nations Security Council is the repository for such judgments.

But nevertheless, we're stuck with the question of what happens if the Security Council does not come to the conclusion that some countries with whom we are in affinity want. And that is the Kosovo case. And I think clearly, it's obviously something that has animated Ivo's thinking about these matters. What do you do then?

Now, I don't think that you need to be thinking about trying to charter a concert of democracies in order to deal with those kinds of questions, because that does get you to the non-starter question. But it's a real problem. And I don't know of an easy or a convenient way of solving it.

I want just a minute or two on the architecture, which also could go a bit to Ted's question. Yeah, I agree that the criteria of the Community of Democracies have been improving and improving. I think ultimately, however, what you really need is essentially a mechanism that provides for peer-review, which is to say I think you would be at an advantage if you had a body whose membership would require the assent of the other members of the body. And that more than meeting specific outlined generalized criteria, I think, would give you some advantages.

So you might start smaller and then have more countries join through an accession process. It would also be my preference architecturally to have a built-in refreshment process, whereby for example any member might, after seven years of membership, take a year off as an observer and require re-admittance to the institution. It would be a way of ensuring that an organization of democracies retained its democratic character and was not subject to excessive pressure from whatever backsliding tendencies might be out there. I think I'll stop there and pass along the rest of the questions.

MR. DAALDER: Just a quick word on global NATO versus a Community of Democracies. I'm in favor of both. So I'm on the record as favoring both. But I mean, NATO is a military alliance. And a concert of democracies is not. And that's the fundamental difference between the two. And I think, as Tod said, it's going to be easier to get people to understand their interests in joining a community, or building on the community, or even a concert of democracies than it is to join a military alliance with an Article V guarantee. So it is a much smaller group of countries that you would think of joining a global NATO.

On the larger – on the architectural questions and the mutually binding obligations, the membership issues, these are the toughest issues of all. And it is in some sense premature to make real choices and decisions on that because you want to know what it's for, who might be interested in it, et cetera. But to give you some sense, the thinking is you need two sets of criteria. You need fundamental political and civil rights within the country that would become a member. And it has to endure over a significant period of time.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

It's not enough to have an election and to be called a democracy. I don't have to tell the democracy crowd here how to think about this. It's about the longevity. And the words that Lindsay and I used originally were that a reversal to non-democratic rule was all but impossible to conceive of. Once you start actually applying that to countries, whether you use Freedom House scores or whether you use the kind of methodology that the Community of Democracy now uses, you actually don't have that much difference. You come to a list.

And there may be some marginal cases – Turkey as a hard case – in some instances and not other instances. But there's some instances that are not marginal; they're just not there. And there's some instances which are clearly inside. And I agree with Tod: there's got to be a review process. A country, for example, that claims that the chief executive is above the law may need to be reviewed for its membership, just to make that clear.

On the binding and mutual issue, what I have in mind is a decision-making process. I'm with Tod on this. Consensus brings for a stronger organization. And what NATO has done beautifully is to find a way to achieve consensus without agreeing. The two are not the same. Footnotes, the unwillingness to participate in particular military operations, as the Greeks, for example, did with regard to Kosovo. The unwillingness to deploy certain weapons systems on one's soil and yet to allow the decision to go through are the kinds of mechanisms in which you can have binding decisions, binding on all, and yet with obligations that may diverge from one member to the next.

And we've done this for 60 years in NATO in a very effective way. And in fact, because of the consensus, we've forced decisions that otherwise would not have been taken. The democratic view or role, you will have majority voting, even if it is large majority voting, like you see in the EU, can create in fact disaffection much easier than a consensus rule. But you have to figure out how you can have consensus when there is disagreement. And NATO has done that in a very effective way. And that's what we kind of had in mind.

Just a final word on legitimacy. What I am worried and concerned about is the legitimacy of the member states and their publics. They have to see the action being taken in their name as being legitimate. I'm actually far less concerned about whether other countries who are not members of the organization find it legitimate. I'd prefer to have them see it as legitimate. And I would prefer, for example, an action to be approved universally by 190-plus countries. But that's not always possible. So at the very least, let's have legitimacy within the context of those who are acting and are members of that organization.

MR. HALPERIN: Thomas, you get the last word.

MR. CAROTHERS: Well, thank you. We're past time, so I'll be extremely brief. Just two points—first, if democracies would like to cooperate at the United Nations in order to sort of counter the actions of non-democracies doing noxious things on human rights, nobody is stopping them from doing that. They can cooperate at the UN. If they're not cooperating at the UN, given the threat that they face on things like the Human Rights Council, why do they need to build their own institution and go outside and create something and say, we're going to cooperate elsewhere? Cooperate right there where it matters.

Transcript Checked Against Delivery

Secondly, and final point, Evo, you said, you know, you can't just tear down; you have to propose. Well, when somebody proposes a new idea, you have to say, is this a good one? Is this worth investing a lot of time and effort in?

I did propose in a report I published here last fall on democracy promotion after Bush, a series of ideas about how the United States can begin to rebuild its legitimacy and credibility as a democracy promotion actor in the world. And I think more broadly, there is much the United States can and needs to do.

And I'm sure you and I would agree on almost all of them to rebuild its sort of position in the world as a multilateral actor and one which seeks and receives legitimacy of the other countries in the world generally for its most important actions. But I happen to think that this initiative, as I mentioned, is largely a distraction, will not address many of the main problems the United States faces in the world, and will make some of them more difficult.

And in a curious way, it's a very old-fashioned idea in that if you go to many developing-country democracies now and say, would you like to sign up in a League of Democracies led by the United States, they see a world of growing multi-power and sort of multilateralism in a different kind of way. And asking, say, a South American country, which is very concerned about building up its relationship with Asian partners, particularly China and others, or African countries and others to say, sign up for our league and there will be all kinds of benefits to you, I think you're sort of swimming in waters. It's a very U.S.-centric idea that seems to me to be out of step with the current of where the world is going. I think swimming against those currents would end up straining the United States and wasting our energy. Instead, we should think about more clever ways to swim with those currents and position ourselves better in the world ahead.

Thank you.

MR. HALPERIN: All right, let me thank you all for coming and thank the panel for a very interesting discussion.

(Applause.)

(END)