

His Excellency  
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Permanent Representative of  
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# The United Nations: An Essential Tool to Confront Today's Global Challenges

The United Kingdom and California enjoy a much closer relationship than our geography would suggest. Our politics and our business interests coincide; they're closely aligned. The United Kingdom is now the largest foreign investor in California. We're both investing in industries such as stem cell research, nanotechnology, biotechnology—the sciences of today and, crucially, for tomorrow. Of course, there are traditions in this, too. We've developed close ties where people and their families, emigrated to Hollywood to pursue careers in film, media and so on. But equally, for many years budding young actors, directors and artists have been drawn to the bright lights, the clear blue skies, the endless sunny beaches, and the relaxed, carefree attitude of...Great Britain.

But on a policy level, we enjoy a close working relationship on a number of issues: law enforcement, urban planning, counterterrorism, transportation, migration—where we are both attacking the same challenges and the opportunities. We're trying to see how California and the United Kingdom can share best practices, how we can evolve together. I'm very pleased, indeed, that Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa has indicated that he hopes soon to visit the United Kingdom to see how we can carry forward that cooperation.

Economically we sing from the same hymn sheet. Economies grounded on the principle of free market capitalism, promoting innovation. What's good for the consumer is good for the economy. For us, globalization is a challenge, but it also brings benefits, and we're very conscious of that. That's why for the United Kingdom's government effective multilateralism is one of the tools that we see as being crucial to harnessing the benefits of globalization. That's why for us the United Nations, with its global membership, actually matters. We work very hard at it.

Today what I want to do is outline some of the accomplishments of the organization, warts and all.

Of course, we confront a whole range of challenges—terrorism, nuclear proliferation, human rights, the need for development, how we combat climate change, and so on. These issues are each in their individual ways so complex that the trans-border dimensions of them mean that we cannot actually cope with them on our

own; hence, the need to try to work for multilateral solutions.

Let me give you a few examples. For three years I've been struggling to try to get Darfur, Sudan, on the Security Council's agenda and actually get something done on the ground. Two million people are in refugee camps, in excess of 300,000 people have died or been killed in the last three years. As I speak, that situation is deteriorating both in terms of attacks and in terms of access to humanitarian relief. What are we doing about that? The African Union Peacekeepers are on the ground, but there is actually a huge international effort which has been mobilized these last two years which is trying to make progress. In Abuja, I hope we will imminently see a breakthrough on the political track which is a crucial element of actually bringing that whole issue to conclusion.

I go back to New York tomorrow morning in time to introduce into the Security Council a draft resolution on Iran and its nuclear affairs. For 18 years that country had a clandestine nuclear program. When we discovered it we then tried to react to it, but the [Iranian] government says, "we're doing this for economic and energy reasons," which none of us can actually use to justify what has been taking place and what is today taking place.

Let me be clear, nuclear proliferation in terms of nuclear weapons—and I'm not talking about civilian nuclear energy, I'm talking about proliferation of nuclear weapons—poses a threat to our collec-

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tive international peace and security. That's why the U.N. is on the case, that's why we have to do better attacking it.

Egypt has been the latest country to suffer. That's a global challenge that demands from us all a global response. The

United Nations is

trying to play its part, but let's be clear—fighting terrorism is a responsibility for all governmental organizations, for all governments, and for us as individuals. A successful policy at the end is the sum of all the individual contributions they can make. The UN's contribution is modest but one that is essential.

sible," he was right.

What we face in the U.N. is a myriad of issues and items, which are so complex that they don't lend themselves to simplistic answers. A radio interviewer said to me this morning, "If you could invade Iraq, why don't you invade Darfur?" It actually begs the question of how you can legitimately do that. How, operationally, can you go across 1,200 miles of land through Libya and Chad to try to solve the problem. And how would you sustain a military presence when you got there? There are no simple answers, but we have to much better than we are doing. That applies to tackling terrorism. The Security Council has a number of committees specifically working on different aspects. It did that before 9/11 and it's continuing to do it. What we have to do is make sure that the U.N. contribution is commensurate with what it is able to do, and there is more that it can do.

So, what's the U.N. doing today to try to

cope with these challenges? Well, on Sudan we continue to press for a peace settlement in Abuja. The Security Council last week adopted sanctions against some of the worst-believed offenders, we're delivering humanitarian relief, and we're sponsoring and financing the African Union's presence on the ground. But what makes Sudan and Darfur difficult is that for 35 years there was a civil war in that country, which eventually—partly because of Security Council pressure at the end of 2004—[after it had] cost at least three million lives, came to an end. But what we've always been trying to do is balance out the involvement of that government in a process—because without it, it would have been impossible to try to tackle Darfur—but at the same time force that government to reach a settlement to end the civil war. It's immensely complicated. That's not to sound complacent, it just underlying to you that when Einstein said, "science might be difficult, but politics is impos-

ible," he was right.

In terms of reform of the organization, we have a United Nations established in 1946, 60 years ago, and still retaining the culture of a 60-year-old organization. The need to change, transform management, to introduce a culture where we look at what we're doing on the outputs not just on what we put in, it's how we prioritize our activities—that's a huge challenge. Because for anything that is being done by the United Nations there is some country out there that believes it should continue, and if 191 countries operate by unanimity you can see the extent of the challenge. But we're on course to make some substantial improvements. We're putting in place a peace-building commission to actually tackle one of the most difficult aspects—how do you build peace? How do you take a country ravaged by conflict where the conflict is coming to an end and say, "OK, we're going to try to sort out the economic aspects, the security aspects, the political prospects of this country and put it all together." Just look at Iraq



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The Middle East peace process is complex, but we're trying to find a solution which actually recognizes the existence of two states living together peacefully. The election of Hamas into government: how do we cope with that? It is a government which is not prepared to accept what its predecessor did, which is not prepared to renounce violence, and which does not recognize Israel. How do we do business with that sort of government and at the same time bring some form of humanitarian relief to suffering Palestinians? All difficult issues in themselves, but let me be quite clear, from my government's viewpoint we cannot sponsor a government that actually endorses terrorism. That's a red line and we cannot cross it.

In terms of terrorism, it's a threat we all face. You've seen it in the United States, we've had it in London, in Madrid, in a range of cities. In the last two weeks,

and Afghanistan, Liberia, Sierra Leone, and you understand the enormity of the challenge. But we're on the case. We don't do it perfectly, but what's clear to

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me is that having been in West Africa and sat down with leaders, they know what the United Nations was doing, is doing and will have to continue to do for their countries.

But, again, we have to do better because half the conflicts in the world actually are conflicts which are recidivist, i.e., there was conflict, we had some sort of peace and then conflict broke out again. So that's an ongoing challenge, to actually maintain peace and build it into sustainable democratic and, hopefully, economic development. Human rights are basic to that. We've established in the last month a Human Rights Council and the elections will be next week. The United States is not participating in those elections, but I hope all of us will rally to a human rights council, which will do better to improve in practice the implementation of rights throughout the world. None of us are in a position that we cannot do better and what's clear to me is that where rights are abused it's often the first sign of insipient conflict. That's why we have to give the right emphasis to human rights.

What I want to do is just highlight some of the activities of the United Nations. Let me focus for a moment on development. Why do we place so much emphasis on this subject? Is it because one billion people today live on less than

one dollar a day each? Is it because four million kids in Africa under the age of five will die this year? Is it that on average some 6,000 children will die each day because of the water that they drink? Is it because there are so many millions affected by HIV/AIDS, or that malaria kills huge quantities? Well, it's all of those. It's because of the obligation that we owe, the national interest we have in making sure that countries do develop and that they don't become recruiting bases for terrorists in a security sense. But above all, it is political, economic and moral interests that dictate that we should do more for the countries out there in the developing world.

The solution is more development assistance, it's more debt relief; it's increased trade access where the European Union needs to look at its performance, and the United States, too. We have to complete the Doha round successfully and very quickly. And above all we need to recognize what the summit did in September of last year. It said we're establishing a partnership that the developed and developing world accept, that the developed world, especially the Europeans, say we are going to provide 0.7 percent of our gross national income each year by 2015 towards development assistance. In return, not in terms of a micro-conditionality but in terms of a partnership, we expect the developing world to put in place policies with respect to democracy, and human rights, tackle corruption, and actually develop the sort of policies that we would like to see and we think will be successful. That's happening in great ways of Africa, but in that partnership it then consummates itself in this simple form: that each [country] of the developing world puts in place specific policies to implement the so-called millennium development goals. The target for that is 2015. We're willing the resources now to do that. The fact is, on the present basis, without those extra resources, many of the countries of Africa will not achieve a number of these

goals before 2060 and some not before 2150. I'm talking about girls having the right to some form of education, that primary and junior school education should be compulsory, that we should tackle child and maternal mortality rates. On the problems of disease, we should try to do better. We should lift at least half of those people out of abject poverty.

That's the scale of the challenge, that's the commitment. And through the Gleneagles agreement of the G-8 countries last July, the United States joined the other seven countries, and especially the European Union lead, in saying, "that's what this is about." Our goal now in the United Nations is to deliver and implement what we've said—all of us, both sides of that partnership—and the United Nations should do better after actually producing its contribution.

We have a practical problem in Ethiopia today. There are 23 United Nations agencies actually on the ground. There are 14 United Nations bodies concerned with clean water. That doesn't make sense. It doesn't make sense that bilateral donors are in conflict, competing with each other and with the United Nations' system. How do we bring that together on some basis, driven by sensible policies, chosen by a democratically-elected government in the developing world and actually say very clearly "we're all here to help and we'll do that with maximum efficiency."? That's the scale of the challenge, that's why we're attacking it, and it's quite crucial that we do so.

I want to say a few words about climate change, deliberations on which continue. For most scientists the debate is over. For an ever-increasing minority there remains what is an ever-shrinking area of doubt. The climate is changing. I don't need to tell you about it in California, but it's the case in London, too. It's getting better, but this may be temporary. The long-term effects still need to be researched, but if there are still some here

with their heads in the sand, as there are in some capitals, let me just quote you the polling.

Since 1990 global carbon dioxide emissions have increased by 20 percent. Over the last 100 years nearly all the significant ice caps have started to melt, add-

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ing some 20 billion tons of water. Global sea levels rose between one and two millimeters annually in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That doesn't sound like a lot, but if you're living in the Maldives—and no part of the Maldives is more than three meters above sea level—that becomes really very, very acute, especially if you think that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, on present trends, the sea level is likely to increase by something of the order of 90 to 100 centimeters. That's close to submerging the Maldives, and lots of other island states. If you're an island state that's got a huge landmass of a volcano or something in the middle you're not going to be totally submerged, but the fact is that the area on which you live is probably going to be submerged. The question is, what happens to those people? Not easy.

The number of people worldwide affected by floods was averaging in the 1960's, per year, about seven million. Today it's 150 million. The five hottest years on record have all occurred since 1997. The ten hottest have all occurred since 1991. What we saw in Europe in [the summer of] 2003, which we thought was a scorcher and which killed tens of thousands of people, that is estimated,

by 2040 to be the average summer. That's the scale of what's happening, and if anyone wants to pretend that actually this is all just part of the normal give and take of the weather cycle, I think they really do have their heads thoroughly in the sand.

It's been 11 years since the world recorded a cooler-than-normal month. In the last century temperature rose on average by one degree centigrade. Again, that sounds like nothing, but the fact is we can now physically determine temperature for past thousands of years, and it has never risen at that rate previously.

And, of course, the ones most likely to suffer from the adverse affects of weather are those in deprived countries, in the poorer areas. That's how life will be.

Africa is getting drier; the Sahara Desert encroaches southwards, and so on. Just to give you an example: Kenya. The winter floods in Kenya in 1997-8 cost \$2.4 billion in damage. They were followed by a two-year drought which cost another \$3 billion and that represents, for Kenya, 22 percent of its gross domestic product. That's the effect of variation in climate on a developing country.

At least the world is opening up and recognizing the problem. The United Nations' frame of convention on climate change has contributed to that. The Kyoto Protocol is now in effect with 160 member countries. Without Kyoto, carbon dioxide emissions would be ten percent higher than their current level. Now, the good news is that the G-8 summit in Gleneagles produced an action plan, and the simple aim is to try to put in place post the ending of Kyoto, in 2012, a scheme that would bring in everyone, including the United States, and to launch developing countries economies, especially China and India. It's necessary because unless we do something to tackle that problem we're all, be it as in-

dividuals, be it as businesses, going to suffer adverse consequences of global warming.

We think in the UK our record is pretty good. We've reduced emissions since 1990 by 23-25 percent, but we're one of the few countries at the moment actually likely to fulfill the Kyoto targets. That may give us some self-satisfaction, it may give us a leadership role, but actually we only contribute two percent of the carbon dioxide emissions globally. To make a real impact we have to draw in the big development countries and the United States.

We found that the tackling of emissions could actually be accompanied by economic benefits. While we reduced our emissions substantially between 1990 and 2003, the economy actually rose at the same time by 16 percent in real terms. Environment-related economic activity, which was estimated at \$28 billion in 2001, we believe that it will reach, by 2010, \$700 billion. That's the scale of the economic advantage which can accrue if you pursue what we would call "realistic and sensible policies."

America is proportionally the largest investor in R&D in environmental technologies. We are working on that in the UK, and I'm pleased to say there are substantial linkups between British companies and companies working here in California. What we look forward to is the subject of renewable energy being debated in an event in October in the Bay Area where we'll bring together our shared experience. In California you have a real awareness of this problem; I'm not trying to preach to Californians because I know that you understand and are doing more about this problem than most in the United States. The efforts being made to reduce emissions here are substantial. But between us, what we all have to do is increase the wider awareness so that this problem is actually tackled. Not to say that any of the issues are

simple because they are not, but actually tackling the economic aspects, applying economic answers, the right sort of incentives, levies actually permitting a market to take place in a reduction of carbon dioxide emissions—these are all techniques which permit us to do better, because as I've tried to demonstrate, it is essential that we do so.

The inter-related priorities of climate change and development demonstrate, in my view, a multi-lateral approach to these challenges and why we have to make that multilateralism as embracing as possible and as successful as we can. Because these problems have no geographic boundaries. It's much like fish – you can't pretend that fish are exclusively yours or that somehow each salmon has a Canadian flag inside it. Fish do not respect boundaries, nor do emissions. And these problems are multi-faceted. They have so many different dimensions that it's only by bringing the full scope of international attention to bear that we have a chance of getting action taken.

That's why the United Nations has a part to play, the challenges are enormous, the U.N. is like a very slow large supertanker that's finding it very difficult to adjust its direction. We're trying to steer it towards sensible conclusions. It's not easy with that number of countries and that number of vested interests, but we have no choice because the U.N.

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has to adapt, it has to do better and all of us have to accept our responsibilities for taking on these issues. But it is the

United Nations and the other global institutions that are best placed to tackle global policy, to overcome economic divides, to prevent conflict, to overcome disease and arrest global warming. Despite the frailties of the United Nations, and there are many, let me be clear—it is the only universal organization with a membership capable of making sure that it provides on one level a legality, but certainly a legitimacy, for international action, and it is incumbent upon us to try to make this organization work better and try to succeed in addressing these issues. That's why the United Kingdom works very hard at the United Nations to try to see if it can, at the margin, make this a slightly better world for all of us.

And that takes me to a simple theory, that the United Nations remains an essential tool to confront those challenges head on. For me and my government, the U.N. is very important. I think it's also very important for the United States, and it's certainly very important for the United Nations that there is the strongest possible United States involvement throughout the U.N. system.

Thank you very much.

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