



UNITED STATES INSTITUTE OF PEACE

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UNEDITED TRANSCRIPT

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GINGRICH-MITCHELL TASK FORCE ON U.N. REFORM:
NATIONS HAVE INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY TO PROTECT
PEOPLE WITHIN BORDERS FROM GENOCIDE

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WEDNESDAY
JUNE 15, 2005

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The Press Conference was held in Room 2203, Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C., at 10:00 a.m., Newt Gingrich and George Mitchell, Task Force Co-Chairs, presiding.

PRESENT:

FRANK WOLF, U.S. House of Representatives

NEWT GINGRICH, Co-Chair, former Speaker of the House
of Representatives

GEORGE MITCHELL, Co-Chair, former Senate Majority
Leader

RICHARD SOLOMON, President, United States Institute of
Peace

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10:02 A.M.

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3 CONGRESSMAN WOLF: If we can begin, first
4 of all, I want to thank Speaker Gingrich, Majority
5 Leader Mitchell and all the members for their work and
6 for their effort. I read the entire report over the
7 weekend and I really think it's -- if you really want to
8 save the United Nations, I think the adoption of their
9 report would really go a long with, would quite frankly
10 do it. So I want to thank all of those who served.

11 I think they had a vital mission. Their
12 report could not be more timely. I have strongly
13 supported the U.S. commitments to the United Nations.
14 Since I became Chairman of the Science, State, Commerce
15 Appropriations Subcommittee in 2001, all U.S.
16 assessments to the United Nations have been paid in full
17 and on time.

18 Between 2002 and 2005, more than \$4 million
19 has been appropriated by Congress for U.S. assessments
20 to the United Nations. I believe the continued
21 viability of the United Nations is critical. We must

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1 constantly be reviewing its weaknesses and find areas
2 where we can make it stronger. That's why I asked the
3 subcommittee to fund this Commission so that an
4 independent assessment of the United Nations could be
5 made.

6 The United Nations was founded to secure
7 the peace and guarantee basic human rights. Yet today,
8 it seems that when we look at the United Nations
9 operation we see too often failure, and even a disregard
10 for fundamental basic human rights.

11 Let's look at the track record recently.
12 Genocide, and I led the first congressional delegate to
13 Darfur. Genocide is occurring in Darfur and the U.N.
14 has done little to stop it. And it's still going on in
15 Darfur as we now speak. It's late in the day, women
16 have gone out to get wood. They've been fortunate if
17 maybe they haven't been raped. The camps -- feces all
18 over the camps. No hope, no opportunity. The fear to
19 go back to their villages, and yet, it's still going on
20 in the year of 2005, in June of this year.

21 U.N. failed to stop genocide that occurred

1 in Rwanda. We said never again, 1994. We've all seen
2 the movie "Hotel Rwanda" in some time in April. We all
3 know what took place in Srebrenica. We've just seen the
4 new films that come out with regard to Srebrenica and
5 Sarajevo.

6 According to U.N. reports, peacekeepers in
7 Bosnia and more recently in the Democratic Republic of
8 the Congo, committed rape and other serious crimes
9 against innocent civilians that they were there sent to
10 protect. Countries such as China, forcibly repatriate
11 refugees back to a hostile situation in North Korea,
12 while the U.N. just doesn't seem to say anything or do
13 anything about it. Talk to some of those have been in
14 some of those camps in Korea. They can't understand why
15 the U.N. doesn't speak out and say please, do something.

16 You know what it's like in those camps.

17 Many other countries across the globe are
18 slipping back into poverty. The U.N. continues to fail,
19 quite frankly, in Africa as it loses the battle against
20 hunger. Millions are at constant risk of starvation.
21 Cycles of famine are occurring over and over again. In

1 Ethiopia, I visited in '84 -- Tony Hall told me to go.
2 I visited. What I saw was unbelievable. We all saw it.
3 And it happened again two years ago. And now it's
4 happening again. It's the perfect example, quite
5 frankly, of the failure to address and deal with these
6 issues, as a nation, as the United Nations, people who
7 care deeply about people who are suffering, whether it
8 be genocide or famine or HIV/AIDS or whatever the case.

9 And for Sudan, which is pretty much helping
10 the janjaweed to do what it's doing to be on the United
11 Nations Human Rights Commission. The U.N. Human Rights
12 Commission fails to pass the recommendations that
13 Senator Mitchell and Speaker Gingrich have on this, are
14 very, very powerful, fail to deal with basic human
15 rights. And obviously, everyone is concerned at the
16 U.N. and in our country and other countries with regard
17 for the U.N. Oil for Food Program.

18 The mandate of this task force was to take
19 a hard look at the United Nations from the standpoint of
20 American interests and I maintain those American
21 interests are the interests of the poor and the

1 suffering and the hungry and those who have gone through
2 genocide.

3 I want to thank speaker Gingrich and
4 Majority Leader Mitchell. They have fulfilled the
5 mission by presenting a series of thoughtful, tough
6 recommendations that will work to strengthen the United
7 Nations.

8 We're going to have a hearing on this issue
9 next week and I look forward to both of them appearing
10 and again, on behalf of the Congress and the American
11 people, I want to thank both of them and all of the
12 members of the Task Force for the great job and I also
13 want to thank the U.S. Institute for Peace.

14 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Let me, first of all, on
15 behalf of the entire Task Force, thank Chairman Wolf.
16 I've served with Frank in a number of positions and I
17 think it's hard to overstate how much of a moral force
18 he is in insisting on confronting reality and trying to
19 do things that are right for human beings.

20 I also want to say that I want to thank
21 Senator Mitchell who has done an extraordinary job. As

1 you can imagine, this is a very diverse task force by
2 design. It brought together people with a wide range of
3 views and a great deal of knowledge about the U.N. and
4 knowledge about the United States. Getting the Task
5 Force to agree took an extraordinary level of effort.
6 Senator Mitchell provided enormous leadership.

7 I also want to say that I'm particularly
8 grateful that Danielle Pletka from the American
9 Enterprise Institute and Anne-Marie Slaughter from
10 Princeton University have both joined us this morning.
11 They are representatives of the Task Force and of the
12 kind of intelligence, energy, commitment and drive that
13 made this possible. A lot of serious negotiations went
14 into this document and we would not have gotten here, if
15 we hadn't had an integrity of trying to hammer out what
16 is the consensus.

17 There are people on the right, including
18 me, who might have said other things in a different
19 setting. There are people on the left who might have
20 said other things in a different setting. But we were
21 able to come together in a very positive way with what I

1 think is a very comprehensive task force.

2 Let me also say about Dick Solomon and
3 George Ward and the entire team at the U.S. Institute of
4 Peace. I've served on a lot of other task forces.
5 Without their professional skill and their drive and
6 their persistence, and their taking calls at 11 o'clock
7 on Sunday night and continuing to push, we would not
8 have gotten this done. So the U.S. Institute of Peace
9 deserves substantial credit for the sheer ability it
10 brought to hold together the process, as we thought this
11 out and worked it through.

12 I want to emphasize a couple of points and
13 then I'm going to yield to my co-chair, Senator
14 Mitchell. There are some big takeaways. This is a long
15 document. I have a written text that we have for the
16 press here, but I want to say a couple big things. The
17 first is we tried to face facts and that's what Chairman
18 Wolf was just trying to say.

19 There's been a lot of nitpicking over
20 whether Darfur is genocide or merely mass murder. And
21 our conclusion as a task force was let's lump them

1 together. Mass murder should be bad enough. You
2 shouldn't have to have some quibble over whether you
3 have technically met the standard of genocide. This may
4 seem like a small thing, but in the world of
5 international diplomacy, it's a very big change. We
6 also said criminal regimes should not be able to get
7 away with being criminal. And that's a standard which
8 is actually a change from where the U.N. has been.

9 So on the issue of facing up to
10 dictatorship, facing up to mass murder, I think this
11 report takes very significant steps in the right
12 direction towards human decency and towards setting a
13 standard that should, in fact, begin to threaten regimes
14 that don't meet the standards of human rights and that
15 don't protect their citizens from mass murder.

16 In terms of corruption, we tried to very
17 candid and very direct. The United Nations is important
18 enough to take it seriously. If you take it seriously,
19 you have to clean it up. And you can argue about
20 exactly what steps you take. We have very significant
21 proposals in here which I'll mention in a second, but I

1 don't think any member of our group thought you can
2 simply shrug off the scandals involving sexual predation
3 by peacekeepers, the scandals involving failure to
4 protect people, the failures involving corruption with
5 the Oil For Food money, and frankly, by any reasonable
6 standard, the scandal of a personnel system in which you
7 can't fire people who are clearly incompetent or who are
8 doing things that are illegal, because the internal
9 checks and imbalances are so impossible.

10 And so we brought to bear a very
11 significant set of reforms on the management side. We
12 also said and here, we actually agree with a number of
13 other studies, that the current Human Rights Commission
14 is destructive by its very nature. It has, in effect,
15 been taken over by the very human rights violators the
16 Commission is designed to deal with and we suggest
17 significant changes.

18 Lastly, and I think this the one place
19 where maybe we are helping break some new ground inside
20 our own system, we really think working systematically
21 to organize the democracies is a very important

1 component of this. There are far too many dictatorships
2 in the U.N. There are far too many violators of human
3 rights in the U.N. You can't just have an up or down
4 vote among the whole gang, because the human rights
5 violators and the dictators have a net interest in
6 organizing to protect themselves. And so if the
7 democracies don't organize on behalf of decency and
8 saving lives and honesty, you can't expect the U.N. to
9 be fixed.

10 And so we strongly advocate focusing more
11 energy in Africa, organizing the democracies into a
12 group that sets a minimum common standard and insist on
13 that minimum common standard being applied throughout
14 all of the U.N. organizations in a systematic way. So
15 it's a very, I think, important report and I hope it's a
16 report that people will take very seriously. It's a
17 report about America's interest in the U.N., but it's
18 also a report that we believe countries around the world
19 that have citizens who care about decency, saving human
20 lives and political freedom will also want to look.

21 I yield to my colleague without whom this

1 could not have happened, Senator Mitchell.

2 SENATOR MITCHELL: Thank you very much, Mr.
3 Speaker. It's a real pleasure for me to join the
4 Speaker and others in presenting today the report of the
5 Task Force on the United Nations. Newt Gingrich is a
6 friend and we served together as co-chairs. We have
7 worked closely together over the past several months,
8 along with the other members of the Task Force, all of
9 whom have contributed significantly in good faith and in
10 a spirit of bipartisanship.

11 My thanks also to Congressman Frank Wolf.
12 It was at his initiative in legislation passed in
13 December 2004, that the U.S. Institute for Peace was
14 directed to create this Task Force on the U.N. And in a
15 compressed period, this group has produced a very
16 comprehensive report.

17 I join the Speaker in thanking all of the
18 members of the Task Force represented here today by
19 Danielle Pletka and Anne-Marie Slaughter, also Robin
20 West is with us. He was one of the senior advisors to
21 the Task Force and representing the U.S. Institute for

1 Peace, Ambassador Dick Soloman, Ambassador George Ward,
2 Heather Sensibaugh and Sloan Mann, I thank all of you
3 and all of the people that you represent for the
4 outstanding work that you did on this.

5 The report is based on fact-finding
6 missions by Task Force members including visits to
7 peacekeeping operations and humanitarian missions in the
8 field, in meetings with the U.N. leadership in Geneva,
9 and in New York. The full Task Force also met in
10 plenary session for two all-day meetings here in
11 Washington. The experts who work with Task Force
12 members represent great breadth and depth of knowledge,
13 reflecting the fact that they come from six of our
14 nations leading public organizations: The American
15 Enterprise Institute, The Brookings Institution, The
16 Center for Strategic and International Studies, The
17 Council on Foreign Relations, The Heritage Foundation,
18 and The Hoover Institution.

19 I would especially like to acknowledge and
20 thank Lee Feinstein of the Council on Foreign Relations
21 and William Sanders of The American Enterprise

1 Institute, for their knowledge of this subject and their
2 substantive contributions to this report.

3 I think it is accurate to say that the
4 report could not have been written in its current form
5 without their very major contributions.

6 As the Speaker made clear, and as the
7 report states explicitly, this is a compromise document.

8 Twelve experienced, knowledgeable citizens came
9 together, inquired, discussed, debated. We agreed on
10 most of the issues and those are set in the report, but
11 we did not agree on every issue and those are set forth
12 candidly as well, in the report.

13 And obviously, each member is free to
14 express his or her individual views beyond those stated
15 collectively in the report.

16 We came together to do what we can to help
17 the United Nations realize more fully the aims of its
18 charter. Our mandate was to recommend an actionable
19 agenda for U.N. reform. We were asked to address this
20 subject solely from an American perspective and we have
21 done so. We believe that the ideals and values which we

1 Americans hold are held by people all around the world
2 and our conclusions with respect to the effectiveness of
3 the U.N. are for others to judge for themselves, but we
4 believe that they will reach similar conclusions.

5 We carried out this mandate in the firm
6 belief that an effective United Nations is in the
7 American national interest. Indeed, that is the first
8 and most fundamental conclusion of this report.

9 Americans have always hoped and wanted the
10 U.N. to play a major role in the pursuit of a better
11 world. Yet, recent events have challenged the U.N. and
12 its members, including the United States to adapt to
13 dramatically different demands: the problem of failed
14 states, catastrophic terrorism, the need for effective
15 action to prevent genocide which the Speaker has so
16 eloquently addressed, and the promotion of democracy and
17 the rule of law.

18 The Task Force concluded that reform is
19 necessary on two levels. The first is institutional
20 change without which other reforms will be much more
21 difficult to implement. Institutional reform of the

1 United Nations is not a favor to the United States. It
2 is a vital aspect of the continued integrity and
3 vitality of the U.N. itself. In this regard, the Task
4 Force notes that it undertakes this effort at a time of
5 growing consensus on the imperative for reform at the
6 United Nations, acknowledged directly to me and other
7 members of the Task Force by almost everyone we met at
8 the U.N. on our several visits there.

9 And also, in light of important reports on
10 reform by the high level panel on Threats, Challenge and
11 Change, and the Secretary General's own report, In
12 Larger Freedom.

13 The Task Force found that management
14 systems that are common in other public and private
15 institutions were lacking in a number of U.N. agencies
16 and bodies that we reviewed. We recommended a reform
17 program that includes a number of elements. Among them
18 are an authoritative, independent oversight board that
19 will have all the authority of an independent audit
20 committee; empowerment of the Secretary General to
21 replace top officials and the creation of an effective

1 Chief Operating Officer and a modern personnel system;
2 effective whistleblower protection and ethical and
3 disclosure standards for top officials and transparency;
4 sunset provisions for all programs and activities
5 mandated by the General Assembly; and identification of
6 operational programs that should be funded entirely by
7 voluntary contributions.

8 With respect to peacekeeping, the Task
9 Force reviewed the disturbing allegations of sexual
10 exploitation and abuse by U.N. peacekeepers in the Congo
11 and elsewhere. We recommended immediate implementation
12 of a policy of zero tolerance, better training, and
13 other disciplinary and preventive measures. We
14 recommended that the Department of Peacekeeping
15 Operations become a more independent program with
16 distinct rules and regulations appropriate for its
17 operational responsibility for comprehensive
18 peacekeeping missions.

19 The second kind of reform is operation.
20 Nowhere is this more important than in crafting an
21 effective strategy and in identify specific measures to

1 improve the United Nations's capacity to stop genocide,
2 mass killing and human rights violations, including
3 immediate action on Darfur.

4 On Darfur, the Task Force recommended a
5 series of immediate initiatives for the United States
6 and the United Nations and others to assist the African
7 Union in stopping the killing. Our recommendations
8 include assembling a package of assistance for the
9 African Union, authorization and establishment of a no
10 fly zone over Darfur and a new Security Council
11 resolution that provides a strong mandate backed up by
12 the forces adequate to the mission.

13 Speaking personally, I think the G-8
14 meeting in July provides an excellent opportunity for
15 the United States and other leading democracies to reach
16 agreement on such a strategy for Darfur. The Task Force
17 also discussed the genocide prevention more generally.
18 One of its most important conclusions, I believe, is its
19 affirmation of every government's responsibility to
20 protect its citizens and those within its jurisdiction
21 from genocide from mass killing, from massive and

1 sustained human rights violations.

2 We recommended that the U.S. Government
3 call on the Security Council and the General Assembly to
4 affirm this responsibility. The Task Force further
5 agreed that in certain instances, and now I quote from
6 the Task Force report itself: "A government's
7 abnegation of its responsibilities to its own people is
8 so severe that the collective responsibility of nation's
9 to take action cannot be denied. The United Nations
10 Security Council can and should act in such cases. In
11 the event, the Security Council fails to act, its
12 failure must not be used as an excuse by concerned
13 members to avoid protective measures."

14 We also made recommendations as the Speaker
15 has noted to replace the Human Rights Commission whose
16 reputation, I think, is in shreds, with a new Human
17 Rights Council, ideally composed of democracies, a
18 proposal that is largely constant with the Secretary
19 General's own conclusions.

20 The Task Force devoted considerable energy
21 and attention to the critical issue of development.

1 Addressing the needs of the developing world is not
2 icing on a cake. It's a key challenge for how one
3 billion people in wealthier nations will share the
4 planet with over 5 billion people in poorer nations.

5 The task force did not reach agreement on
6 the recommendation of the Secretary General that
7 developed nations meet a benchmark of .7 percent of GDP
8 for development assistance, but it did agree on the
9 importance of greatly increased support for the effort
10 to bring developing nations out of poverty as a global
11 priority including government to government assistance
12 and greater emphasis on private investment, including
13 the legal, political and economic infrastructure that
14 will allow such aid and investment to flourish. That
15 is, there must be a greater effort by the wealthier
16 nations and a much greater effort by the recipient
17 nations to ensure that such funds are not wasted.

18 The Task Force also did not reach agreement
19 on the details of any Security Council expansion. It
20 did conclude, however, that any such expansion should
21 enhance the effectiveness of the Security Council and

1 not in any way detract from the Council's efficient and
2 ability to act in accordance with the charter.

3 Task Force members have differing views on
4 this question and they are, of course, free to express
5 them and I'm confident they will do so. For myself, I
6 believe that the United States should support expansion
7 of the Security Council, with the aim of improving the
8 Council's ability to carry out its key security and
9 development functions, by which I mean more support for
10 development and more capacity for peacekeeping
11 operations. The Task Force discussed, did not reach
12 agreement on, but I support an expansion with no new
13 veto powers, no new permanent members and with a
14 possibility of some longer and consecutive terms,
15 similar to one of the proposals advanced by the high
16 level panel.

17 Let me conclude with just a few general
18 points. Our task force agreed that reform is both
19 desirable and feasible, but it can be accomplished only
20 with a strong and concerned leadership of the United
21 States working with the growing ranks of the world's

1 democracies. A successful U.S. effort will also require
2 bipartisanship at home and cooperation between the
3 Executive and Legislative branches of our Government.

4 I believe the work of this Task Force and
5 the wide range of views it represents is itself a
6 demonstration of what is possible when people of
7 differing views come together in good faith to chart a
8 course for the common benefit of our nation.

9 Before taking your questions, I want to
10 repeat my gratitude to all of those who participated,
11 specially Speaker Gingrich who devoted a great deal of
12 time, effort and leadership to this effort and without
13 who, I assure you, none of this would be possible.

14 Thank you all very much and I believe the
15 Speaker and I will be glad to take your questions now.
16 Ambassador Solomon of the United States Institute of
17 Peace is here as well.

18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: My question concerns
19 Darfur. You mentioned that NATO would be the likely
20 institution to assume some action here. It begs the
21 question, did you conclude in your analysis there was no

1 reason to hope for effective action in Darfur from the
2 Security Council. If so, what does that imply for the
3 Security Council's ability to move forward and how does
4 that relate to your call for a separate entity of
5 democracy within the U.N.?

6 SENATOR MITCHELL: We did not reach that
7 conclusion. Indeed, to the contrary, as I noted in the
8 statement I just read, we recommended a new Security
9 Council resolution with a much stronger mandate and with
10 resources adequate to the task.

11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Regarding Japan, the Bush
12 Administration has repeatedly come out in support of
13 Japan's bid for a permanent seat. You seem to be saying
14 that you don't support. Could you clarify your position
15 on that, Speaker Gingrich, on your personal view on
16 membership.

17 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Speaking for ourselves
18 because the Task Force did not reach a consensus view on
19 this, I personally, strongly support Japan having a
20 permanent seat. I could see as a middle ground the
21 proposal for an expansion that has several long-term

1 seats that have an opportunity to be reelected and that
2 may be where the U.N. ends up because after all, it
3 takes a two-thirds vote. It's a very high standard to
4 change anything. But I agree with Secretary Rice, when
5 you look at the totality of Japanese contribution, it's
6 pretty hard not to argue for them and I would say to go
7 a step further than the Secretary has gotten.

8 I'm not quite sure in the long run if you
9 want a truly representative -- not representative of the
10 entire world. I'm not talking about representative in
11 an elected sense, but I think in the long run you want
12 the second largest country and the largest democracy in
13 the world, India, to somehow have a much greater role.
14 And I think both of those countries would, in fact,
15 strengthen the Security Council. That's not the
16 government's view and it's not the Commission's view.
17 That's just my personal view.

18 SENATOR MITCHELL: I caution against
19 interpreting failure to reach agreement as opposition.
20 I don't think that's the case. The Task Force did not
21 reach agreement on the subject. There are widely held

1 views. You probably could get a spirited discussion
2 going right after this meeting if you got Anne-Marie and
3 Danielle and all the rest of us here to have a debate on
4 it, but that doesn't mean it's opposition. It means
5 that there's the absence of agreement.

6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: All of these reform
7 proposals are before the United Nations with some
8 urgency and here we're embroiled in this issue of Don
9 Bolton, to have a U.N. Ambassador, to have this
10 particular U.N. ambassador. What is your view of the
11 impact of that controversy or the U.S. being able to
12 take the lead.

13 SPEAKER GINGRICH: I want to answer exactly
14 the question you asked. It is clearly harmful to the
15 interest of the United States to not have an ambassador
16 at the United Nations right now. This is an
17 extraordinarily critical time. There are very important
18 items being negotiated and the United States should have
19 an ambassador representing it.

20 Now I want to say up front because I'm
21 going to go a step further with the expectation that my

1 good friend from the Senate won't agree. I represent
2 the House view of the Senate which is another topic
3 that's not always diplomatic.

4 I really do think that it is inappropriate
5 to avoid an up or down vote on a nominee from the
6 President. And in this particular case and forget the
7 judicial fight. On this particular case, I don't
8 understand the perennial use and this is bipartisan on
9 the Senate. Senators use the ability to put holds on to
10 slow down confirmations to a level that I think has been
11 a scandal for at least three Administrations, including
12 the last Democratic Administration. It's a pattern
13 that's now evolved. You have 20 or 30 percent of the
14 Executive Branch political appointees that are vacant at
15 any one time. And it's really a severe problem for the
16 United States.

17 Now whether you like Bolton or don't like
18 Bolton, the President of the United States ought to be
19 able to get a nominee unless there's some overwhelming
20 reason not to, but in that case they ought to get
21 defeated. They shouldn't just be out here in limbo

1 blocking any nomination from going forward. I think it
2 has hurt the United States' ability to get the very
3 reforms we want to not have an ambassador working at the
4 U.N. without commenting on whether it is Bolton or not.

5 SENATOR MITCHELL: How I wish you'd been in
6 the Senate during the six years I was the Democratic
7 Senate Majority Leader and given that speech then when I
8 had to file cloture to end Republican filibusters 74
9 times in the last two years that I served in the Senate.

10 To be clear, there weren't 74 filibusters, sometimes I
11 had to file cloture several times, but there were far
12 more than in history.

13 That is a subject that really goes far
14 beyond our mandate and I don't think it's appropriate to
15 debate here, that is the filibuster, so I won't attempt
16 to do so, except to say that with the greatest respect
17 for the Speaker, but he and I don't agree on everything.

18 That's one thing that we don't agree on,
19 but with respect to the specific nomination.

20 Our mandate was to look at the institution
21 of the United Nations over the long term, not to look at

1 individuals in the short term. And so we did not, to
2 the best of my knowledge, ever have any discussion
3 whatsoever about Mr. Bolton's nomination, at least not
4 in my presence and therefore it's simply not a subject
5 that was within the mandate of the United Nations and
6 each member of the Task Force will, of course, be
7 completely free to express his or her individual view on
8 the subject as the speaker has done.

9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There have been some
10 proposals on the Hill to withhold U.S. dues to the U.N.
11 unless they do these certain reforms. How do you both
12 feel about that?

13 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Look, I think, first of
14 all, to take the specific example of the Hyde Bill,
15 which we'll get to later on this week, as an expression
16 of the level of anger that many Americans feel about the
17 whole series of scandals, it is a totally understandable
18 approach. It's also an approach that has historic
19 precedence. It's been done before.

20 The view we took, as a group, was that we
21 should first try to organize the democracies and get

1 what we need done, that we did not reach an agreement
2 either for or against withholding funds, but I would say
3 that, as a general rule, we think you withhold funds
4 last, not first. But the standard that they're trying
5 to set in both the House and the Senate that the reforms
6 have to be real, that you can't just get a lowest common
7 denominator, what will the, you know, average dictator
8 feel comfortable with or what will the political process
9 of the personnel system feel comfortable with, you
10 cannot tolerate this reform process degenerating to that
11 level.

12 And so I understand fully why Chairman Hyde
13 has taken the position he has. I think we, as a
14 collective group, it is fair to say, did not reach a
15 specific conclusion. We certainly didn't come out
16 against it, but we did say that that ought to be part of
17 the process, but the primary focus of the process, in
18 our judgment, should be to organize the democracies,
19 things like the G-8 Meeting, to have all the major
20 funders collectively say they have had enough of this
21 kind of corruption and enough of this kind of

1 inefficiency and collectively insist on modernizing our
2 nations and making it more transparent and more honest.

3 But the underlying anger, I would say, that you're
4 seeing in both the House and Senate is very real and I
5 think if the average American knew the facts, they would
6 be equally troubled by this situation.

7 SENATOR MITCHELL: During the entire period
8 that I served in the Senate, Congressman Hyde was in the
9 House and we worked on many matters together very well.

10 I have the greatest respect for him and regard him as a
11 good friend. And I share many of the recommendations in
12 his legislation, first, of course, the fundamental need
13 for reform, which we have just expressed here; second,
14 and importantly, the recommendation that several of the
15 institutions shift from the regular assessed budget to
16 voluntary contributions to enhance both their
17 independence and effectiveness, which is a major thrust
18 of the legislation proposed by Representative Hyde.

19 As the Speaker noted, the Task Force did
20 not endorse the concept of withholding, and personally,
21 I do not share the view that it is a useful or effective

1 means of accomplishing one's objective. I believe that
2 the way to do this is in the positive and constructive
3 manner that the Task Force has recommended and for which
4 I believe there will be a great receptivity within the
5 United Nations. To the contrary, the threat or use of
6 withholding produces a very powerful negative response,
7 which I think will decrease the prospect of reform as
8 opposed to increasing it. But I emphasize this is a
9 personal view and Task Force members hold different
10 views on the subject and, of course, are free to and
11 will, no doubt, express them.

12 QUESTION: Yes. What about the possibility
13 of a Latin American country like Brazil becoming a
14 permanent member of the Security Council?

15 SENATOR MITCHELL: I've stated my view,
16 which did not include reference to any individual
17 country, but rather supported the concept of expansion
18 along the lines of one of the models proposed by the
19 High-Level Panel. That is, the addition of some members
20 to longer terms with the possibility of renewal, but not
21 permanent and not with a veto. The decision on which

1 nations will be involved, if such a course is adopted,
2 will be for the U.N. to make. The Speaker's already
3 indicated his view and the U.S. Government has expressed
4 its view.

5 QUESTION: How realistic is the reform?

6 The U.S. has been calling on reform since the inception
7 sixteen years ago. There have been reports and proposals
8 for reform, especially in the past year or so, but can
9 we realistically expect that reform will happen or will
10 it take another (inaudible 10:36:53) to know more in the
11 one or will it take more scandals such as (inaudible
12 10:37:02) for someone to get really serious about this?

13 SENATOR MITCHELL: I believe it is
14 realistic. I believe the time is right. And I do not
15 believe in this, or any other act in which we are
16 engaging, past failure should be an excuse for not
17 trying now. I served in Northern Ireland for several
18 years in the peace negotiations there. For 700 days, we
19 had failure. And almost every one of those 700 days, I
20 was confronted by members of the media who, doing their
21 jobs, said, "Aren't you failing?" And, indeed, we were.

1 And on the 701st day, we had success. We have to keep
2 trying and I think the opportunity now is right for all
3 of the reasons that we've suggested, the scandals that
4 have occurred, the disrepute into which the Human Rights
5 Commission has fallen, the difficulty that the U.N.
6 faces here and around the world and the receptivity
7 there to reform. I didn't meet a single person there
8 who said, "Things are fine. Go away." Every one of
9 them, without exception, U.N. personnel, representatives
10 of other countries said, "Reform is necessary. We
11 believe in it. We encourage what you're doing. We want
12 to act." Now they, no doubt, will not all agree on the
13 specific recommendations we've made, but we think the
14 time is right. And we commend Congressman Wolf for
15 having the vision to see that and we hope very much that
16 these recommendations will, in fact, be made -- be
17 placed into meaningful reform.

18 SPEAKER GINGRICH: I want to add to that.
19 First of all, there have been, on occasion, successful
20 reforms in the past and the U.N. is a somewhat different
21 institution than it was. But I think there are four

1 factors and Senator Mitchell put his finger on some of
2 them. The first factor is that the scandals, the
3 inefficiencies, the failures, are clear enough and vivid
4 enough and repetitive enough that I think there's a much
5 deeper mood that something has to be fixed or the U.N.
6 will simply cease to be relevant at some point. So
7 people who care the most about the U.N. have the
8 greatest reason to want to reform it. That's very
9 different than what some of the moods of the past have
10 been.

11 Second, there is a spirit across the
12 planet, which you saw in Ukraine, you saw in Georgia,
13 you've seen now across all of Eastern Europe, there is a
14 mood of popular involvement and popular will that sets a
15 new standard for honesty and against dictatorship. I
16 think that new pattern is actually a very powerful part
17 of what's affecting the potential to organize the
18 democracies that are now growing in number. And for the
19 very first time, you might, in fact, have a working
20 majority among democracies as opposed to various levels
21 of dictatorial government.

1 Third, the news media makes a difference.
2 We both found that when we were first announced and had
3 our first press briefing on this that there were
4 publications all across the planet that were interested.

5 So there is a worldwide news media that is going to ask
6 the question all summer and in September, "So what
7 really happened?" "What got done?"

8 And lastly, I think among the senior, most
9 powerful governments, there is a growing sense that this
10 has to get better and that they are prepared to put some
11 real energy and some real leadership into making it
12 better.

13 For those four reasons, I think we'll make
14 some progress. It won't be overnight, it won't be
15 everything we want, and I suspect that this
16 Administration and the succeeding Administration will
17 have to make reform in the U.N. a continuing priority,
18 but I think that it's an important enough thing that it
19 will, in fact, happen over time.

20 QUESTION: Mr. Speaker?

21 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Yes?

1 QUESTION: You made your point, and I
2 appreciate it, but improving bureaucracies and knowing
3 what you know from your experience in Government, is a
4 difficult plan. What's to stop the U.N. from taking a
5 couple of the low-hanging fruits in your report and
6 making a few minor changes and moving on? They are,
7 after all, only recommendations.

8 SPEAKER GINGRICH: First of all, the U.N.
9 doesn't have to take anything in our report. Our report
10 is to the U.S. Congress and, hopefully, to the
11 Administration, Executive Branch. The question is
12 whether or not, first of all, the news media is going to
13 accept trivial reform as a serious effort, second,
14 whether the key governments are going to accept it. I
15 mean, after all, it is the governments who have the
16 greatest burden around the planet who are spending the
17 most money on the U.N. collectively, not just the United
18 States, who have a real interest in the United Nations,
19 which is competent, honest, accountable and transparent.
20 So the question is, I think you put it well, Brian, the
21 question is, "Can the United States Government have the

1 will to outlast the normal inertia of a bureaucracy and
2 a political system seeking to avoid change?" What we're
3 saying is, optimistically, but it was bipartisan and
4 unanimous, you know, we have this naive American faith
5 that if you're -- as Ronald Regan once said, "If you
6 trust but verify," you can get a lot done. So we think
7 we ought to move forward. The Administration ought to
8 make it a major goal. The Congress ought to keep track
9 of it. What we should also bring along as many
10 democratic allies as we can and collectively we ought to
11 be honest about how much we get done in September and
12 whether we need to go back at the same thing again in
13 2006.

14 QUESTION: What was the consensus view on
15 the performance of Kofi Anan and was there any movement
16 within the Panel that we should may be split or --

17 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Let me say -- and I
18 think the Senator will agree -- we made a very
19 deliberate effort to avoid personalities. The question
20 is, "Can you build a United Nations system which is
21 transparent, honest, accountable, and responsible for

1 major things that are useful to people across the
2 planet?" We deliberately, I think, sidestepped trying
3 to get involved in the specific individual personality.

4 SENATOR MITCHELL: I agree with that. I
5 agree with that, yes. Go ahead.

6 QUESTION: Mr. Speaker, in reference to
7 President Bush and leadership on this issue, where do
8 you think this fits in terms of his second term agenda?

9 There's always the danger of over-reaching and that
10 could cause some issues, and without U.N. reform, do you
11 think we can put his successor, he or she, in a strong -
12 - with a strong grasp on international issues in terms
13 of changing the international molds on some of these
14 issues?

15 SPEAKER GINGRICH: Well, like I say, I
16 don't want to even contemplate without U.N. reform
17 because, as you've just seen with this report, if you
18 look at the twelve participants, and the range we bring
19 to this, and if you look at the feeling in both the
20 House and the Senate, if you look at the feeling in the
21 Executive Branch, I think you're going to see a

1 continuing concern to get real reform. But we made it
2 very clear in our report that it is important that the
3 U.N. be reformed, but in the absence of effective United
4 Nations action, those countries that care about human
5 lives and those countries that care about freedom cannot
6 be constrained with the excuse that the Security Council
7 didn't act. So I think we're also serving some notice
8 to the United Nations that we want it to be effective,
9 we want it to be honest and transparent, but we also
10 want democracies that care about human rights and that
11 care about the lives of people to recognize that the
12 responsibility in the end is on the members. The U.N.
13 is only an institution of its members. So you can't
14 say, "Gee, the U.N. failed" if, in fact, it's specific
15 members causing the failure and other members at that
16 point have the option to take steps on behalf of human
17 rights and to take steps on behalf of saving lives. So,
18 in that sense, I think we're also serving some notice.

19 SENATOR MITCHELL: Each person, each
20 institution has only so much time, energy and available
21 resources. It is appropriate that a part of the

1 resources and effort of the news media should be devoted
2 to speculation on failure. We understand and accept
3 that. But it is not necessary for us to do so. I
4 believe that our effort is to devote 100 percent of our
5 time, energy and resources to succeeding in what we're
6 doing and then if we fail, we'll indulge in your
7 speculation about what to do then.

8 QUESTION: Mr. Speaker, you mentioned in
9 your remarks that there are far too many dictatorships
10 and there are far too many abusers of human rights in
11 the U.N. right now and that one of your recommendations
12 was that democracies had to unite and come together with
13 one stronger U.N. and push this through. I'm just
14 wondering how far you want to go with that. Are you
15 saying that there should be a minimum set of standards
16 for countries to be able to join the United Nations on
17 that?

18 SPEAKER GINGRICH: The only standard we set
19 as a collective group was that in terms of the
20 replacement of the Human Rights Commission, we strongly
21 believe that there should be a very hard effort to have

1 only countries that obey the rule of law and recognize
2 human rights serve on the successor, that to simply
3 change the name of whatever organization the dictators
4 are going to organize would be, I think, a total
5 betrayal of human rights. So we do believe the
6 democracy should focus very intensely on setting the
7 standard that if you're not a democracy, don't apply to
8 serve on the replacement for the Human Rights Commission
9 because, by definition, if you're a dictatorship, how
10 can you possibly have any moral standing to serve on a
11 Human Rights Commission.

12 SENATOR MITCHELL: One of the specific
13 recommendations we made was that democratic nations,
14 rather than adhering to regional groupings and voting on
15 nominations based solely on geography, as is now the
16 case and is a contributing factor to the current status
17 of the Human Rights Commission, should rather join
18 together to cast their votes based upon standards. And
19 they should be voting for other democracies, not
20 necessarily on regional groupings.

21 QUESTION: In terms of general membership,

1 there would be no minimum set of standards?

2 SENATOR MITCHELL: No. Let's be clear
3 about the history of the United Nations. There are five
4 permanent members of the Security Council representing
5 the nations that were victorious in the Second World
6 War. There were no standards of democracy. The Soviet
7 Union was a charter member, while Joseph Stalin was the
8 leader of that country.

9 China is an initial member and shortly after the
10 adoption of the United Nations, became a communist
11 totalitarian state, which continued as a member. So
12 there is a benefit from universality, from getting
13 people in to talk, engage, and hopefully, transform and
14 there is some evidence that's successful. It may not be
15 causative with respect to the U.N., but there can be no
16 doubt that the number of democracies in the world is
17 increasing. As the number of nations increases at the
18 U.N., so does the number of democracies. I'm expressing
19 a personal view here now. We didn't debate this at the
20 Task Force. The best thing we can do is to get people
21 involved, engaged and especially make them transparent.

1 That's the most important thing. Transparency,
2 openness and democratic institutions and we think that
3 will follow.

4 We'll take one more.

5 QUESTION: From what you just said, then if
6 you constitute a Human Rights Council made up of
7 democracies, does that not then cause some of the
8 dictatorships that fall out of any kind of conversation
9 that you might have diplomatically had because of the
10 change to their human rights position?

11 SENATOR MITCHELL: Oh, no, no. I don't
12 suggest that they have to be on the Human Rights Council
13 to engage in dialogue. If you follow that logic, then
14 every country would have to be on every committee and
15 every commission of the U.N. and you would soon have 191
16 members of every committee. I think there is a
17 distinction between membership in the entity,
18 participation in a General Assembly, and membership on
19 various groupings. And it is crystal clear that several
20 of the nations with poor, terrible human rights records,
21 have become involved in the Human Rights Commission for

1 the principal, if not the sole purpose, of protecting
2 themselves against criticism, not in advancing the cause
3 of human rights. That's one of the reasons why the
4 Commission has fallen into such disrepute. It's being
5 used for purposes that are directly anethetical to the
6 purpose of the Commission itself and that's why it has
7 to be abolished.

8 Thank you all --

9 SPEAKER GINGRICH: I just want to also add
10 one thing to that because you asked the perfect
11 question, I think, to close this out on and illustrate
12 why this Task Force produced this report. George Orwell
13 once wrote an essay on politics and the English language
14 where he essentially said that the less defensible your
15 position is, the more grotesque your language will be.
16 If you think about a Human Rights Commission that, at
17 one point, was chaired by Libya, and to which Sudan was
18 elected while being investigated for genocide, you
19 understand how desperately the United Nations needs
20 effective reform.

21 I think that we felt very strongly, as a

1 group, that establishing first the standard, that
2 countries have a responsibility to protect their
3 citizens, and that this applies to every country on the
4 planet. It has a responsibility to protect its citizens
5 from the kinds of things that are happening, for
6 example, in Dar IV (phonetic 10:50:58). Second, that
7 the democracies have an obligation collectively to
8 ensure that when human rights are being discussed, only
9 those who have proven by their own commitment to the
10 rule of law in human rights should be in the room
11 because, otherwise, it becomes a travesty of the very
12 process. I think those are exactly the kinds of
13 concerns for honesty, for transparency, for
14 accountability and for a fact-based system that we tried
15 to use to unite the Task Force to issue this report.

16 Thank you very much.

17 SENATOR MITCHELL: We now have a concluding
18 word from Ambassador Dick Solomon of the United States
19 Institute for Peace. Dick?

20 AMBASSADOR SOLOMON: Just let me close by
21 saying this report reflects the kind of passion for a

1 more effective United Nations that you heard from
2 Chairman Wolf and the incredible leadership that we've
3 had from Speaker Gingrich and Senator Mitchell.

4 Also, a unique aspect of this report was
5 the collaboration that was mandated in the Congressional
6 Legislation between, what shall I say, six unlikely
7 collaborators in this town and the policy organizations
8 that were mentioned. But they nominated the members of
9 the Task Force and I want to mention the ones that have
10 not been mentioned here. General Wes Clark, Ed Feulner,
11 the president of the Heritage Foundation, Rod Hills from
12 Hills & Stern, two former U.N. Ambassadors, Don McHenry
13 and Tom Pickering, Anne-Marie Slaughter and Danielle
14 Pletka are with us here from AEI in Princeton, Dr.
15 Michael Spence from Hoover, and Senator, former Senator
16 Malcolm Wallop, Frontiers of Freedom, and Jim Woolsey,
17 former CIA Director, now with Booz Allen and Hamilton,
18 and then two very effective senior advisors, former
19 General Charles Boyd, now with BENS, the Business
20 Executives for National Security, and J. Robin West.
21 Robin West is, apart from head of his company, PFC

1 Energy, also in the issue of full disclosure, Chairman
2 of the Board of the Institute of Peace.

3 They made really important contributions,
4 but the six policy organizations also contributed the
5 experts that provided much of the substantive input to
6 the five very detailed chapters that are in this report
7 and the Institute of Peace, after next Wednesday's
8 testimony before Chairman Wolf that was mentioned, will
9 be holding one or two follow-on sessions to give you all
10 a chance to talk to the experts who contributed to the
11 individual chapters.

12 Finally, let me just say that you can get
13 reprints of this report from our web site, www.usip.org.

14 And with that, we all thank you very much for your
15 attention. Thanks very much.

16 (Whereupon, the Press Conference was
17 concluded at 10:44 a.m.)

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