



**Women's Foreign Policy Group
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Keynote Address: US Priorities at the UN

Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo

US Alternate Representative for Special Political Affairs to the UN

Gillian Sorensen: Ladies and gentlemen: I hope you're enjoying your lunch. And I want to thank and salute again the marvelous leaders, Chairman of the Board Maxine Isaacs, and the President of the Women's Foreign Policy Group, Pat Ellis, for all they have done. And I also want to salute and thank a special supporter, Melinda Blinken, who has been a sponsor of this luncheon. Thank you everybody.

We were very honored and fortunate to have as the main speaker of today's luncheon, the US Alternate Representative to the United Nations for Special Political Affairs, Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo. She has had, what some might call, the quintessential diplomatic career. She has served in Moscow, in Oslo. She's worked at the US Information Agency. She has worked for the United Nations in the Washington office. She has been Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs, and she came to the US Mission in New York last August. So she has been here through the important and delicate transition between the last administration and the new administration. So we look forward to hearing her words on priorities for the United States administration. For some of us who have worked on US-UN issues over the years, it feels as though a breath of fresh air has come and it's a promising time and good things are going to happen, and Ambassador, we thank you for joining us and we look forward to your words.

Ambassador Rosemary DiCarlo: Thank you, Gillian, for that kind introduction. It's an honor to be introduced by someone who has done so much to make sure that women's voices are heard in international affairs. Let me also pay special tribute to Maxine Isaacs and Pat Ellis for their outstanding leadership.

On behalf of Ambassador Rice, I would like to thank the Women's Foreign Policy Group for hosting this event and for providing us with the opportunity to speak about US-UN relations. Ambassador Rice and I both appreciate the role of this group. The intellectual rigor and energy that its members bring to foreign policy issues are essential to helping to make the UN a more effective and responsive forum.

Today's headlines remind us all of the importance of collective responses to global challenges. A virus that most of us had never heard of just a week ago has now spread to 13 countries and claimed more than 100 lives. The need to think clearly and pragmatically about problems that pay no heed to borders has important implications for our foreign policy and our agenda at the United Nations. What could more vividly demonstrate the importance of global cooperation than the spread of an infectious disease that can cross the globe as quickly as an airline flight?

President Obama took the oath of office just over 100 days ago. During his first address to a joint session of Congress, he called for, in his words, a "new era of engagement." As he put it, "America cannot meet the threats of this century alone, but the world cannot meet them without America."

This is the spirit that animates our work. Allow me to outline briefly some of our key priorities here and show how we are delivering on the President's promise of revitalized American leadership and cooperation at the United Nations.

First, we are committed to putting the United States at the center of international efforts to reduce poverty, fight disease, and promote sustainable economic development. By investing in our common humanity, we advance our common security. We know that the problems faced by fragile states do not stay within their borders, and by helping them build up their capacities to stave off privation, illness, and poverty, we help pave the way to a more peaceful, prosperous world.

Already, we've begun to make a historic investment. The Administration's first budget, as submitted to Congress, puts us on a path to double foreign assistance. This aid is devoted to tackling clear, shared objectives. One such target is reaching the Millennium Development Goals, which, as President Obama has said, will be America's goals as well.

Second, we are working toward a world free of nuclear weapons. As President Obama said in Prague last month, "The threat of global nuclear war has gone down, but the risk of a nuclear attack has gone up." We uncover more troubling evidence every day about the perils of the market for illicit nuclear material and technology. This is why the President has announced an international effort to secure all vulnerable nuclear material around the world within four years, and that is why the U.S. will host a Global Summit on Nuclear Security later this year. The next Preparatory Commission for the Review Conference of the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty begins next week, and we hope to lay the groundwork at this session for a successful outcome at the NPT Review in 2010.

We at the US Mission recently found ourselves on the diplomatic frontlines of this challenge. Last month, North Korea launched a rocket using ballistic missile technology, clearly violating Security Council prohibitions. We helped marshal a strong, united response: first we won unanimous Security Council condemnation of the launch, and then last Friday, the Council agreed to impose financial sanctions on three North Korean

firms, marking the first time the UN has penalized individual companies linked to Pyongyang's nuclear- and ballistic-missile trade.

And on Iran, the UN Security Council continues to look at ways to improve enforcement of sanctions on that country as part of multilateral efforts to prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

Our third priority is providing strong global leadership on climate change, which also means recognizing that all major greenhouse gas-emitting nations must be part of any serious response to this gathering crisis. At the President's Major Economies Forum on Energy and Climate earlier this week, participants agreed that climate change is a clear and present danger to our planet that demands immediate attention from all countries. This year's UN General Assembly will also focus efforts toward a global warming agreement by the end of 2009. We are grateful to have a strong advocate and partner here in Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

Fourth, we are committed to increasing the UN's capacity to carry out peacekeeping missions. Let me be clear: UN peacekeeping serves US interests. Peacekeeping can be an effective tool to manage conflicts whose spread could threaten U.S. national security interests and values. The UN's "blue helmets" often go where we are unable or unwilling to send troops on our own. The missions are also a pretty good deal for the American taxpayer: deploying an operation costs roughly one-eighth the amount of a unilateral U.S. deployment.

These operations are performing vital work. They are helping young democracies such as Timor-Leste and Liberia move from war to peace, and UN political missions are helping with our efforts to find political solutions to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

But UN peacekeeping operations are growing in size, complexity and number—straining the UN's capacity to provide adequate resources, leadership, troops, and oversight.

We need to do more to ensure that missions are planned more carefully, deployed faster, led more ably, ended earlier, and avoided altogether when there are less expensive ways to manage a conflict.

I have outlined four broad priorities but I want to stress that many other regional political and security challenges occupy our agenda at the United Nations such as continuing violence in Sudan, the Congo and Sri Lanka, as well as ongoing repression in Zimbabwe and Burma.

On Sudan I think that you know the efforts we have made along with like-minded members of the UNSC to pressure President Bashir to reverse his reckless decision to expel NGOs that deliver humanitarian assistance. We have also worked with the UN on how to fill the gaps left by the departure of the NGOs.

On Sri Lanka, the Security Council has discussed this issue five times, mostly in informal sessions. Our goal is to pressure the Tamil Tigers to lay down their arms and release civilians they are using as human shields and to make clear to the Government of Sri Lanka that it must protect civilians as it takes action against the Tigers. We have expressed our concerns about allegations of violations of international humanitarian law.

Let me say a few words about UN reform. Now, at a time when we are asking the UN to deliver on more fronts than ever, a well-run and cost-effective UN is clearly in America's interest. Our eyes are wide open. The Obama Administration fully recognizes the UN's limitations and weaknesses, but we are supporting reforms that will strengthen the institution and increase accountability.

We take our responsibilities to the American taxpayers very seriously. Waste, corruption, and fraud are unacceptable anywhere. We will spare no effort to hold criminals accountable. We are working to maximize the effectiveness of three key UN bodies that evaluate performance and investigate abuses.

No reform agenda would be complete if it did not improve the performance of several newly created UN bodies, such as the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. We must also strive to revitalize the work of the UN's major bodies: the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council.

There is a special place for American will and American ideals at the UN. No country is more capable of exercising leadership in the United Nations, and no country can do so much to help frame its programs and shape its actions. The United States is not only a principal founder of the UN; it is also the UN's largest financial contributor and a guiding light for such inspiring examples of deeply held American values as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

These are the reasons why the Administration announced that the US will run for a seat on the UN Human Rights Council. That election is set for May 12. We fully understand the council's flaws, including its obsessive focus on Israel. But sitting on the sidelines has done little to advance the cause of human rights around the globe. Flawed as the council is, we are determined to try, by working from within, to build partnerships to make the Council a more effective forum on behalf of the victims of human rights abusers everywhere.

Before this audience in particular, let me also offer a special word on the role of women. The Administration stands firmly committed to two landmark Security Council Resolutions, 1325 and 1820 devoted to women, peace and security, which among other objectives, stress the need for the active involvement of women in efforts to promote peace and security. We strongly support those resolutions' call to give women a larger decision-making role in resolving conflicts. In our experience, mediation efforts that shut out women's perspectives and deny them a seat at the table are likely to neglect issues that are vital to securing lasting peace. And let me suggest one key place where we would be delighted to see women contribute more: The U.S. would like to see more

women among the special representatives and envoys who pursue crucial assignments on the Secretary-General's behalf.

More than 60 years ago, the United States provided the leadership and vision that led to the founding of the United Nations. Great American leaders such as President Truman understood then that a global institution that brings all of the world's countries together would enhance America's influence in the world. This is as true now as it was then.

Toward that end, this Administration is committed to honoring America's financial obligations to the UN. We are working to address the unpaid dues that have piled up over the years. We recently requested some \$837 million for peacekeeping from the Congress, and in the coming weeks, we will submit another request to meet all our financial commitments.

But leadership does not only mean paying the bills; it means bringing the full weight of American diplomatic and political influence to the United Nations. It comes from listening and learning from others who may have different perspectives. This Administration does not view engagement as a reward but as an important tool to advance U.S. interests.

At the heart of President Obama's "new era of engagement" is the reinvigoration of American leadership – and the pursuit of the international cooperation that is essential to meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Every day, in word and deed, in substance and in tone, we are engaged at the United Nations to deliver on that promise, and the promise of a better tomorrow for all our children.

Thank you so much. It's a great pleasure to join you, and I look forward to taking a few of your questions. Thank you.

Luncheon Q &A:

Question: In the beginning, you said the Millennium Development Goals are also going to be the development goals of the United States, and that was music to our ears. But is there evidence to show that this is going to take place? What are the baseline indicators now in the United States? As members of this group, how can we join so that the Millennium Development Goals in the United States are held to the highest level and everyone is held accountable, and all of us are stakeholders?

Rosemary DiCarlo: I think it's very clear that development is a key issue for this administration. It's something that my colleagues at the mission are working on very closely, and there are various agencies and parts of the UN working on development issues. We think it is absolutely key to work to meet these goals, and in order to meet these goals, we have to ask for additional funding, and we hope that Congress will accept it.

Question: Could you comment on the effectiveness of sanctions?

Rosemary DiCarlo: Thank you, it's a very good question, and an issue that we review all the time. I think that we believe that in many cases sanctions have been effective. We think that the sanctions that the Security Council has placed on Iran have been effective. We see the curtailment on certain activities of certain entities on which sanctions were placed. It's very difficult to measure how effective sanctions can be. For example, in Africa, sanctions in the DRC and Liberia certainly contributed to lessening the traffic of arms, of diamonds. I think it's very clear that sanctions can only be effective if they are enforced, and that's one of the areas that we need to work very closely on, is meaningful compliance of all member states with sanctions that have been voted by the Security Council.

Question: You've worked a lot on the Security Council on the issue of Somalia, and I was just wondering if you could bring us up to date in terms of whether anything might be happening on the piracy issue. And another issue that's been floating around for a long time that I wanted to bring up is the issue of the Security Council enlargement.

Rosemary DiCarlo: Well, on piracy, the United States has really taken the lead here at the UN on various piracy resolutions. We have two current ones in place. We, I think, have done quite a service by getting the Council to agree to resolutions, for example, to resolutions that allow countries to intercept ships, and approval last December to allow countries that have been attacked to go on the land to arrest pirates, to be sure that we were able to punish those who were perpetrating crimes. We've also been doing work with NATO and the European Union to do the work that they were doing, on intercepting and escorting. We have NATO now acting as a sort of escort for World Food Programme ships, because so much humanitarian assistance was being diverted.

There is going to be a Contact Group meeting on piracy in New York, I believe May 29 is the day we're looking at. The Contact Group is 20 some-odd countries involved in this effort; it includes the United States, France, UK, other European countries, Russia and China. We are looking at ways to strengthen what we're doing on piracy. You've probably been reading that there are some countries that are not allowed once they capture the pirates to try him or her (some are female) but we have felt all along that we have the authority to do this not only by our national legislation but by what's called something like the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea Convention. Some countries do not feel that this covers them or that there is a jurisdictional issue, but we know that if we don't find a way to deal with prosecution, this problem will continue.

Obviously, Somalia is a very difficult issue, one we've been wrestling with. We talked last year about possibly establishing a peacekeeping operation in Somalia. Many members of the Council and the Secretary-General felt that the time was not right for this, but we do have the African Union there, and the African Union is trying to help in government and security. There was a donors conference held recently in Brussels, where \$213 million was pledged, and this was for both African Union troops and for the Somali security forces. It's a very, very big issue here.

Security Council enlargement – the administration has made it very clear that they are open to enlargement, that it's important to have a Council that is a viable Council, that is considered representative, that can deal with these issues, that member states feel is representing them. We don't have a formula for enlargement. There was a formula under discussion, there are inter-governmental negotiations that are underway now. There are a lot of formulas out there; there is a new initiative being launched by the French and the British to consider an interim function, since it's difficult to get everyone to agree on what the formula should be for enlargement. What enlargement should not do is divide the membership; it should bring them together.

Question: I wanted to ask a question about the special envoys. I'm wondering if you can talk about the specific strategies to see women appointed as those special envoys, and what about a special envoy for violence against women?

Rosemary DiCarlo: As far as strategies or increasing odds, I don't have the specific figures, but I understand the number is very, very small; the number of envoys who are out there for mediation on behalf of the Secretary-General. I think it's about seven, but I'm not sure if that's accurate, and certainly special representatives heading operations of UN missions. I think it's really incumbent on all of us, all member states, when we see a position opening, if we know a good person, we put their name forward. I think that's really key. It's not just a question of the United States putting forward American names, it's a question about putting forward good people who we think will really be good for it. And I think it's not just the responsibility of the Secretary-General, but it's our responsibility as well. Now, organizations like the Women's Foreign Policy Group, and there are other women's groups out there, that also serve in generating interest in some of these positions among qualified women around the world.

Your point about having a special envoy on violence against women – I don't know if this has been considered. Obviously this is an extremely important issue, we've seen it in places like the Democratic Republic of Congo, where violence against women can be used as a tool of war, and I know that a lot has been done by the Secretariat and by the UN Mission in the DRC to try to reduce violence against women, but it's a big issue.

Question: Eva Busza said that the Secretary-General increasingly is going to be making statements that 2009 is a make-or-break year for the world and its people. And I wondered what you feel are some of the make-or-break issues for this year.

Rosemary DiCarlo: I think there are several issues that are important for this year; one is climate change. I think it's very clear that we need to get the ball rolling here, that a lot of work remains to be done, and if we don't start taking it seriously, we'll have a very major problem. And the other one is health. And it's not just about pandemics, but it's about health in general, and declining health around the world. Those are some key, key issues. The global issues are really major. We had a regional conference, they're very concerned about proliferation issues, but we also have some other issues that could go across borders and that really merit UN attention.

Question: I have two questions, the first one is on Haiti, I was wondering what you see as the role of the United States in this. The second question is on the Arab-Israeli conflict, what role do you see the US taking in the conflict, and possible resolutions.

Rosemary DiCarlo: Thank you very much. Haiti is an issue that we focus a lot on. President Clinton has done a lot, as you're aware. The donor conference was successful; the US is going to continue all the programs in different areas, for development, security sector reform. But we have to note that whenever we have a UN mission for a considerable period of time, a lot of critics say it's time to wind down, unfortunately, and we don't think that Haiti is ready yet, and we think the kind of role that the UN is doing on training national police in Haiti, working on the coast, is vitally important.

On the Middle East, Senator Mitchell is our special envoy and is working very actively and we are still looking for solutions. Obviously the Middle East can come up monthly in the Council; we have periodic conversations, once a month at a minimum, on the Middle East. I'll put this as diplomatically as I can – discussions within the Council have rarely led to an action or a product that has helped, in most of the process. We have worked very well, however, with the UN quartet of the US, EU, Russia, and the Secretary-General of the UN and value that kind of cooperation.

Question: I think it's quite commendable that the United States is wanting to play a more active role in the world of human rights. And I think that it is very welcoming. Are there any particular areas in human rights that you would want to focus on?

Rosemary DiCarlo: I think we're going to be focusing on a range of issues. Obviously there are some issues that are more thematic in nature that we will be working on in the Human Rights Council, but also on the issue of recognition. We do feel that there are a number of countries that are gross violators of human rights that unfortunately don't get the kind of attention from the Human Rights Council that they deserve.

Question: There will be a high-level meeting organized at the Council in May, and I was wondering whether we have any indication as to what would be on the agenda for the UN?

Rosemary DiCarlo: That has not been decided yet; there will be a high-level meeting on May 11. We do have a debate once a month in the Council. At this time under the Russian presidency, the Russians will have their Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, chairing the session.

Question: Can you tell me the restraints around UN on the global financial crisis [inaudible] and the global rescue plan packaging. We know that the most vulnerable will be women and children but we do not see any mechanism within the discussions that focuses on the most vulnerable and creates a human rescue plan for the most vulnerable.

Rosemary DiCarlo: You're absolutely right, and the most vulnerable are going to be the most vulnerable again in this particular crisis. But when it comes to who is contributing, we actually are doing a lot of work in that area. We announced several weeks ago additional resources that we were putting into agricultural development [inaudible]. Your point is well taken though, and we will look at it more closely.

Question: I wanted to ask a question in regard to the situation in Kenya, and the role that the US and the international community could play [inaudible].

Rosemary DiCarlo: Thank you, and just want to say that former Secretary-General Kofi Annan and his mediation efforts as well, he and his role working with other partners, including the African Union – that example is used often when we talk about the need to bolster mediation services. I believe you met with Under-Secretary-General Lynn Pascoe earlier today, who I'm sure made the pitch for new and expanded mediation efforts, and as far as what role the US would play in that, I don't know the answer to that, to be honest. I think it's very clear, though, that it's an issue we will watch and provide some support when needed. But it's an issue that is very well looked after in the UN mediation.

Gillian Sorensen: Thank you, Ambassador, for your service to the country and for being here today.