

The View from the U.N. on its 75th Anniversary: Reflections on Purpose, Direction, and Dangers

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00:01: Well, thank you so much for doing this, Ambassador. I thought I would start with a question having to do with the 30,000 foot view. It's the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, an organization that was started with the loftiest of ambitions, in part to prevent interstate conflict, but also to promote basic democratic values. When I interviewed your predecessor, Nikki Haley, at the end of 2018, she said that the verdict was still out whether the United Nations and the US participation in the United Nations still served US interests. I wanted to get your view on this question, now that you've been in the job. So what do you think? Has the UN lived up to its founding principles? And do you think the organization and US participation in the organization serves American interests?

00:55: Thank you, Eli, for that question. If we weren't having a monsoon rain, I would walk the iPad over so you could see my view of the East River, and the UN compound that I see every morning when I wake up and come into the main room. I can't imagine looking from the 37th floor of my residence and not see the UN compound, and that not being here in New York City, in the United States of America. And I think it's really important that the institution is located in New York, it's located in the United States, because it gives the US the opportunity as the host country to be able to be face-to-face with like-minded countries and with countries that we don't see eye-to-eye with, so that we can shine a light on them.

01:39: Can you imagine the UN not being located here and perhaps being located in China? I have read what the predecessors have all said, and yes, it is discouraging at times. We are discouraged at times that people do not always see the founding principles of the UN Charter. But at the same time, that is what we are here to do, is to promote our founding fathers, to promote the 75th anniversary. In 1948, we signed the UN Charter. It's funny enough that in 1971, China, of all countries reaffirmed their commitment to the UN Charter and the UN Declaration of Human Rights. I can't imagine the UN being located anywhere, and I'm hoping that I can build upon my predecessors. And not necessarily have affection, but have gained respect and continuing to shine a light on countries that abuse the rights of others.

02:39: Following up on that, certainly the Trump administration, but before that, George W. Bush, and there's a long tradition of American ambassadors being very frustrated with UN bureaucracy and seeking reform. Can you talk a little bit now about the reform agenda and how much you have accomplished in that regard? How do you approach reforming the United Nations, which I think was the first... In Trump's first address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2017, he made a big point to say that you can't live up to these principles without reform. So can you fill us in in what you've been doing in this regard?

03:20: Absolutely. I go back to my predecessors and Ambassador Kirkpatrick and the fact that she first acknowledged that there was waste and that we needed to reform the United Nations. And then I go to Negroponte, who took upon her words and her opening the doors for us to be able to reform and to actually acknowledge the fact that the institution needs a lot of help. We need to institute

transparency, accountability. We need to carve out areas where there's a lot of waste, financial waste. We have an obligation to the American tax payers to not only modernize the Secretariat and the UN as an institution, but to hold them accountable for our dollars and for the tax dollars of the countries, the contributing countries.

04:13: And as you well know, we are the largest contributor to the United Nations. And I just think it's important to build upon my predecessors and to make certain that we hold them accountable, and because accountability only results in actions that are going to initiate positive reinforcement of the United Nations.

04:34: How do you hold UN bodies that are answerable to other nations or, for that matter, international institutions accountable, what are some of the ways that you think the United States can do that?

04:48: Well, I think first and foremost, we have to really focus on implementing more Americans within the UN system, within the Secretariat. And not only just Americans, but like-minded countries. Because as in UNICEF and the World Food Program, when you have Americans that are the directors at the helm of organizations, you have accountability, you have transparency. And I think until we are able to place more Americans and like-minded countries within the system, there's always that question of are they being fully transparent, are our tax dollars being used according to the mandate, whether it's a peace-keeping mission, or any of the NGOs, for that matter.

05:33: So that is for and first foremost. And I think we need to also really pull in public-private partnerships within the UN system. Because I can tell you that the private enterprises, the private industry, private individuals are going to demand transparency and they're going to demand accountability. And we will pull out of organizations where we don't think that our funding is being used appropriately, as we have shown in the past, and we will continue to do so. And I think it's only important for all the member states to the demand transparency and accountability for their taxpayers as well.

06:13: Well, this dovetails into my next question, which is about Secretary of State Pompeo has really had a, almost a public awareness campaign about what he would say would be the predations of the Chinese Communist Party. And a big focus of that has been on the UN international organizations and trying to make, trying to compete for the leadership and also key personnel in these organizations, in some cases, like the World Health Organization, President Trump has pulled out. Can you give us a sense of where that campaign is right now, and what are some of the successes? And in your view, where is there room for improvement?

06:55: Eli, let's go back to 2016 during President Trump's campaign. This was one of his platforms, is really shining a light on China. Whether it is China stealing from our economy, our intellectual property, it's all been about China. And this is just a continuation of the President's platform. The Secretary is... Every day we are shining a light on the way that China is behaving, whether it be through the WHO. The United States has been the largest contributor of WHO, and basically that's been to be a mouthpiece for China. And so therefore that's why we withdrew from the WHO. We are working very hard on different organizations within the UN during elections, like WIPO, the intellectual property, to make sure that the Chinese... That their candidate does not win. Because the

more people that we can have within the UN system that are either Americans or like-minded countries, the more transparency and the more that we are able to really shine a light on China. And it is daily that they are abusing the rights of others, or abusing the UN system.

08:05: They are increasing their contributions and it's really to manipulate the system. It's not in order to lift up other countries as the US, as our number one priority is at the UN. It is to manipulate through the system their own agenda. And the General Secretary Xi and the Communist Party of China want to bring in their ideals, and want to bring in their people. We cannot allow this to happen. And every day that I'm in the Council, we will be shining a light on China, and other countries that also are abusing the rights of others, and abusing the system.

08:43: Well, on that point, we know that there's been some very good public reporting on how China conducts its own diplomacy. They can get very personal and offer bribes, they can offer countries loans, they can do all kinds of things to try to secure votes in these international organizations for Chinese-chosen leaders and other things like that. Tell me about how the United States does its counter-diplomacy in this regard. Do we play a similar kind of hard ball?

09:13: I don't think we need to play hard ball. I think that with every day that we shine a light on China within the Council, or from Washington, from the administration, that that is allowing the member states to see that China may come in and offer help, but they're also offering ownership. So they come up with these shiny projects, have visibility, and it's low return. And if you look no further than the continent of Africa, I think they are now becoming very tuned in to the fact that when China comes in, they take with them more than they leave. And that's what's important about the US, is when we arrive in a country, whether it be the states in Africa, Latin America, the Pacific Islands, the Caribbean, we leave with communities intact. We leave with the building up of communities, of families, of the economy, of sustainability. And that's what we're focused on. I think more important, we provide actions. We're not about lip service.

10:15: But when you are doing your diplomacy with various ambassadors and so forth, walk me... I don't know how much you can say. I know that diplomacy often has to be done discreetly, but just walk us through. Is that the argument that you make that China's not in your long-term interest. Is it all based on principles? Or are there things that are going to be tangible to smaller countries that choose to vote with the United States? It certainly wouldn't be the first time the US has done that kind of thing, and I'm not casting aspersions on it, but I just want to get a sense of how that works on the nitty-gritty level.

10:49: I think what... The way I choose to... My daily interaction is building relationships with some of the smaller countries regardless of the fact of their relationship with China. Because what we have to do is show them action. I have to show them interest in their country and in their needs. And then I will take it to the administration, whether it be to the development areas of the administration where we can come in and help build. Most importantly, help build them sustainable communities. When I first arrived, I took a lot of the acknowledgment from George H. W.'s book and how he arrived at the UN and reached out to the smaller countries, and he himself went to visit them, as did Ambassador Negroponte. I did the same thing.

11:41: And until COVID-19, I was seeing them face-to-face. During COVID time, I used those

months to actually reach out via text and phone to the other member states and just to have a conversation. They need to be listened to. They need to be acknowledged that they matter. The votes come later. I think when you develop that relationship, you don't have to ask for the vote, because you have the ground floor. When you ask someone for a vote and you don't have that relationship built, these are smart people. They're here for a reason. They're here because they are the cream of the crop of their diplomats. And I want them to understand that we respect that and that their relationship matters to me. The vote will come later.

12:29: I want to move on to the Middle East. As you know, and I'm sure you've been working on, I guess in October, the UN conventional arms embargo will sunset with regards to Iran. This has been a high priority for Brian Hook, who I think will be addressing the forum later. And I think it's a high priority for a lot of US allies in the region to make sure that that arms embargo remains. So at this point, do you think you will be able to persuade China and Russia not to veto a new resolution at this point, that would extend...

13:05: At this point... Obviously this is very crucial at any point. But at this moment, we have a choice. We have a choice between freedom and tyranny. We have an obligation to protect the Arab countries, to protect Israel, to protect the European countries. Russia and China, they too do not want Iran to have the access to nuclear weapons. We all are aware that this is a very rogue regime, you need look no further than just the way they treat their own people. And we want to protect the Iranian people. We want to protect people in Yemen, Syria, Libya, Lebanon, Venezuela. I can go on and on at where this rogue regime is going in and only adding fuel to these little fires that they have set themselves. I think it's really important that we started early, because this is obviously a very crucial issue that will affect the world for generations to come. China and Russia have threatened to veto, yes, that's accurate. However, I also know that they understand that this... There's a choice here. And this is a choice that they will have to make, they will have blood on their hands.

14:21: They also understand that we have a Council that feel very adamantly about their choice of freedom. And this is an issue that Brian Hook, the Secretary, and myself have been working on in reaching out to the countries, especially the Security Council countries. Brian, who will be speaking with the Aspen institute tomorrow, will be able to speak more technically. However, what I have been doing is reaching out to the perm reps on the Security Council and just re-emphasizing the importance that there's a choice here between freedom and tyranny. And this is a choice that's going to affect millions of people around the world, and I think everyone understands that fully.

15:03: Is the strategy to persuade the Chinese and the Russians to change their mind or is it to isolate them on the Security Council to show that, yes, they may have to use their veto, but you want to try to get as... I'm assuming France, the United Kingdom, the other veto-wielding members and others are on your side of it. Is the strategy that you think that there is some diplomacy to be done that maybe will get them not to exercise the veto or do you just want to isolate them at this point?

15:31: I think the strategy in a perfect world will always be to have them abstain and/or obviously not veto. However, let's be realistic here. Right now the strategy is working with the other members of the Security Council. And making certain that we really... Just as we did in Syria with the cross-border issue, put them in a corner and shine a light on them. Because this is a choice, and everyone

is going to know this is a choice between tyranny and freedom. And we will allow the world to see the choice that China and Russia will make. Just as we did with the cross-border issues in Syria, 13 of us gathered together, we became one, we were adamant about keeping the border issue in Syria, as we will be about promoting freedom and keeping the regimes, rogue regime in Iran, from affecting the many countries that they already are engaged in, and protecting the freedom and security of Israel and the Arabs countries.

16:31: So if I could just push back a little bit, it seems... Maybe I'm getting it wrong. But it seems to me that you're saying that you're trying to morally almost shame the Chinese and the Russians, and saying if you choose to stand by this, then blood will be on your hands. But do you think that shame works with Russia, which has been Assad's air force since 2015, with China that is conducting this campaign with what have been called concentration camps against the Uighurs in the Xinjiang Province. These are, you could say, great powers that seem to not have many moral considerations. Why do you think that shame would work or they would care, given their history of voting in the past on these kinds of things?

17:16: I think it's really important to show the other member states, who also are... This is an area, this happens to be a topic where it's going to affect the world. And we have made it very clear within the UN system to all of the member states, not only to the Security Council, and as you know, the Secretary and the President, this is their priority, is showing to the world that we are here to protect the freedom of the Iranian people, to protect the Middle East, Israel. And yes, they're... Russia and China are going to be who they are. I'm not going to be able to change their mind. However, what we can do is to change the way that other countries look to them and look at them. And that's what's important. And honestly, there's a choice here.

18:06: And my job is to make certain that we hold accountable Russia and China, and that we truly shine a light on them. And if we don't shame them, who is going to shame them? Who is going to stand up to China's propaganda, to Russia's propaganda? This is what the Americans do. This is why the American Ambassador is so important within the UN system. And also in hope that we have the like-minded countries that stand with us because there's more power altogether, especially within the UN system.

18:38: Now, if I could turn it around, and I'm here in a journalistic capacity, so I want to make it clear this is not my view. But I think there would be plenty of people who would sort of say what standing does the United States under President Trump have to make these moral arguments. The United States unilaterally took out Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad Airport. The United States unilaterally withdrew in 2018 from the Iran nuclear deal. Why is the United States lecturing other countries on morality and state-craft at the United Nations? What's your... I'm sure you encounter this, but what is your response to that argument?

19:15: We have an obligation as Americans, because we are a country that we were founded on democracy, the rule of law. We have an obligation to really use every tool in our tool box to call out rogue regimes, to be able to protect the citizens of these countries, of rogue regimes. The Iranian people, the people in Syria from the Assad regime. You realize Iran is propping up the Assad regime. They're in Yemen, they're in Libya, Lebanon, Venezuela. They are the reason for so many atrocities, not only to their own people, but around the world. And with the founding principles of

the UN, we have an oath, we took an oath, we have an obligation to promote freedom and democracy, peace and security around the world.

20:12: Okay, I mean, I certainly agree with that, but I'm just saying, how would you respond to saying, well, the United States has acted unilaterally, it has taken these steps in Iraq against, as I said before, in Qasem Soleimani, so there is an argument, it's very popular, even in this country, a lot of people think that Trump has sort of acted himself at times as a rogue leader and so forth. I just want to know how you kind, when you encounter that at Turtle Bay, what do you say?

20:41: My response is that this President cares first about the safety and security of the American people.

20:47: Right.

20:48: We are on a world stage, we are the leader of the free world, the President has been... He ran on this in 2016 in calling out rogue regimes in, first of all, mining our own people in building up our own, our economy, our defense, building America, and we can then take what we have built upon and make certain that we implement this around the world. I do hear this frequently, but I will tell you, there is no one who is a better defender of democracy and the rule of law in the world than President Trump and Secretary Pompeo, and I am not, I will never apologize for our mannerisms. And I am telling you now, when daily, when the UN fails to promote democracy, I'm going to do whatever it takes to defend democracy.

21:46: Okay. Moving on, I want to talk a little bit about what can the United Nations and really the Security Council in regards to Venezuela? We know that Nicholas Maduro has called for what appeared, will almost certainly be sham elections in December. Can you talk a little bit about the role for the UN to play in the transition to democracy for Venezuela?

22:11: You know, as you know, as you well know, the United States and several other member states support Guaidó and support his presidency. We also support the national assembly. The US has been the largest contributor to humanitarian aid in the Latin American countries, I was just in Colombia before COVID and saw firsthand the hundreds of thousands of refugees that are crossing over into Latin America, especially into Colombia, so you have human rights that are being abused in Venezuela. People are traveling, especially into Colombia, because obviously of the proximity, so what we have been able to do is to offer humanitarian aid and support to the Latin America countries, because before COVID, before the migration, this was an issue just within their own countries in their health issues, their economy, and then to have this compound on what already was occurring.

23:12: So you know, it is really important that we help Latin America, that we uncover all the atrocities of the Maduro regime, obviously, once again, Iran is engaged in propping up the Maduro regime. This is a very evil actor who has absolutely no respect for the people of Venezuela, and as the Ambassador to the UN, the US has to represent what is the right thing to do, and that is to call out the Maduro regime by supporting Guaidó and by supporting his people for free and fair elections, and we have to really stress that the UN and the Council, the Security Council, the

Human Rights Council, any council cannot cover up for the Maduro regime.

24:02: Do you have any specifics on how you think have UN bureaucracies covered up for the Maduro regime?

24:09: Well, we can't bring this before the Security Council, and if you look at the Human Rights Council, which allowed Venezuela... I mean, what more proof do I have that the United Nations system has yet to abide by the original Charter?

24:22: Well, the UN rapporteur for Venezuela, Michelle Bachelet, just came out with that devastating report, I think last month, on human rights abuses in Venezuela, I thought it was just absolutely... It was horrific to read, but it was... I thought it pulled no punches.

24:38: And of all people to come out to write a report in addressing human rights abuses and Venezuela, then Michelle Bachelet. I can't imagine why if other countries did not take heed and read her report, I don't know how else I can say that it is far important that we continue to really uncover this Maduro regime, because if she cannot, and she is someone that was very surprising, that as you well know, that came out with this report, yes, we can welcome this all day long in Latin America, but we all go feel the same, what we have to do is continue calling out, and I will continue trying to call AOBs on Venezuela within the Security Council, we have to take the like-minded countries who are recognizing the Guaidó regime and continue to lift him up and to really stress to him the importance of free and fair elections and support them for this, and also to make certain that we don't forget the Latin American countries who are under this heavy burden right now, on top of COVID 19, taking in all of the refugees coming in from Venezuela.

25:49: This is a disaster, you have Iran, you have Russia, you have China, Cuba, we have so many countries lifting them up, but if, you know, that's a really good little circle of friendship there to think about all the friends they have, they're all just such rogue regimes and they're all the same country, that the US is constantly using every tool in our tool box to stop the abuses, just by our sanctions, whatever tools we have to be able to stop what they are doing to prevent democracy and the rule of law for their people.

26:23: You mentioned briefly, and then we'll get to some questions, but you mentioned the UN Human Rights Council. The United States is not on the UN Human Rights Council, sort of on principle, but is there any hope that the UN Human Rights Council will really, you know, at least begin to not allow members that are horrific human rights abusers to serve under it, or is that just what's going to happen because of the nature of regional voting and such?

26:47: There's a reason that we're no longer on there, can you imagine a council that allows the Democratic Republic of Congo to be a member? We don't need to be a member of the Human Rights Council. If you just read Secretary Pompeo every day calling out China with the way they treat the Uighurs, with the way they treat Africans, look at Hong Kong, Taiwan, the way they're treating the Tibetans. We will continue without being a member of the Human Rights Council to shine a light on those countries. And if you look at the members of that Council, why would you want to be part of a group that is abusing their own people? We have far more effectiveness, if we

are calling them out outside that council, so that we can really shine a light what's going on with them.

27:39: Okay, I think now is the time where we're going to open it up for the last 15 minutes for some questions, if people want to raise their hands. So let's just... Hopefully this will get working. It's a little bit technical. In the interim, I'd love to ask kind of a personal question, when you took this job did you call prior US Ambassadors to the United Nations, and have you had a relationship with Nikki Haley or Susan Rice or Samantha Power? Can you talk a little bit about that?

28:09: Absolutely, you know what, one of the first... Obviously, Nikki and I spoke, the very first thing we got together and spent several hours, but I had lunch with Susan Rice and she was very open about refugees and areas in Africa that she thought I could be very helpful because she understands my initiative for public-private partnership in Africa on a personal level. And Samantha Powers, I have not met with her. I have read her book, as I did George H. W.'s, and spoken to Ambassador Negroponte, Ambassador Kirkpatrick.

28:44: So what I've tried to do is take all of the positive approaches from my predecessors and build upon those, because I'm hoping that from their good policy... There's nothing wrong in building upon good policy, then I will leave this stronger and then my successors will also then have something that they even have a more solid platform. I am very much interested in the situation in the African states, that's a very private, personal initiative of my own, and it was nice to talk with Ambassador Rice because she too felt the same way. Samantha Powers, also, with several, her publications have stressed refugees and also stressed the importance of having relationships with the smaller countries. And that is something also that George H.W did really well. And so I've tried to take everybody's advice and use a little bit of it to suit my own personality, and it's really worked well. So thanks for that question.

29:55: Yeah, absolutely. So you had a lunch with Susan Rice?

29:58: Yeah. I did.

30:00: Is she Vice Presidential material?

30:02: This was last year. I think she's just one of the smartest women. She was very helpful to me. If you can imagine people walking by us in the restaurant, looking at the both of us at lunch.

30:12: I can imagine. Yeah.

30:13: But I walked away, better knowledge on refugees and areas where I am best suited to help. And that's from my conversation with her was really related to the UN and how... What an impact that the US, UN and the UN Ambassador has within the UN system and that to take advantage of the moment, and you know, she also said make certain to enjoy yourself. That was really good advice.

30:37: Oh, that's nice. That's nice.

30:39: I read some of the comments when you had interviewed Ambassador Haley and different people, and the fact that we don't have Ambassador Bolton, and you leave with that affection, it's not a popularity contest here.

30:50: Sure.

30:50: What it is, is making certain that I am privileged to have a sneak peak into the real, the heart of some of the countries that we normally would not be able to have that opportunity, and so with that comes a responsibility. And so when I leave here, I will still carry that responsibility to carry the message of countries that this is their only platform, and like I said to you, when I look at on the East River and I see this... It's a huge compound, these 38 floors. I think about the small countries that really depend upon this compound as their only platform. So it's up to us to really shine the light on the abuses and to make certain that we uphold the charter. We are the leader of the free world, we are the largest contributor, and we have an obligation to really hit hard and hit back at the countries who do not follow the UN Charter.

31:47: Thank you so much, Ambassador Craft for those. We have a lot of people interested, the attendees asking questions, and Eli, if you're ready, maybe we'll talk to...

31:55: I am.

31:55: Laurie Garrett from the Council on Foreign Relations.

32:06: Great.

[pause]

32:12: Are you hearing me?

32:14: Yes, Laurie. We hear you.

32:16: Because as it may go to understanding your technology problems, as soon as you said my name, you logged me out of the system. [laughter] And I had to log back in entirely to Zoom. So, oops. Quick question. Can you, Ambassador Craft, tell us what actually is the strategic thinking in the Trump administration regarding how we will end this pandemic? And in particular, how does that go to your role in the Security Council and in relation to the multilateral system to come up with some shared sense of solutions and strategic plan?

32:58: Thanks for that question. I think it's really important right now to understand that with... I'm going to go back to March with the Secretary General in his global call for the ceasefire. I think that has been really important, especially during COVID, because we have to have this ceasefire in order to to safely allow the frontline workers... We already have humanitarian aid for existing situations going on in Yemen and Syria and other places in Latin America, other places around the world. But the global ceasefire that was initiated with the Secretary General has allowed us at this

time to really mitigate this process, this COVID-19, because there's a lot of humanitarian aid that is yet to be able to be delivered because we had situations of conflict on the ground. As far as domestically, the President has been a leader in our country speaking about COVID-19. But it is also a responsibility of each of us to be responsible for ourselves and follow the guidelines and also we have a responsibility for those people that are either next to us or in our own homes.

34:08: So I take it as responsibility upon myself, and I really stress this. When I was in Turkey and I could see... I saw the border, I saw the Turkish side with the Syrian refugees. And you look over the border and you see the difference when you do have a system that actually demands people to follow guidelines. I mean, you look over into Syria and you see... Can you imagine being a Syrian refugee on the Syrian side and being asked to shelter in place and you're already in such a small area that there is no sheltering in place by yourself. There is no social distancing. If you're a mother in one of these refugee camps and you have several children and you have a choice between purchasing a bar of soap or feeding your children, if we can't get the humanitarian aid for simple supplies like soap, then you have to forgo that in order to feed your children. So it is really important right now especially during COVID-19, especially in areas of conflict that they maintain this local ceasefire.

35:11: As you know the UN Security Council we just also had our resolution on the global ceasefire and that has allowed us more humanitarian aid, more humanitarian workers. It's protected the pregnant women coming from Syria over the border to be able to give birth, the ones coming in from Venezuela into Colombia. The global ceasefire has to really help to protect those in need, especially in COVID-19. And then another area that really concerns me at the moment is we are also focused on COVID, as we should be, around the world, but we can't forget that there are simple vaccinations that children are not... That infants and children are not receiving because we are really focused on COVID. So we really need to remember that they already have situations before COVID that we need to also serve and make certain that our humanitarian aid and the medicine and supplies are reaching the situations and the diseases that were there before COVID.

36:14: You're absolutely right on the other vaccinations. And we're going to hear from Laurie Garrett actually later on in the program, I think on Thursday. We now have a question from Charlie Dunlap. And questioners, just hold on. It'll go dark for a second and then you'll be promoted to panelist. No need to log back in. Charlie Dunlap.

36:33: Thank you very much, Madam Ambassador. I'm Charlie Dunlap, a retired Air Force major general now teaching at Duke Law School. I would like to follow up on something that Mr. Lake raised and that was the Human Rights Council and specifically recently there was a report by the special rapporteur who generally condemned drones, but specifically alleged that the US strike on Soleimani was illegal under international law. And my question then is do you have any comment on that, but specifically, I'd be interested to know if other... What other nations have said to you about the strike and whether they're supportive of the United States or not. Thank you, ma'am.

37:18: Thank you. Soleimani was planning and had planned several attacks on US military and on our like-minded allies. This is a rogue regime. This is a regime that promotes bloodshed. This is a regime that executes its own people. This is a regime... I can go on and on. The Iranian regime is propping up Assad. This is a dictator who uses chemical weapons against his own people. They are

propping up the Houthi rebels in Yemen. They're in Libya... I mean, they're in Lebanon. We are going to go after any player and any regime that is harming American military and personnel. And he, Soleimani, wreaked havoc on a daily basis and we are not, for one minute... We are going to use every tool we have to take down people that are not allowing human lives and that are exploiting others. This is a rogue regime, Soleimani was part of it, and we know for a fact and I will tell you that they were several countries that just had a sigh, because they too know that by Soleimani no longer being here, it helps save their countries.

38:43: So privately other ambassadors at the UN told you that they approved of the strike but they wouldn't say that publicly, is that right?

38:50: Well, I have ambassadors come up to me, obviously before COVID when I was at the UN on a daily basis, that would thank America for the fact that we are in different ways keeping their country safe, whether it be through the Security Council Resolutions, whether it be just through statements from President Trump. People understand the importance of the fact that America takes the lead on protecting people across... Around the world. So yes, to answer your question.

39:22: If I could just maybe ask you to follow up on Charlie Dunlap's point. Is there an argument that says that part of the point of the UN is to have every country adhere to the same set of rules. And if the United States takes the position that anywhere there's an individual that is a threat to it, it reserves the right to use a drone and lethal force. Well, there would be kind of global chaos and war if every country acted like the United Nations. And I'm not saying that I necessarily believe that, but I think that's the argument. Can you respond to that, that why America kind of has maybe a right to be exceptional in this regard?

40:01: We wouldn't even be having this conversation if every country also adhered and abided by the UN Charter. Let's start back from 75 years ago with the Charter in 1948, if everybody adhered and upheld this Charter with human rights and freedom and democracy and freedom of speech, we wouldn't have to take the measures that we take. But I will tell you that any time an American is in harm's way, as American troops, American personnel, we are going to take measures that is going to mitigate that situation, whether it is take that person out, whatever it takes. There will not be American military servicemen and women and American personnel in harm's way under the Trump administration. And if we can't get the UN to act upon it together, we will do this alone.

40:54: Understood. I think we have time for one more question, and that's from C Young Kim, and then I want to give Ambassador Craft and Eli just a minute to close it out. C Young Kim?

[pause]

41:18: Possible that we lost them. So maybe I'll just turn to you, Ambassador Craft, with one last question...

41:25: Can you hear me now?

41:28: Now we can hear you, great.

41:28: Oh, sorry. Thank you, it's an honor to have a chance. So in terms of North Korea, I want to have a question that it's been over the two years, we're discussing the North Korea problem in the United Nations. So I want to ask you the perspective of yours toward the North Korean problem, including some sanctions and some nuclear threat as well. Which is preferred, some pressure or some diplomatic raise, which is your preferred method? I want to ask that, thank you.

41:58: Our preferred method is whatever tool that works in order to protect A, the people in North Korea and the region around North Korea. We have an obligation, and as President Trump, as you well know, in his meetings with Chairman Jong, that we are very clear about our expectations of denuclearizing, of dewatering, of making certain that the region around North Korea, and it is a daily discussion. It is something that we keep a very close eye on, as you've heard the news today, it is something that is we take very serious and we are very concerned about. I hope I understood your question correctly. And if I didn't, you can repeat it.

42:45: Thank you very much. Eli, do you want to say a last few words?

42:49: Well, I want to thank the Ambassador so much for doing this. I certainly learned a lot, I hope everyone else did. And I know it's not easy to sort of take all these kind of questions in a Zoom format from all different regions of the world, but I think you did a great job. So thanks so much for your time on that. Do you have anything you want to say, Ambassador?

43:05: I just want to thank the Aspen Institute and actually all the media, because without the media shining a light on what was happening with the refugees in Syria, I don't know that we would have had the 12-month border, the 12-month mandate. Because without the media really showing all of these graphic images of children and women during the winter months, we might have just had a six-month mandate. And so I have to really... I owe a tremendous gratitude for people reporting accurately for happening myself and other people before me today and tomorrow for being interviewed, because I think each of us will leave just a nugget of information and of truth that the listeners can take. And it's just really important that we have institutes like the Aspen Institute that has people from all walks of the political spectrum and from all the beliefs.

44:05: So, I really appreciate the fact that you've allowed me to continue to shine this light on China. You can come to me tomorrow or next year and I'm going to be continuing the same light until we finally show the world the human rights abuses that are happening inside China, and we owe it to the Uighurs, we owe it to the Africans. We owe it to the people in Hong Kong, the Hong Kongers that have fought for democracy, and every day I'm going to be talking about what's happening in China. And also, shining a light on Russia. So you can better believe that I'm happy there in the Security Council, because that gives me the opportunity when in person, to be able to have that dialogue and say, "You know what, we're on to you. We know what you're doing, and there's not for one second that the US is going to stand by and let this happen."

44:53: Thank you very much, Ambassador Craft. Thank you, Eli Lake, for this excellent interview and thanks for shouting this out. This is exactly what we're trying to do as the Aspen Institute, have different viewpoints, international viewpoints, US viewpoints, and we're strictly bipartisan and

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we're very grateful to have you here. So thank you very much.

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