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International Affairs: What Does The Future Hold?

Chatham House's 90th Anniversary

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International Affairs: What Does The Future Hold?

CHATHAM HOUSE'S 90th ANNIVERSARY

Introduction: Robin Lustig

Good afternoon, everybody. Good evening. Good afternoon to New York. I'm Robin Lustig and I will be chairing this rather special 90th anniversary event which is in the nature of a sort of intellectual birthday party, I suppose, to celebrate 90 years of Chatham House and very nearly 90 years of the Council on Foreign Relations. The aim really is to take stock a little bit of what's happened over the last 90 years and also to look forward. We'll be doing more looking forward than looking backward because it's much more interesting. Whether we will be able definitively to answer the question on the screens – What does the future hold – I'm not absolutely convinced but that's up to Richard Haass and Robin Niblett. I thought what we ought to do probably, what I ought to do, before we do the looking forward is just get sketch out very briefly the last 90 years, take a look at how these great institutions began and how they developed. I'm fortunate to have had some access to some insider information, all of it obtained without any help at all from Wikileaks -- all of it available, in fact, online on the excellent websites of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations.

So, how to start? Well I could start by referring you to a shadowy sounding group of young Americans who first met in New York City back in 1917 and 1918 during the First World War. Their job was to come up with some ideas for President Woodrow Wilson about options for the post-war world once Germany had been defeated. They were known, I think rather sinisterly, as the Inquiry. The man who was responsible for recruiting them, a 28-year-old Harvard graduate by the name of Walter Lippmann, said he was "skimming the cream of the younger and more imaginative scholars. What we are on the lookout for is genius -- sheer, startlingly genius. Nothing else will do." Listen to this for a description of how they went about their work once the Paris Peace Conference got under way at the end of the First World War. Daily teas at the Quai d'Orsay, bridge games, breakfast and dinner meetings of experts from a dozen countries, in congenial and civilized encounters they floated ideas in the non-committal style of an Oxford common room. They noted each other's expertise and forged life-long friendships without regard to age or nationality. In these unrecorded discussions, the frontiers of central Europe were redrawn, subject of course to their principal sanction and vast territories were assigned to one or another jurisdiction. Does sound fun, doesn't?

They apparently enjoyed their work so much that together with a group of British delegates at the peace conference they came up with the idea of establish an Anglo-American Institute of Foreign Affairs. Their experience of combining the expertise of diplomats with that of scholars had been very useful they decided. So why didn't they try to carry on after they had all gone home? The key according to a certain British diplomat at the time was to combine impartial research, dialogue among experts from different disciplines, frank discussion of opposing views and wide dissemination of the facts. And it seems to me that that's as good a description as any of what, Chatham House and the CFR have been doing pretty much ever since. As things turned out, as you will know, it wasn't one Anglo-American institution that was born, but two, one on each side of the Atlantic.

The British Institute of International Affairs held its inaugural meeting in London on the 5th of July, 1920, having received a generous donation of 200 pounds from an associate of Cecil Rhodes. It became the Royal Institute six years later. The Council on Foreign Relations held its first meeting in New York in 1921. It was an amalgam of those bright young diplomats and scholars and a group of financiers, business leaders and lawyers in which whose business interests would prosper. So what did they talk about? What did they write about? Well, in 1923, for example, the CFR had a close look at the Bolsheviks in Russia and concluded that any suggestion that the revolution might spread beyond Russia's borders was hysterical. In London, they looked at the League of Nations, conflict in the Middle East, fascism and much, much else. I'm not going to take you through a long list of who said what and when over the past 90 years, but one thing did strike me as I was reading through the histories of these two august bodies and that's how genuinely global their vision was right from the very beginning. The very first issue of the CFR journal *Foreign Affairs* included an article on the Pacific islands which had formerly been part of the German Empire, were now being governed under a League of Nations mandate. "The introduction of the mandate principles," said *Foreign Affairs*, "into the Pacific is an experiment which will be watched with interest. The administration of backward races and undeveloped areas by individual states in the Pacific as elsewhere has hitherto not always been as fortunate as could be desired. There is hope that the mandate principle of collective international supervision may bring better results." In 1931, Mahatma Gandhi spoke here at Chatham House. He told his audience that the best way of arriving at the solution to any problem, political or social, was for the protagonist of rival views to meet one another and talk things out with sincerity and candor. That of course is precisely what Chatham House and the CFR do. They enable people to discuss, to debate,

to analyze – all of it away from the hothouse atmosphere for Westminster or Capitol Hill. They bring together policy makers, political leaders, scholars, in the firm belief that what Gandhi said is right – that talking, in his words, with sincerity and candor is the best way of arriving at solutions.

But there is a problem, isn't there? Despite all of the best efforts of Chatham House and the Council on Foreign Relations, despite all the efforts of all the many men and women over the decades, the world is self-evidently not yet at peace. The First World War was followed by the Second World War, then by the Cold War, independent struggles in Africa and Asia, wars in the Middle East, in Vietnam, more recently in Afghanistan and Iraq. Now, you could argue, that it would all have been much worse without the good work that was done by these two great institutions. Or maybe they did come up with the solutions but the politicians simply ignored them. So what I would like to do over the next hour or so with Robert Haass in New York and Robin Niblett here in the London is first look back just for a few minutes at any lessons that might have been learned over the last 90 years and then look forward to the next 90 and look at what might be some of the key themes over the coming decades. I've just got from China at the weekend so I am going to ask about China, about the post-9/11 challenges, relations between the Islamic and non-Islamic worlds, climate change, food security, migration, no shortage of things for us to talk about.

So let's start with lessons learned. I think, Robert Haass, as you are the stranger in our midst as it were, talking to you from London, let's start with you. Do you detect any threads that run through from 1920-21 when these two institutions were formed right up to the present, up to 2010, or do you rather think that the world has changed so much that really you have to start all over again?

Richard Haass

Well, the short answer is both. The world has changed in important ways and it would actually be fairly easy to come up with an awfully long list of ways in which the world has changed. One could look at technology. One could look at nuclear weapons. One could look structurally at the world today and say that the biggest threat to international order is not the rise of a revolutionary or great power that opposes the status quo. One could point to the proliferation of non-state actors. As you yourself suggested Robin, the salience of global issues. We could make a long list there. But I'm also struck by the similarities or the continuities that get overlooked. The inspiration for one comes not from an American and not from an Englishman but from an Australian – Hedley Bull. Hedley was with me when I was at Oxford. Hedley's great book, I

thought, was *The Anarchical Society*. And the idea that international relations at any moment has dimensions of order, what he calls society, but also dimensions of anarchy or forces that are centrifugal. Seems to me it was true 90 years ago. It's just as true today. The composition if you will, the specifics of what those forces of order and disorder are change from era to era but the idea that international relations is always something of the net result or the balance between organizing forces and centrifugal forces is one of the constants. Another constant you mentioned – Woodrow Wilson and that whole era – we are still having the debate in my country over the purposes of American foreign policy. Should the principal purpose be to shape the internal nature of other societies to make them democracies and markets or should the priority of American foreign policy be to essentially shape the external behavior that the purpose of foreign policy ought to be to shape the foreign policies of others. That debate was central 90 years ago. It remains central today.

In looking at these two institutions – I won't speak for yours, but I'll speak for mine – one of the real lessons of World War I and the principal impetus of the Council on Foreign Relations was to avoid a return to isolationism. The whole idea that was at the core of the inquiry that you discussed was that the United States was going to have to find a way to stay permanently involved in the workings of the world, that the world wouldn't just short itself out in the way of Adam Smith's invisible hand. Well, that was true then and I think it's true now. This institution is premised on the idea that isolationism is no real strategy for the United States and that the real debate ought to be over to what extent we're involved, how we are involved, and so forth. So I'm actually struck by some of the threads that go through the 90 years.

Robin Lustig

OK, thanks very much for that. Robin Niblett?

Robin Niblett

Yes, I would agree with the bulk of those points and maybe just tying it to specifics – We are living in a world, as we were during the 1920-21 timeframe, of a pretty important shift in power balances. The impending decline, should we say, of the British Empire, the rise of Germany, the rise of Japan, trying to deal with that shift and that change in power balance was obviously a key feature of those 1920s, 1930s and is something that we are having to deal with today. Playing back to the point that Richard mentioned of the relationships between states of having some aspect of continuity in the competitive element absent structures of an international society means that

that level of competition can spin out, if not managed, into conflict or even into war.

So I think that what's interesting about today is again we are reliving a moment of turmoil in a sense of the ordering of the world that carries some parallels, one might say, to the 1920-21 time frame. Therefore, in parallel to that -- second point -- we're trying to design institutions that will manage that process. Now, it wasn't let's say 1944-45 that certainly the League of Nations was a first effort at trying to capture a kind of global approach or international approach to international relations and relationships between states and in a way we are grappling, I suppose, towards something equally unsatisfactory in a way at the moment in the G20 process the sense that the UN Security Council isn't really enough, much as the League of Nations wasn't really enough.

I wonder if being provocative a little bit one could say that one of the continuities, as a third point -- We think of the role the US did not play in the League of Nations is whether US exceptionalism is still a continuity? Maybe Richard would want to comment on this. I'm sure he will in a minute. I'm not saying isolationism, but exceptionalism. Actually, it's not just the US that's exceptional. We're discovering other countries might be exceptional, too -- China or India and maybe we Europeans are starting to feel that we are the exceptional ones because we are not exceptional in our thinking of foreign policy. And then obviously, to state the obvious, with all the stuff that is happening here in Europe, the fear of global economic recession and I know that a number of the meetings that we've held, actually not in this room, but the garden above this particular room that we have right now -- we had our meeting hall in the garden -- was about how to deal with the Great Depression that took place back in the 1920s and early 1930s in the United States and spread its way over here to the UK.

The one last continuity I'd mentioned from my own point of view, from a UK standpoint, is that it does feel a little bit right now, certainly looking at the coalition government's articulation of its distinctive foreign policy, that we're going back to the future. We're back to thinking about our relationships with the Gulf, with India, with China, rekindling relationships with Latin America and it almost looks like the kind of Euro-Atlantic focus of the 1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s and maybe even 80s, is something we're now trying to rebalance with a rediscovery of some of the importance of broader international relationships, obviously without an empire this time, but of an aspect of continuity. The differences are equally interesting to talk about and Richard mentioned some of them, but maybe those would be some of my points of continuity.

Robin Lustig

OK, Richard Haass, do you just want to pick up the point about American exceptionalism?

Richard Haass

Well, it's funny. It's resurfaced in the American political debate over the last few weeks, particularly in the Republican Party. We see plentiful references to American exceptionalism. I guess I'd say two things. One is, in a way, that it's not exceptional, that this debate is not just happening here and I think the other Robin, if you will, alluded to that. There is always a tension between nationalism and adherence to various international norms and institutions and that's not unique to the United States. To what extent your foreign policy, if you will, is a narrow foreign policy as opposed to one that has a larger, international purpose, to what extent you look to institutions and other arrangements to carry a lot of water for you – that debate is going on in lots of countries. We are in a far more, for better or worse, advanced stage of that debate. China actually, I think, is in early stages of that debate and one of the interesting questions of the next year will be where the balance of voices comes out in China about how it interprets its national interests and its relationship with international institutions.

The other aspect of American exceptionalism – it's one that I've been working on a lot recently and, in a sense, wrote about it with Roger Altman in the last issue of *Foreign Affairs* – is to what extent our economics will permit us to play an exceptional role and I actually think we are at a moment in time where the greatest national security question facing my country is whether its economic foundations are up to the task. It's less a question of economics than it really is a question of domestic politics. Whether we can act in the name of the national or collective interest or whether now specific interests or narrow interests have got the upper hand in ways that we simply won't be able to tackle, among other things, the deficit or debt that I actually believe is the major question mark over this country's future. We think of ourselves as exceptional. The real question to me is whether we'll be able to carry out a role that really is qualitatively different.

Robin Lustig

OK thanks. Robin Niblett, can I ask you just to look at the role of the nation state because it does seem to me that 90 years ago it would have come as a great surprise to your predecessors on both sides of the Atlantic to think that they needed to consider more than nation states. The idea, perhaps in the anti-colonial period, there were independence movements which were actors on the world stage who were not yet nations. But the idea that now, we are

considering so many issues which are not nation state specific, threats which do not come from nation states – Is that a qualitative and substantial difference?

Robin Niblett

I mean, the easy answer is to say yes and I'll come back to the yes bit in a minute. A colleague of mine at Chatham House – Jonathan Knight – were doing some digging about kind of concepts of international affairs as they were a century ago. He came up with this quote from Lord Salisbury in 1895 where he said, "Governments can do so little nowadays. Power has passed from the hands of statesmen, but I don't know on earth where to?" I think that there's been a time at which we could perhaps overplay the sense of which states felt that they were dominant or powerful in international affairs in the way that I think we've interpreted them to be somewhat through the work of international relations theories, the particular of the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s. Again, the launch of the First World War, you might say, carried about the assassination of an individual tipping a particular interstate vulnerability, but tipping it over the edge in ways that perhaps diplomacy might, might, might otherwise have been able to manage.

So I'm just cautious about overplaying. But I think that certainly today it's the plethora of states. It's not just that it's states. It's that Venezuela can thumb its nose and get involved in international affairs in ways that perhaps distract us and ways that might not have done in the past -- the fact that we talk as much about failing states being a problem as active states. I think there is no doubt that multi-national corporations have become – I know they've been a feature of IR since the 1960s in particular and maybe even the 1970s – but they are entwined and involved at the moment in a global level in a way that they never were in the past. We're not in a condition where we are simply trading across borders, where states still retained a national identity in the process of that trading. They have now invested themselves in other societies. In many cases, they are delivering returns more through investment than they are through their trade. That's making them lose their identity and therefore making it difficult for governments to know how to interact with them and know what the forces are on their side to achieve change as compared to how they might have been in the past.

I think, to get back to the point that Richard raised about technology, I think individuals are able to do things today at a systemic level or small groups of individuals that when combined with the power of the media are at a qualitatively different condition to, let's say, the 1920s, 30s in that period. The ability to kind of go viral, the extent to which governments have to spend all

the time almost on the back foot, dealing with messaging. I'm sure the pressures of decision making were equally as intense back in the 1920s and 1930s, but the speed of decision making certainly must have changed as a result of the interaction with individuals in particular. So I think the role of the nation state is certainly different, but then you know nations would be created back in the 1920s, states were very young constructs in many cases. We have many more nation states today than we did in the 1920s and most of them are trying to acquire power as states rather than relinquish it. To go back to Richard's point, therefore, it's not just a China or India or others who are looking to imitate it. We can acquire the powers of state even as we look at these counteractions of the role of multi-national countries and individuals.

Robin Lustig

Richard Haass, your thoughts?

Richard Haass

I've been listening. I agree with a lot of what Robin said. At the risk of having too much agreement here – I mean, on the one hand, there is nothing new about non-state actors. The Catholic Church is a pretty powerful non-state actor for an awful lot of history. The various trading companies were extraordinarily powerful actors. So non-state actors have been a feature of the international scene.

What I think is different is first of all the number, just the sheer volume is quite stunning. Second of all, their ability to leverage technology and resources and have an impact. I think that's also different and to have an impact across borders. I am struck how the groups like the Gates Foundation – If you were going to put around a small table the actors that would matter in the world of global health, you would be foolish if you did not have the Gates Foundation represented. Or to go to the other end of the spectrum, if you were going to look at the actors who made a real difference in international affairs over the last decade, one of them would be al Qaeda, a non-state actor that obviously has had a real impact. Again, it's the ability of smaller groups to get a hold of resources and to have a degree of reach that's quite extraordinary.

All of this to me adds into the challenge of how you manage international relations. It's bad enough if you've got a UN General Assembly with 192 votes, but more broadly, how is it you organize? How is it you organize reactions for managing various types of global challenges and it just seems to me that it has gotten more complicated. It's harder and harder to think of who you invite – You always now have tensions in the G7. The G20 transition is a perfect example -- the tension between inclusion and effectiveness and its

questions of legitimacy and accountability. You add all these things up and it just seems to me it's added to rather than subtracted from the challenge of international relations and foreign policy.

Robin Niblett

If I can just say, in many cases, groups like the Gates Foundation and others are looking to increase the state's capacity to act as states in many parts of the developing world. The challenge of good governance – I don't think we've come up with a better model than, let's not call it the nation state, let's call it the state as the intermediary between peoples representing groups agglomerated in smaller or larger groups, whichever way you look at it. But we're actually in a state of trying to increase state power in many cases because we haven't worked out an alternative that isn't as inefficient or that is not less efficient than the G20 or groups of states that are pulled together that way.

Richard Haass

It is interesting in terms of the timing. Here we are meeting and you have the meeting in Cancun, the global [inaudible] climate change. Something big is not going to happen. The only chance is for something small to happen. One of the areas is to try to do something about deforestation. In order to do something about slowing the destruction and burning of a forest, you've got to build up state capacity in places like Brazil and Indonesia. So it's exactly Robin's point – that in order to do things that have international impact, you've really got to deal almost at a micro-level in order to achieve a macro effect. It's so interesting. Ninety years ago, if we had been having this conversation, a lot of our concern would have been about strong states, Germany and others. It's interesting how much of the conversation now is about weak states which again, because of globalization, can have tremendous impact although, unfortunately, negative across borders.

Robin Lustig

It's funny you should mention strong states, weak states because it's something I did want to ask you. I'm going to bring in everybody here in our Chatham House audience in just a second because I'm sure they will have questions, but looking ahead and trying to draw the thread from 90 years ago, it seems to be that US and UK in particular for much of the period over the last 90 years identified a threat as coming principally from a single source. It might have been fascism. It might have been communism. In the immediate post-Cold War world for a time, some people seemed to think it was going to be Islamism. Now, there are some people who think maybe it's going to be China. I'd be interested to hear from both of you whether you think that policy

makers are always tempted to identify a single, overriding threat and perhaps that leads them astray?

Robin Niblett

Inevitably, in order to generate political support, you have to simplify. So simply saying, the world is complicated therefore we need a large amount spent on our foreign policy and our defence budget is not going to cut a lot of ice. The ability to boil it down somehow becomes important even if that boiling it down at some times then creates a larger problem later on. I think one could just as easily point out the problem of turning nationalist movements into communist movements as a way of generating an opposition against them during the Cold War to saying that, you know, in my opinion, nationalist movements in many cases were terrorist movements when they were still nationalist or insurgent movements in more recent years.

So there is a risk of oversimplification always which is driven by the need to try to communicate and gain public support for difficult actions beyond borders. It's easy to motivate people relatively easy inside the borders of a nation state to be able to drive change for economic returns. That everyone can see the value of. When you need to take people outside, unless it's a direct threat of war, you have to articulate it in a way that's going to capture people's attention. Part of the problem is today, we can't. I look at the, again from the UK's standpoint, the Strategic Defence and Security Review. We've gone through it. The difficulty is trying to work out what's the narrative. Within our top level of threats, we've put international terrorism at the top, but for obvious reasons, we didn't want to put failed states also in the top list even though the failed states in many cases are where the terrorists are coming from. We wanted to put international military crises in the top four of the UK list because we wanted to, in a way, try to send the signal, we won't spend too long in Afghanistan. We're caught a little bit hoist in our own petard of trying to simplify things that are incredibly complicated.

Today, I don't think it's possible to put a particular risk out there. I think that there was a fear of populism and that we may have to try to find populist answers in particular in Europe, maybe it might be the same case in the United States. We're trying to resist the simplifications that are sometimes required to drive foreign policy, but I don't think there is anything out there. Islamism or the various versions of it that were described in particular in the 2001 to the 2008 period that in a way has dropped off at the agenda. Suddenly, it's dropped off the Obama agenda which is where it was strongest although it does carry some resonance in certain parts of the world, including in parts of Europe. There isn't an *ism* out there I think today and I don't think

China is going to let us play that role. We'd love it to, but I think the Chinese, in my opinion, are going to be a bit too clever to let us box them into that corner.

Richard Haass

I don't believe you need a threat, but you do need an organizing principle for American foreign policy. Let me give you two arguments why besides Iran's [inaudible] to galvanize public support. Fair enough. One of them is simply time. From my experience in government, one of the most important resources is time for policy makers, be it the president or his lieutenants in the cabinet or the people who work with him. The perfect example is if you get up in the morning and you are the Secretary of State, what do you devote your time to? Is it sitting down trying to work out rules of the road, if you will, with a China? Is it trying to negotiate something in the Middle East between Israelis and Palestinians? Is it trying to do something about this or that global issue? And, again, these are not mutually exclusive, but there is a question of priority so I do think you need some sense of what are your priorities for your country's foreign policy.

Another is simply a question of resources. They are limited. If the United States, for example, chooses to – I would say it has chosen because I like the phrase “wars of choice” – [inaudible] to places like Iraq and Afghanistan that will have consequences for resources. A legitimate question for the United States going forward is not simply how much it can devote to defence, but should its defence be thinking about weak states – future Iraqs and Afghanistans – or should we really be rebalancing our military to think a lot more about more classic engagements either to deter them or to fight them with rising great powers and that is a legitimate question. It is going to be very hard to do both, particularly under the budget pressures we face. So again I don't think we need to go out there and hunt for a threat particularly where one doesn't exist, but we do need to have some organizing principles. We do need to have priorities. Otherwise we will find ourselves spread way too thin and simply going from crisis to crisis with no compass for deciding how much we want to get involved.

Robin Lustig

OK, last question from me then. Richard, what are your priorities for, let's say, the next decade?

Richard Haass

I'd say it's to one, deal with the American economy. I actually think the single greatest national security challenge facing the United States – and it's not just me saying this, it's the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff – is to restore American economic power. That deals with such things as our education program, immigration reform, trade policy, but essentially to restore the foundations of American economic growth. If we do that, we will have the capacities to continue to act in the lead in the world. If we don't do that, I actually think it fundamentally changes the debate about American foreign policy.

Secondly, I would say it's to consult with the other major powers in the world, state and non-state, to try to design international arrangements that will help [inaudible] manage what I see as the dominant challenges of this era. Whether it is energy issues or climate issues or trade and financial issues or proliferation issues or terror issues or coping with weak states – we live in a world where I'd say there is a gap between the scale of these global challenges and the scale and adequacy of the arrangements that are in place to deal with them and narrowing – not closing, that's too ambitious. But narrowing that gap becomes paramount and that's something we can't do alone. We've got to get the Chinas and Indias and Europes and Japans and Brazils and others to join with us. So I would say those are the two challenges for the United State – a domestic challenge and this global challenge.

Robin Lustig

OK, Robin, your priorities the next decade?

Robin Niblett

I mean, they are going to have some aspect of similarity. It's interesting that obviously, if you are in the US, as Richard said, you need normalizing principle. You get pulled in too many directions. That is one of the features of a great power – that it has the resources, the demands and, let's say, the global footprint to get pulled in all those areas. I think that's not primarily a feature of most other states, certainly not a feature of the UK which has been trying to work out where to try to leverage as much as possible.

To me, if I had to put the big challenge in a nutshell from my standpoint, I mean how to we accommodate another three billion people in the next 25 years, 30 years, certainly by 2050. Hopefully, it won't grow beyond that and

projections say it won't, but that's another third in essence at a time when we believe that we are already stretched at many levels from resources, food, and water. Not because we don't have enough of them, but we can't get them to the right places in the most efficient ways et cetera. So this business of how to accommodate people is probably just another way of saying some of the points that Richard said – energy, the climate impact of more people, weak states trying to cope with greater populations – but I think when we think of it in that sense, it's a common challenge we all face of the many more people coming, demanding more, requiring more, with the technology to demand more and with the kind of impacts. That does organize your mind.

In terms of a single organizing principle, I mean, I did write in a paper as we thought about UK foreign policy earlier this year that I felt a single organizing principle. If you have to, as Richard said, get up in the morning and think of something around which you organize other parts of your thinking, I think it is open markets because I think that is part of the answer to the three billion people. Now, you've got to pass what one means by open markets. You've got to play around with it a little bit, but the idea that we can accommodate even the people that we've got without more efficiently integrating, let's say, those poorer people into the wealth creating effects of the open markets – people in China and certain parts of India and certainly all of us in Europe and America or most of us in Europe and America have benefited from -- I think is practically impossible. And I think a focus on the markets keeps you away from focusing on just who is stronger and who is weaker in terms of the kind of zero sum security perspective of the world and gives a certain focus perhaps to some of the international arrangements that Richard said as being a dominant push for the US. From the UK standpoint, this government I think has actually sort of decided right, we'll do that. [inaudible] comes their own opinion on this, but their view is diplomacy in a way will look at growth. Economic growth, the point Richard made, is going to come from those new markets and those new markets, we must make sure they are integrated in an open way and hopefully a rules-based way that we can all see and operate within a transparent context. That would be my organizing principle.