

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum

*Presents*

The Presidency in the Nuclear Age

October 12, 2009

Panel Four:

*Nuclear Weapons, Terrorism, and*

*The Presidency*

**TOM PUTNAM:** We begin our final panel with an address from President Bill Clinton.

[VIA VIDEO]

**PRESIDENT WILLIAM CLINTON:** Like most presidents, Republican and Democrat alike, from Dwight Eisenhower to President Obama, I felt an obligation to try to remove the spectre of nuclear war from our children and grandchildren's future. Ending nuclear tests was a priority of my administration. By 1994, nuclear missiles in the United States and Russia were no longer targeting each other's country. We achieved an indefinite extension of the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and the ratification of the chemical weapons conventions. We continued inspections in Iraq, and we made a deal with North Korea that was much derided but avoided the development of dozens of nuclear weapons.

In 1996, we reached agreement on a comprehensive test ban treaty. I was the first world leader to sign that treaty. But, unfortunately, the Senate rejected it in 1999, even though we had a robust nuclear force and nuclear experts affirmed that we could have maintained a safe and reliable deterrent without the test.

The most successful nonproliferation program we pursued constantly since the Congress passed it in 1991 is the Nunn-Lugar program, to bring all the nuclear weapons out of the former Soviet Union and into Russia proper, and secure and then dismantle the weapons

and destroy the material. President Yeltsin and I each agreed to destroy 50 tons of plutonium. Now, Russia still has the biggest biological stocks in the world so it's a good thing that we can spend limited funds on this, and we had to expand our efforts there. I think the Russians and the United States also should agree to a further reduction in our warheads. President Yeltsin and I had tentatively agreed to a substantial reduction, but, alas, neither his Duma nor my Congress would approve it.

There are two things I think we should keep in mind about our current nuclear situation. First of all, every country that's ever been paranoid about nuclear weapons thinks they have the right to have them. The Indians wanted a nuclear weapon and they got one. The Pakistanis wanted one, and they got one. The Americans spent years trying to research the development of two new nuclear weapons, even though a lot of us opposed that. We simply have lost the impetus to nonproliferation. We need a serious effort now led by Americans and Russians and Europeans to stop proliferation. I believe it would be better if in the next seven years we could work toward a more comprehensive nonproliferation agreement.

Second, I think it's unlikely that any country that gets nuclear weapons would knowingly initiate the use of them, even Iran. But every time you have nuclear weapons in more hands, you increase the chances of accidents, and you increase the chances that unscrupulous people will either sell or steal the fissile material and give it to terrorists or criminals who could use the nuclear weapons in small, dirty bombs. We simply have to get back into the business of nonproliferation quickly and in a cooperative way. No matter how much military power we have, our ability to make other people do things they don't want to do is quite limited. Therefore, we should be trying to build a world with more partners and fewer adversaries.

I wish you well in your deliberations. I appreciate the President's determination to revive the nuclear nonproliferation treaty. First envisioned by President Eisenhower, first advanced in a temporary way by President Kennedy, then we finally had the treaty that I signed and our Senate wouldn't ratify it. I think we can reverse all that today. There's also

some other reasons to hope. I'm encouraged by the work the Chinese and the Russians are doing with the United States to contain the North Korean nuclear problem, both to restrict the ability of North Korea to export nuclear materials and technology, and to import materials that will enable it to expand its arsenal. People know we're on the brink of a whole different world that could be exploded in a negative way by nuclear weapons or exploded in a wonderful way by cooperation. Your meeting here today increases the chance that we'll choose the latter course. Thank you.

[END VIDEO]

**TOM GJELTEN:** Hello, everyone. I'm Tom Gjelten. I cover national security issues for National Public Radio, have for a number of years. Can I just say, first of all, is this an amazing forum or what? [applause] This has just been, for me sitting out in the audience, this has just been a terrific day to cover the whole panorama of nuclear issues from the beginning of the problem to the present time and to see so many distinguished people who have personal responsibilities, personal history with this issue.

Up until now, basically, we have been looking at the history of the issue of nuclear security. Now with this panel, we are going to move to the current challenges that we face. And I think we can all agree that, unfortunately, the dangers that we've been talking about have not diminished. I wish that we were here today to talk about the achievements that explain President Obama's earning the Nobel Peace Prize, but alas we are not in a position to do that yet, are we?

But let's just briefly consider, before I introduce the panel, how this problem has evolved. We are now looking at the number of nations with nuclear capabilities being somewhere around eight, nine. The conflicts, however, between these nations have become more numerous and more multilateral. What caught my attention in President Kennedy's interview that we saw earlier was he talked about how what made the '60s so dangerous was this global confrontation between communism and democracy being carried out in a nuclear context. Now, we are not talking about a single confrontation, we're talking about

a multiplicity of actors with nuclear capabilities and all their own interests at stake, which cannot be summarized or categorized in the kind of neat way that the Cold War achieved for us.

This past panel, with the debate over disarmament, one of the thoughts that occurred to me listening to it was, in a sense, how this debate is now moot. I mean, this is no longer an issue that we can think about in terms of bipolar disarmament negotiations. We've moved beyond that. And, of course, we now have the added danger of nuclear terrorism, which is something that cannot be dealt with with any of the strategies or any of the policies that we have used in the past to confront the nuclear danger.

So these new nuclear national security challenges are the ones that preoccupied President Clinton, whom we've just heard from, President George W. Bush, and that now face the Obama Administration. It certainly is a sobering security agenda. Fortunately, we have here the very best panel that could be put together to summarize the challenges that we're facing and the varieties of ways that we could confront them.

If we begin, for example, with North Korea, the newest member of the nuclear club, we have here Ambassador Stephen Bosworth, who was Ambassador to the Republic of Korea, also deeply involved in the negotiations for the agreed framework that we heard about from President Clinton and who now, I think we can say, has some advisory responsibilities for helping this administration deal with North Korea.

Next, we have the issue of Iran and what we have just learned in the last few weeks about the secret facility for uranium enrichment at Qom, as well as the disclosures from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the so-called secret annex in which international officials are now saying that they believe Iran has the knowledge to produce a nuclear weapon. We fortunately have Ambassador Nicholas Burns, who handled the Iran portfolio in this past administration -- that building on his experience as Ambassador to NATO and Ambassador to Greece, and, of course, he was Undersecretary for Political Affairs in this last administration.

As far as nuclear terrorism is concerned, we have Graham Allison here who has written the definitive book on nuclear terrorism. Fortunately, it does have that one word in it, “preventable,” because if it weren't for that one word, this would be one of the most terrifying books ever, right?

And we have Leslie Gelb, very distinguished in the worlds of media, in think tanks with his Presidency of the Council of Foreign Relations, and, of course, your government experience as well. So we just have a terrific panel here.

What I'd like to do, just to begin with, because these problems are all problems that coexist and they're very interrelated, it's going to be very hard, I think, to separate them out one at a time and to deal with them one at a time. So let's begin with North Korea. Ambassador Bosworth, something President Clinton just said caught our attention, I think, and that is his suggestion that any state, his hint that any state that wants to develop a nuclear weapon so far has been able if it really is determined to develop a nuclear weapon. From your experience dealing with North Korea, is that true?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Well, I think the North Koreans in the end had a little bit of assistance from outside sources, going way back to the Soviet Union and more recently, of course, with a certain gentleman in Pakistan who seems to have provided some assistance. But it is true. I think that even a state like North Korea, which is relatively de-industrialized, has the potential if it devotes enough energy and enough resources to it, to become a nuclear weapon state.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And, Nick, can you say in dealing with Iran in the aftermath of the Clinton Administration and efforts to deal with North Korea, what lessons did you take from the experience that the Clinton Administration had dealing with North Korea?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I think, first of all, to recognize that the combination of nuclear weapons with the current Iranian regime of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is a horrible

combination for the future peace and security not only of the Middle East, but of the world. And I think that in the last administration -- President Bush in his first term called Iran part of the Axis of Evil -- had a policy essentially of regime change in the first term, a transition in the second term to try to negotiate with Iran, offered to negotiate but with a condition: that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment. That gave Ahmadinejad the excuse not to negotiate.

And so I therefore think that President Obama has done the right thing to say that before we consider the use of force, before we even consider a harsh international sanctions regime, we've got to negotiate with the Iranians. President Obama took away the condition, offered to meet the Iranians anywhere. And I was surprised, I think pleasantly surprised, by the progress that was made a week and a half ago by the State Department when they negotiated with the Iranians. But looking ahead here, and I'm sure Graham will have a lot to say on this because he is so expert on this, we've got to be very careful in how we deal with these negotiations. If we're too aggressive, if we give up on diplomacy, if we think that negotiations cannot work, we're likely to find ourselves on the verge of a conflict with Iran, on the verge of a third war in the Middle East, which I do not believe we can sustain. And so I think that the President is right to lead with negotiations, to exhaust diplomacy, to be prepared to have the IAEA engage in very tough inspections and be prepared to sanction. But as Nick Thompson said, and I was very intrigued by what he said in the last panel, we've learned from the Cold War experience that we've discussed today, that it is possible to contain malevolent countries, malevolent governments, I should say. And the Soviet Union and communist China, Mao's China, were far superior in strength to what Iran is today. So it bothers me a little bit about our national discourse is that a lot of people are assuming that if President Obama fails in diplomacy, we have one alternative and that's war.

I think there's a second alternative, and that would be containment. And I do believe we're strong enough to contain a nuclear armed Iran if it should come to that. I don't wish that. I hope we'll be able to convince them not to achieve a nuclear capability through

negotiations. But war is not inevitable here, and I'd be interest in what Graham has to say about that particular proposition.

**TOM GJELTEN:** I'm going to get to Graham in a second, but I want to ask you a question first, Les, because you've been following this debate about whether to engage or confront over many decades now. And what's your assessment of where the best thinking about this issue is now? From all points of view, has this debate evolved over the years with respect now specifically to how to deal with Iran or North Korea? This is such an old issue, confront or engage. How do you see it right now?

**LESLIE GELB:** Well, the debate hasn't evolved, it's still ridiculous. You still have the right wing and the neocons making charges that scare the hell out of liberals and Democrats and prevent them from doing sensible things. But the evidence has accumulated quite substantially of what works and what doesn't and why. Nick Burns just recited it. If you look at the states that have caused us problems over the last 50, 60 years -- like Russia, like the Soviet Union, like China, like Libya, like the Palestine Liberation Organization -- I can go on and on with it. The fact is we contained and deterred all those threats. We won the Cold War, not those guys. And we won it for lots of good reasons, including the fact that we were a better, stronger state. We often didn't handle our foreign policy terribly well, but we were a better, stronger state and we knew how to do two things: contain and deter and we did them well. And we can do them in the future as well.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Well, Graham, how can we contain and deter with respect to nuclear terrorists?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** I was going to be part of that debate, but I'll answer your question quickly and maybe go back, if I can for a second. I think in the theory of deterrence, one threatens the actor who might take an action with overwhelming consequences, the costs of which vastly exceed the benefits. The difficulty with nuclear

terrorism, in which just as you said in the introduction makes it a problem unlike the other ones that we're dealing with, are twofold.

First, for somebody who is intent upon committing suicide, threatening to kill them doesn't quite make it because it's not the overwhelming consequences that would lead them to choose an alternative. Secondly, as was discussed in the earlier panel, John F. Kennedy's worry, terrorists don't have a return address. So if you take the speech that President Obama gave at the U.N. Security Council the other day, he's got a good paragraph about ...

**TOM GJELTEN:** And we're going to see that in a little.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** That imagining one nuclear bomb goes off somewhere, the first question that'll be asked is turn to the intelligence community and say, "Who did it?" To which it answers, "Well, that's a good question." And the second question is, "Where did the bomb come from?" And that would be a second good question. But if it were determined that the bomb was brought to us by Osama bin Laden, what would President Obama say to the intelligence community or to the chiefs? "Well, go get 'em." But excuse me, that's what we've been trying to do for the past eight years since 9/11. So for actors that don't have a known return address, the logic of the treatment that we've been accustomed to doesn't fit.

So that, I think, drives us, at least in my argument in the nuclear terrorism book, and I think this is now more or less the consensus, drives us to the proposition that we have to deny terrorists the means to achieve their deadliest aspirations. And it would be great if nobody wanted to kill large numbers of Americans, and we should wish for that and we shouldn't try to stir up more people that want to do that. But even more practical, I think, or the more immediate is the notion that we might deny them the means. So even though they might aspire to kill -- Osama bin Laden says their intention is to kill four million Americans -- if he doesn't have the means to do that, the fact that that's his aspiration is uncomfortable, but it's not the same as if he should have the means. So I think in the

Obama sort of current program, the idea of locking up all nuclear weapons and materials to a gold standard as fast as possible and in any case over the next four years, is an essential element in a counter nuclear terrorism strategy.

**TOM GJELTEN:** In your book you lay out the three no's: no loose nukes, no nascent nuclear weapons, and no new nuclear states. As far as I can tell since that book came out, the first one seems to be more or less still valid. But the last two, unfortunately, can't report much progress on those two.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** The last two were much shakier. So the first one says if we deny terrorists the means, they can't achieve their deadliest aspirations. And there have been significant improvements in the security of nuclear weapons worldwide, including as President Clinton was saying the Nunn-Lugar support in the case of Russia. So things are more secure there than they were before.

On the second no: no new national enrichment of uranium or reprocessing of plutonium. Sadly, while that was a reasonable aspiration and remains our goal in 2004 when the book was written, Iran now today has 4,700 centrifuges spinning, has produced enough low enriched uranium after further reprocessing for two bombs, and has mastered the technology of doing that. So we're not doing too well on that way.

And then the third one: no new nuclear weapon states, we have this odd man out, North Korea, which has the unique status of a self declared but unrecognized nuclear weapon state. So it has the bombs' worth of plutonium, it's conducted two nuclear weapons tests, but the U.S. and all the other parties say we're not accepting this as a fact. Our objective and intention is to roll this back. And even though that requires a little bit of diplomatic fiction that Nick would have to explain to us better than I could, I would say the general idea is a good one because by not accepting North Korea as a nuclear weapon state, this can have some impact on the politics and the national security communities in Japan and South Korea. And it's the effect that we have to worry about in terms of proliferation, as well as the case in itself.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Stephen, to go back to my original question, do you think now looking back was it inevitable that North Korea would go down this path? Or were there mistakes made or decisions by the North Korean leadership in response to particular policies that we and other countries implemented that explains where it ended up?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Well, I think as President Clinton said in his taped interview, the agreed framework which was put together in 1994 froze North Korea's nuclear weapons program as it then was. Our assessment then was that they had enough fissile material for one or two devices. The framework broke down in 2002, for reasons that -- I mean, we could go into them but what happened was, the effect of that was that the North Koreans were left free. They were off the leash, and they ran free and for three years they had that five megawatt reactor fired up and they were producing more plutonium. So they now, as Graham says, probably have enough plutonium for maybe ten nuclear devices. That's a big difference, very big difference.

Now, our goal, the goal of the Obama Administration, is to roll that back, to persuade the North Koreans that their own self interest is better served by giving up their nuclear weapons program than it is by keeping those nuclear weapons programs. Now, that's not going to happen overnight, obviously, and it is a true challenge to the concept of engagement. But I believe that it's worth trying, and we cannot simply say, "Well, they'll never give them up, so we're going to walk away." That just leaves the situation not only in a bad state, but it could well get worse. As Graham points out, the regional implications of a nuclear North Korea, while I don't think there's any certain outcome, that would probably mean almost without question that some countries would begin internal conversations about nuclear options that we would rather they not have.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Nick, it seems sometimes like we keep coming back to the North Koreans with new offers and new carrots, in a sense. How do other countries, and I'm thinking here of Iran, look at that history and what do they conclude? Do they conclude that they actually are going to get a better deal if they play hard to get and if they sort of

continue to be confrontational? Is that an illogical conclusion to draw from the history of our dealings with North Korea?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Well, I assume, unfortunately, that the Iranians are watching the international experience with North Korea and they're drawing their own conclusions. I think President Clinton and then President Bush did the right thing in North Korea in establishing this multilateral context. That it can't be just the United States seeking to prevent a North Korean nuclear weapons capability, we needed the Chinese, certainly, and the South Koreans, the Japanese and the Russians.

Similarly on Iran, it would be a mistake to make this into a battle between Barack Obama and Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. One thing, again, I think the President's done in a very sophisticated way since he took office in January is to assert that it's Ahmadinejad who should be on the defensive and the rest of the international community can rally around a lot of countries to support efforts to either negotiate with them or sanction them. So I think multilateralizing, internationalizing these issues is very important.

If you think about the arc of the conference today, there's a lot that we can learn in looking at the Iranian and North Korea situations and the experiences of President Kennedy and President Nixon and President Reagan and their successors because of what Les said. I mean, there are some principles here where power can be applied, and we're still the most powerful country in the world to try to prevent these countries from going down the road that they seem to be intent on.

I think what's more difficult, especially for this panel, is to think about Graham's agenda where Graham is so expert. And that is this new development, really in the last decade or so, the juxtaposition of terrorism and nuclear weapons. It's one thing to assume that Iran and North Korea might be rational states where containment and deterrence can work. It's another thing to assume rationale in dealing with Osama bin Laden; you cannot assume that. And if you think about the destructive power, it's a very dangerous age. On 9/11, Osama bin Laden used the crudest means possible to kill 3,000 people. They

exploded airplanes into buildings. They collided the two for an explosion. If he had had or used biological weapons or chemical weapons or nuclear suitcase technology, it would have been a truly catastrophic event with the deaths and the wounded in the multiples of 3,000. And so I think that while we do practice traditional statecraft in looking at North Korea and Iran, we've got to think a little bit more creatively and purposefully in dealing with this very difficult problem of nuclear terrorism.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Let's just stick on Iran, though, for one moment. How much time do you think this government has to figure out what to do about Iran?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Well, I think it's hard to know exactly how much time one has but I think there is time available. I think everybody agrees that the North Koreans are not yet fully capable as a nuclear weapons power. And so I think it would be a mistake to say we need to rush to an Israeli military strike or an American military strike. I don't think that the President ought to take those options off the table. In dealing with a difficult adversary, you want to be able to combine diplomacy with the threat of force and the possible use of force.

But as we've not tried diplomacy, really in 30 years, it's been 30 years since the United States has had a sustained, meaningful negotiation on any issue with the Iranian government. We ought to take three or four months, and that's about the time period that President Obama and President Sarkozy have suggested to see if negotiations can make the kind of progress that we hope they can make. Why three or four months, why would you end it there? Because you don't want to stay at the negotiating table and have Iran play out the clock. Negotiate for two or three years while they enrich enough uranium, as Graham said, sufficient to become a nuclear weapons power. Within two or three or four months, we'll know and President Obama will know whether there is a serious possibility of a successful diplomatic play. And if that does not happen, then I think President Obama will have much greater credibility in the international system to turn to Russia and China, the largest arms exporter and the largest trader with Iran to say, "Join us in very tough sanctions," hopefully sanctions that will drive the Iranians back to the

negotiating table. There's more that can be done on this continuum, and I think there is time available for the President to do that.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Go ahead.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Nick addressed Tom's earlier question because if you took the Kissinger ... Henry made the point, are the Iranians going to be less subtle and tricky than the North Koreans? I don't think so. So if they're looking at the North Korean story, they negotiate, they seem to be in good faith, they agree to something, they get paid a little bit. They then back up a little bit. So I think Tom's earlier question is what might they be reading from the North Korean experience of the past whatever, four or five years of negotiation, all of the while offering some promise? I mean, so you could imagine in the same way the Chinese come in and say, "Don't worry, they're just about to agree." The Russians will come in and say, "Don't worry, they're about to ... "

**LESLIE GELB:** Graham, there's no answer to your question. We don't know. We can't say with any confidence whether these negotiations will work. These are bad guys, they do diddle us, they have a good history of diddling us. And that doesn't mean you stop negotiating because it's always a question of what the alternative is. We said we didn't negotiate with Iran for 30 years; we didn't negotiate with North Korea for most of that time as well. And what did we accomplish? We accomplished their getting on the road to a nuclear program, developing the capability to develop nuclear weapons. So that whole, long period where we were either explicitly or implicitly threatening regime change, but not changing the regimes, just hardening their attitude toward us. The whole time where we were warning them that if they crossed certain thresholds in their nuclear development program, they'd be sorry, but they weren't because we didn't do anything about it. We just lost our credibility. It all suggests to me that we have to be very careful about setting time limits and issuing warnings that we have either no intention or capability or good sense in fulfilling.

**TOM GJELTEN:** But, Les, one difference between Iran and North Korea is that it doesn't matter what threats we may make against North Korea; they can look at us and not believe we're going to do anything. With respect to Iran, we have another actor, which is Israel. And it seems to me there's no doubt in the minds of Iranians that whatever the United States says, Israel is prepared to act. How does that change the situation?

**LESLIE GELB:** Well, I don't mind that the Iranians are worried about possible Israeli action, let them worry. If that's going to help the negotiations along, let it be.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Do you think it will?

**LESLIE GELB:** You know, I just don't know because I don't pretend, as opposed to a lot of other people involved in this debate over the last years, I don't pretend to know what's going on inside the heads of these Iranian leaders. Our intelligence is very poor indeed. You go to any of these countries, like North Korea, Iran, we don't know what's going on.

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** We don't have a clue.

**LESLIE GELB:** So it's just a matter of argument. Somebody knows, I'm sure, but not us. So we make it up as part of the political debate in this country, we make up what's going on inside the inner councils, but we don't know.

I say let the Israelis make their threats. But I would say to the Israelis privately this: you know and we know that the chances of your actually being able to knock out all or most of the nuclear capability is very slim. All you'd do by going after it would be to set them back a little but to give them justification for coming after us in a worldwide campaign of terrorism. And that's bad for us and it's going to be terrible for you. So Israel, make all the threats you want, but the only kind of action we would ever accept would be preemptive when we were really sure they were on the verge of taking action against you.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Nick, presumably they've heard these arguments?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Well, I agree with Les. I think it's very important to assert the American national interest, to convince the Israelis not to act for the time being. One can understand Israel's vulnerability and sensitivity to this, given what Ahmadinejad has said, but it's not in our interests to have Israel act before the U.S.

I would agree with Graham. I think if you play this out and assess the probability of what's going to happen, the Iranians are going to play this two steps forwards, three steps back, one step forward, four steps back, because they'll have taken a page from North Korea's playbook. They'll have watched what happened from 1994 on the agreed framework. That's why I do think it's important for us to have a sense of limits here. The President has said by the end of this calendar year, he's going to assess whether or not this is a serious negotiation. And if it's not, he's going to move to pressure. I don't think he's talking about military force, sanctions. And I think that's what distinguishes North Korea from Iran. North Korea can live in splendid isolation in North Asia. Iran cannot live in isolation in the Middle East. It depends on integration; it depends on trade and investment. It needs to export that oil and natural gas. It needs to import 40 percent of its refined gasoline.

And so I'm not of the opinion that sanctions would be feckless if President Obama, if he's successful in bringing some of the Arab countries -- the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Japan and South Korea, two major trading partners, Russia and China, the two most important countries with influence on Iran -- into a sanctions regime to send a message that if they don't -- if the Iranians don't respond to that -- more dire consequences might lie ahead for them.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** We have a sanctions regime against the ...

**LESLIE GELB:** I think that should be extensive.

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** The sanctions regime is Swiss cheese; it's full of holes.

**LESLIE GELB:** And anything we're going to do further is going to be full of holes, too.

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Not if the Chinese and the Russians join.

**LESLIE GELB:** Not if they do, but are they going to do it and are we going to go forward on our own if the Chinese and Russians aren't with us? It doesn't make much sense.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Ambassador Bosworth, go ahead?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Just gently to challenge the notion that somehow all of our policies toward North Korea have failed: as long as the agreed framework was in force, which was for seven years, North Korea did not produce any new fissile material. It was not until the Bush Administration incorporated North Korea in the Axis of Evil and until we challenged part of their behavior on nuclear matters and did not keep our engagement going. The agreed framework fell apart and we had no backup strategy other than to stand back and say, "Well, it's an awful regime, and at some point it's going to collapse." But it didn't collapse.

**LESLIE GELB:** But, Steve, did it fall apart because they violated it?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** No, we could not prove that they violated it. There was a perfectly acceptable way of trying to investigate it: bring them in and have a negotiation over whether or not they were conducting uranium enrichment or not. And we knew that they were not producing plutonium. That was under international inspection. So when we challenged it, had no backup strategy, they then said, "We're going to break out of the agreed framework." They did that, they threw out the

international inspectors and they began producing plutonium. But to say that the agreed framework in and of itself was a failure is, I think, a misstatement of history.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Steve, you said before we don't have a clue of what they're thinking, or what they were thinking throughout this period. Nevertheless, I'll ask you. Do you think that strategically they made a decision to suspend the nuclear weapons program during that period?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Yes, I do. The known program, which is if we knew about, everybody knew about, was frozen and it was under IAEA inspection for that eight year period.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Let me just put a footnote here because Steve and I were talking about it the other night. I agree 100 percent with the proposition. So just to repeat, because I think there's a canard out there which people like to say, which is that nobody can deal successfully with the North Koreans because Clinton tried this policy and it failed and Bush tried this policy and it failed. And I would say as a first approximation, that's completely wrong, completely wrong. The proposition that the agreed framework froze in place the things which it dealt with, which was the plutonium production facilities, and did so in a way that was completely verifiable. There were guys there looking all the time. There were 24/7 cameras looking at it. So for that piece of it, it succeeded. Where it left a question mark was were they cheating in some other dimension, a question mark which we have today since we have never been able to figure out.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And what were they doing on the proliferation front during that period? Because this is also the period when we're very worried about nuclear material falling into the wrong hands and the delivery of missile technology?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** The North Koreans, again, I think Les's caution is a good one. I mean, first, we don't understand these regimes very well. But for my simpleminded version, I would say, is a first approximation: think a Mafioso regime.

**LESLIE GELB:** That's good.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** So what business are they in? They're in the business of extortion, blackmail, kidnapping. They kidnap guys, ladies, girls swimming on the beach in Japan, they kidnap them and then sell them back or keep them. They kidnap people from South Korea. Their main money makers are illegal arms, counterfeit \$100 bills and counterfeit drugs. Viagra they sell to people. So that's their business, that's who they are. And I would say if we look at this period, they're selling whatever they can to whomever they can if they can get the money for it. So through this period, they're selling weapons, they're selling missiles, they're selling counterfeit hundred dollar bills, whatever they can get away with.

They're not selling enriched uranium because they don't have any. They're not selling plutonium because they have only two bombs worth of stuff. If you have only two bombs worth, you don't want to sell what you have. They were a dangerous, unpredictable, evil regime, correctly I believe, in this period. It's just they didn't have the capability to do things like what they could do today. Now we know, now that they've enriched enough uranium to have an arsenal of weapons and they've conducted two weapons tests, so now it's not only that they demonstrated they have a weapon, but they've got extra material. They then are building a reactor in Syria? Again, you could hear in the previous conversation. If you just said, "What is the most unlikely thing you could imagine," Syria is right next door to Israel. Syria was a hundred miles away from Iraq. We and the Israelis were all over there. How could they imagine you could build a huge facility and get away with it? And they almost did.

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** But that's exactly why, I think, that the objective of the United States with regard to North Korea cannot be simply containment and you

somehow present proliferation. The only sure guard against proliferation in the case of North Korea is denuclearization. And that's why all of our diplomacy is aimed at getting them back on that track. And through engagement, trying to change their perception of where their self interest lies.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And their economic isolation, they're dependent on China, their dependence on China and Russia make them, I would think, uniquely susceptible to that kind of pressure, correct?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** We'll see.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** See, what Steve said raises some very interesting questions tied back into the previous discussion: that is, how does all this relate to going towards zero nuclear weapons? What Steve said I think everybody here would agree, that is with a country like North Korea down the line with Iran or Pakistan, we won't know whether they ever really get rid of nuclear weapons or they have material secreted here and there which they keep for themselves so they would be prepared to sell to terrorist groups. Which is one of the reasons why it's very good to have the goal of zero nuclear weapons very far down the line.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Nick, this issue of containment is a really critical one, whether we can live with countries becoming nuclear powers or not. Steve says we can't with respect to North Korea. What about in the Middle East? Up until now Israel is the only country with a nuclear capability in the Middle East. What does that mean for peace and stability in the Middle East, and how would that change if one of Israel's enemies had nuclear capability?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Well, I think the prospect of a nuclear armed Iran is alarming in one sense, because it might cause countries like Egypt or Saudi Arabia or even Turkey to think that they need to become nuclear weapons powers, too, in that very tough neighborhood. So let's say that the strategy that President Obama has put forward

does not succeed. I hope it does, I think he's on the right track. But if it doesn't succeed and Iran races forward towards a nuclear weapons capability, I think we're going to have to deal with this reality of assuring the countries of the region that the United States can successfully contain the Iranian nuclear and therefore military threat. Iran would become, if you will, the most powerful country in the Middle East apart from, say, the United States. In that instance, a containment regime would not only involve intensive sanctions, economic sanctions, but probably security assurances by the United States to Israel, to the Gulf Arab states, to some of the states in Levant so that they wouldn't think they had to take their own security into their own hands. It's analogous to what we did, some very wise men and women in the 1940s and 1950s, in establishing the two containment regimes of communist China and of the Soviet Union.

And a last point on this would be to go back to what Les has said on nuclear zero. I think President Obama was right to put forward the American belief that we ought to be committed to nuclear zero. Why? Because it does enhance our credibility to go back to other states and to make the argument that some states should have nuclear weapons, like the United States or Britain or France, and some states like Iran and North Korea should not. We really have no moral credibility to take that position, which is the position of the United States government and has been for many administrations, if we don't at the same time acknowledge our responsibility not just to reduce the level of nuclear weapons, but also to bring them down at some point, as President Obama says, perhaps in his grandchildren's or grandchildren's grandchildren's lifetime. I think he's won back for us a lot of international credibility that we had lost on this issue.

**TOM GJELTEN:** That's why he got the Peace Prize.

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** That's it. I was so pleased to see that he ...

**TOM GJELTEN:** Really?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I was very pleased to see that he was awarded the Peace Prize. I think any American should be proud of that confirmation. [applause] We'll speak to this in a minute. But if you look at the United Nations speech, which I think you're going to show in a minute ...

**TOM GJELTEN:** We're going to show it, yeah.

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Think about his Cairo speech and the Prague speech on nuclear weapons. President Obama is essentially recognizing that while we're still the most powerful country in the world, our power has to be shared with others. We are part of an international collective. I think he's voiced the most idealistic human ambitions about what kind of world we want to live in. He's asserting the promise of peace which I think no American president has done since President John F. Kennedy so successfully. And so I was very happy to see that he received that prize, and I think he deserves it.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Les, do you want to say something before we show that clip?

**LESLIE GELB:** Yes, if I could. We're talking about Iran and North Korea, which are really pains in the neck, are very dangerous countries, and Mafiosi is a good way to describe them. But we haven't talked about what I think is the biggest, most serious, most immediate problem, which is Pakistan.

**TOM GJELTEN:** I know. I haven't forgotten it.

**LESLIE GELB:** Because here's a country that already has nuclear weapons, probably around 100, and while we ...

**TOM GJELTEN:** Graham says 50.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** No, a hundred.

**LESLIE GELB:** Yeah, I think they have about a hundred now. And we try to put these permissive action links on them so they can protect them and everything. But see, they're not so dumb and they figure we're putting those things on so we can control them instead of those guys. And they've got extremists there who represent a real threat to the stability of that government. And they've got an army that has diddled us every bit as much, if not more, than the Iranians and the North Koreans. And here's a country in the end ...

**TOM GJELTEN:** We're sending them billions of dollars a year.

**LESLIE GELB:** ... that won't let us talk to the former chief nuclear scientist, A. Q. Khan, who probably has done us more harm than Ahmadinejad or Kim Jong-Il, and we can't even talk to that guy and we're about to give this country \$7.5 billion over the next five years in economic aid alone? I mean, how do you deal with this problem?

**TOM GJELTEN:** Well, now that we have, in fact, covered all the bases of the nuclear security challenges, let's see what President Obama intends to do about it and how he is going to be approaching this dilemma. This is a speech that he gave, a portion of a speech that he gave at the United Nations General Assembly last month.

[VIDEO]

**TOM GJELTEN:** Nick, is that a realistic program or is that, as Ken Adelman would say, an illusion?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I think it's a realistic program. When I read that speech a couple of weeks ago, I told my class -- I teach with Graham at the Kennedy School -- the next day I told my class it reminded me in one important respect to President Kennedy's speech at the American University in June of 1963. I think that was one of JFK's very greatest speeches because he was articulating in that speech, I think, the human interest which sometimes has to transcend the national interest. And JFK in the wake of the Cuban Missile Crisis was able to say, "We have got to pull back from nuclear

Armageddon.” I thought President Obama matched that level of intensity and articulateness in saying that we've got to pull back from this horrible situation in which we find ourselves. We've got to assert a human international interest in overcoming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. So he called for a vigorous review of the nonproliferation treaty. He is going to call for the Senate to ratify the comprehensive test ban treaty. He is going to, I think, negotiate by December of this year a new nuclear arms reduction treaty with the Russians -- we hold 96 percent of the nuclear warheads in the world -- to reduce our respective levels to historically low levels. And he focused on Iran and North Korea. This is the most ambitious nuclear arms agenda of any president in decades. And I think he is matching President Kennedy's moral clarity in talking about what we Americans have to do to lead this effort.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And then there's the issue of nuclear material, which he said he's going to try to get a new agreement of countries to control their nuclear material, which is probably to me the scariest issue of all because it's the prospect of nuclear terrorism that is in a whole different thing. And I want to ask you very quickly, Nick, do we know where the nukes in Pakistan are?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I don't know the answer to that question.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And you are Undersecretary for Political Affairs in the State Department?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Exactly right.

**TOM GJELTEN:** That's a pretty scary thought, isn't it, Graham? Do you know the answer?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** I think I know the answer, and I think the answer is no.

**TOM GJELTEN:** No, we don't? No, the answer is we don't know where they are?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Do not know. And I think you can get there not from some highly classified information, but from just the mental exercise of imaging that you are in charge of the nuclear weapons program of Pakistan. So you wake up every morning and what's your first worry? That the Indians know where the weapons are because if the Indians do, they might attack them. And they might. And what is your second worry?

**TOM GJELTEN:** That the Americans know.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** The Americans know where they are because the Americans might try to secure them ourselves. And I've had that conversation with President Musharraf about four or five times back and forth on the question, look, if the weapons get loose, I'm worried about the weapon coming to the U.S. I told him what happens in Pakistan and India I'm also worried about, but not as much as ... And he says, "Don't worry. Everything is absolutely completely secure. There's no reason to have any concern whatever."

**TOM GJELTEN:** Musharraf basically can't raise his head in Pakistan anymore.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Once, when I was having this conversation with him, it was two weeks after he had come within a second and a half of being assassinated by a bomb by extremists. And I said, "Why should I imagine that nuclear weapons in Pakistan are more secure than you are, Mr. President?" And he said, "That's a good question."

**TOM GJELTEN:** Well, is it irresponsible of the United States not to know where they are? Is it unachievable that the United States cannot find out where they are? And is it irresponsible for us not to have a contingency plan for securing those materials in the event of an Islamist takeover?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** We're trying to find out; we try to hire spies to tell us and everything. And sometimes you get a spy who tells you something. But I think the

answer is classified, from my understanding of the classified answer, is the Paks have some of their nuclear weapons in central depots and they move the other half around the country all the time. So you're going to know where some of them are, but you're never going to know where all or most of them are.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And it doesn't take very many loose ones to present a problem.

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Indeed, it doesn't, no.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Well, just to make it worse, two things: one, look at this group that overran the military base in Lapuni (?) just two days ago. So, again, if I don't secure the place where my officers live, what am I securing? I think usually people take care of their own security as well as they take care of the security of anything else, their own personal security and that of their command structure. So that's a first point.

Second point, back to the point that Ambassador Bosworth made earlier: over the past eight years Pakistan's nuclear arsenal almost tripled from what was, you were saying earlier number, to now the first approximation is a hundred nuclear bombs and more than a hundred bombs worth of material from which you can make additional bombs. And the factories are running. And secondly, Pakistan has come increasingly to rely on its nuclear deterrent as the equalizer to an overwhelming Indian conventional superiority. So much like the old Cold War days that were discussed earlier, when we thought there were a hundred Soviet divisions, American put tactical nuclear weapons in Europe thinking, "Well, that'll somehow equalize the picture." The Pakistanis now imagine that they would prevent a sharp Indian attack by conventional arms on Pakistan by their nuclear arsenal, which means spreading them around more places so that the Indians can't attack them, and also loosening the chain of command because if the chain of command isn't completely tight, the chances of a preemptive attack are larger. So I think the situation is much worse today than it was eight years ago.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Now, Graham, the little intelligence that I have access to as an intelligence reporter makes me think, conclude, that up until now al-Qaeda does not -- or any terrorist group -- has not been able to get their hands on any nuclear material, correct?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Correct.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Why is that? Why despite the efforts that you have documented so well in your book, what has worked in this time?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Well, I would say the first thing is grace and good fortune. So if something terrible had happened, it would more likely than not. And if it didn't happen, it wasn't because of what we did, that's the first. I would say secondly, to go back to the earlier conversation, one of the most amazing things that happened was that the 16,000 nuclear weapons that were left outside of Russia when the Soviet Union disappeared in December of 1991, so big a country disappeared, nuclear weapons virtually everywhere, all those 16,000 weapons somehow got rounded up and back to Russia, most of them actually dismantled. And we've been buying ... The highly enriched uranium in the bombs was down blended into low enriched uranium. The low enriched uranium has been bought by the U.S. as fuel for nuclear power reactors. So if you go down here to Seabrook ... What's our local -- Seagram's?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Seabrook.

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Seabrook, I'm sorry.

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Seagram's whisky is something you drink. [laughter]

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** Seabrook, half of the fuel that's producing electricity for lights is produced by low enriched uranium that used to be high enriched uranium in bombs that

were part of Russia. So that's an unbelievable story, thanks to Nunn-Lugar and the program that went with it and thanks to the Russians.

I think the other point I would point to is fortunately the al-Qaeda crowd has been what I think PC would call technologically challenged. So the 9/11 Commission report documents three cases in which they bought material which they thought was going to be the stuff of their bomb, but got cheated. So once they got cheated by the guys in Niger, once they got cheated by some guys in Uzbekistan. So then bin Laden -- no dummy -- said, "Well, gee, but the Pakistanis know how to make nuclear bombs." So he got Mr. A. Q. Khan to send two of his nuclear scientists who know how to make bombs to visit him in his facilities in Afghanistan and said, "What do I need to do?" So that activity's been going on. Fortunately, as far as we know, not yet successful. But the hard thing to remember about 9/11, 9/11 was five years in the planning. So these guys, their MO is careful, work it through, go through the motions. So if they were five years into a nuclear effort now, we might not know about it until we knew about it.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Steve, before we get to these questions, I want to take advantage of your current involvement in these issues and ask you something about North Korea. We've heard a couple of contradictory things about North Korea here. One is that they would not sell nuclear material because they don't have enough of it and they want to keep it. The other one is that it's a Mafiosi regime; Mafiosi regimes have their own rationality. What's your assessment of the current situation in North Korea with respect to the stability of that regime and the prospect of, let's say, rogue generals or someone else with genuine international criminal connections who may have access to nuclear material and not have, even in their own mind, the interests of North Korea at stake?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** Well, bearing in mind the fact that at some point in the not too distant future I may be sitting across the table from North Korean government representatives, I'm not sure I'm going to comment in great detail on some of the underlying assumptions of that. I find it doesn't do any great particular good to massively indict your negotiating partner before you actually sit down to negotiate.

I think I would fall back on something I said earlier, Tom, and that is in my judgment the uncertainties involved in the questions that you raise require that the U.S. objective, and the objective of our partners -- China, Russia, Japan, and South Korea -- vis-à-vis North Korea must be the objective denuclearization. And anything else is, I think, just poses too much risk, too much uncertainty.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Les, as an advocate of containment, do you agree with that or do you disagree with that?

**LESLIE GELB:** Agree with it.

**TOM GJELTEN:** So your advocacy of containment does not apply to the North Koreans?

**LESLIE GELB:** No, you try to do everything you can to prevent this from happening. And you let them think you're prepared to go very far to prevent it.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Nick, give us the best argument for believing that sanctions, with respect to Iran or North Korea, still has practical potential in spite of the frustrations that we've seen trying to apply that over the last many years?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I think sanctions are going to be a very difficult proposition for us to make work successfully. It's hard to establish, especially if you're talking about a country like Iran. It's a powerful country. It trades with a hundred other countries in all sorts of materials. It's hard to establish a regime where everyone stops trading, particularly in materials that are critical for the survival of this regime in Iran. But we're dealing with two bad options here. If you denigrate sanctions, and I know you're not trying to do that, but if one denigrates sanctions and says we've only got an option and that's to use military force, doesn't get you very far.

I start with this presumption. I'm not aware of any scenario where the use of American or Israeli military force actually resolves the question you're trying to resolve. Could you stop or delay significantly Iran in its nuclear weapons development capacity? I don't think so. And I think as Les alluded to before, you'd invite asymmetric attacks by the Iranians through Hezbollah, through Hamas or the Shi'a militants in Iraq against our forces, against Israel, against the moderate Palestinians.

Les has just written a brilliant new book about power. You have to think about the application of power, what you might achieve to what you might lose. And I think that negotiations and sanctions are a better option than the use of force for our national interests knowing what I know. That even if you fail the negotiations sanctions track, you're still left being the most powerful country in the world with a great number of allies and partners in the Middle East, who I believe could successfully contain and deter the use of those weapons, nuclear weapons, by any future Iranian government.

So these are difficult options. For President Bush, they were difficult, they're difficult for President Obama. And I do think that you've got to look through the consequences of the use of military force more than perhaps some of the advocates have been doing.

**TOM GJELTEN:** As the person who had responsibility for the Iran portfolio in the last administration, would you have liked to be in the position that the current administration is with respect to a government in Iran whose legitimacy is now questioned more than it was when you were handling that? Do you think the events of the last few months, has that actually strengthened the hand of the United States and other countries in dealing with Iran, putting pressure on Iran?

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** Yes, two events: the aftermath of the elections when the Iranian government used brutal force against peaceful demonstrators turned the international community against them. Second, the revelation by President Obama, Sarkozy and Brown of the secret nuclear facility, that revelation being made three weeks

ago, that I think has put Iran on the defensive in a way that it was not when I was dealing with this question between 2005 and early 2008.

But let's give President Obama some credit here, too. From the clenched fist reference in the inauguration, which I thought was quite powerful, to the Nowruz message. He sent a video message over the heads of the Iranian government to the Iranian people to offering, or challenging the Iranians to negotiate without conditions. I think President Obama, his actions, they've also weakened Ahmadinejad in an appreciable way. And, therefore, I think it's those two events, plus the actions of the administration that have put us in a stronger position than we were even two or three years ago.

**TOM GJELTEN:** I want to give the audience here a couple of chances to ask questions of this incredibly thoughtful and well informed panel. The first one, and the reason I'm going to this first is because this identifies an issue we have not mentioned at all, and it's partly because we're talking about nuclear challenges. But if you want to talk about mass destruction and terrorism, you have to consider biological terrorism. And this question is some, for example former CIA director John Deutch, believed the threat of bioterrorism is actually greater than the threat of nuclear terrorism. What do you think about that, Graham?

**GRAHAM ALLISON:** I would say the likelihood of a biological terrorist attack is larger than the likelihood of a nuclear terrorist attack. But the number of people likely to be killed by a nuclear terrorism attack dwarfs a bio attack. I had the good fortune to serve on the commission that Congress established as a successor to the 9/11 Commission. It was called the Commission on Preventing WMD Terrorism and Proliferation that Senator Bob Graham and Jim Talent co-chaired. And this commission unanimously concluded and provided its report in December of '08, that it was the judgment of the commission that the likelihood of a nuclear or biological attack somewhere in the world in the next five years was greater than even. But it also concluded that the bio was more likely than the nuclear.

Now, as we look forward, particularly with the biochemical revolution that's going on in the life sciences, in the future people will have more capabilities for creating biological agents that may turn out to be almost as destructive as nuclear weapons, but not today.

**TOM GJELTEN:** And one final question and then we're going to wrap up. Russia, we also haven't talked a lot about Russia. You said some very interesting and, I think, encouraging things. Because when your book came out, Graham, that was, as I recall, the biggest concern, is the amount of loose nukes that were coming out of the former Soviet Union. The fact that many of those or all of those have been secured, is really encouraging. But some questions here about where does Russia stand now in terms of cooperation with the United States and other countries, whether with respect to North Korea or Iran. Is there anything else we can do to get Russian support with respect to Iran? I'm going to give that to you, Nick, because you used to be a Russia expert before you were a NATO expert and before you were an Iran expert.

**AMBASSADOR BURNS:** I think the relationship between Moscow and Washington is very complicated, indeed. What do we have going for us? We both are victims of terrorism and should be fighting terrorism together. We both are stewards of most of the world's nuclear warheads and therefore are responsible for its safeguarding together. And we're both energy producers. That's all positive. I think that President Obama and President Medvedev and Prime Minister Putin can probably find some common ground there.

On the other hand, we have a massive disagreement with the Russians on how the East Europeans should be treated. We think they should be free and democratic as they are. Russia, I think, would like to intimidate them into towing the line in a new Russian sphere of influence. We ought to try to prevent that.

And the question of Iran, it's going to be fascinating to see what happens. When I was negotiating, when I was the Iran negotiator, my biggest problem was Russia. Russia was not using its influence that it clearly has on Iran in harmony with that of the United States

and the West European countries. Russia was protecting Iran, watering down the sanction resolutions of the United Nations Security Council. I hope that in return for canceling that missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic, Russia owes President Obama. I assume there's some understanding that if President Obama negotiates with Iran and they fail, those negotiations fail, the Russians will join President Obama in very tough sanctions. I hope that's the deal that's been made. I don't know if that's the case. But I think it's now the central issue in the U.S.-Russian relationship.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Steve, how encouraged are you about the prospect of Russian support in dealing with North Korea?

**AMBASSADOR BOSWORTH:** At present, the Russians are being very supportive on the North Korean issue. They, along with the Chinese, of course, were prime moving factors in the United Nations Security Council resolution on sanctions against North Korea earlier this year. And they've been very cooperative and collaborative in the so-called six party negotiating process.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Les, do you have any quick concluding thoughts? And then we're going to let Tom take it over again.

**LESLIE GELB:** No.

**TOM GJELTEN:** Are you going to go home reassured tonight?

**LESLIE GELB:** Terribly, by everything my colleagues said. I'm only frightened by what I said. [laughter]

**TOM GJELTEN:** Well, thank you very much. This has really been a treat to be up here. Thank you very much. [applause]

**TOM PUTNAM:** I'll actually ask the panel just to remain seated for a minute. I'm going to give the last word to Ted Sorensen. But before I do, please join me in thanking not only this panel, but all of the panelists for the day. [applause] We're bringing out one other document from our archives that you might want to see on the way out. It's a fascinating letter that Nikita Khrushchev actually sent to Robert Kennedy about this Library and agreed to donate documents to the Library. Mr. Adelman, if I had a copy of the INF treaty in my archives, I would pull that out as well. My colleagues tell me that that's actually owned by the State Department, and it's going to be on display at the Library of Congress for the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, which I think is a nice metaphor for this last comment from Nikita Khrushchev, who in this letter to Robert Kennedy wrote simply -- it was a very praiseworthy and thoughtful letter about John F. Kennedy -- but he wrote, "The signing of the nuclear test ban treaty was a convincing confirmation of the fact that no matter how difficult contemporary international problems might be, solutions to them can be found." And I think this last panel has given us that same hope, that no matter how difficult these problems are, hopefully years from now we'll look back and realize that solutions were found.

I want to thank the audience so much for coming and for your engagement and attention throughout the day's proceedings. And now, Ted Sorensen has asked for the final word.

**TED SORENSEN:** Thanks very much, Tom. As one of those who was consulted in the establishment of this wonderful institution, I want to say that today's conference has not only been a splendid success, but represents very much what was of the utmost importance to President Kennedy. And I want to tie some of the remarks by all of these magnificent panels together by saying just three or four things.

First, Ken Adelman's announcement that he was now an admirer of President Kennedy surprised me a bit. Adelman admires Kennedy? Who's next, Rush Limbaugh? [laughter] But although I'm sure the good Father from Notre Dame who was on the opening panel would say, that a sinner is always welcome back. Nevertheless, Ken, you based your support of Kennedy on the fact that he never uttered anything as foolish in your mind as

what you said Jimmy Carter said about he and Gorbachev dreaming the same dreams, and so on and so forth. I just want to quote further from the speech that Nick Burns has already quoted from, and we also saw a clip from it earlier, the American University commencement address, in which Kennedy referred to our differences with the Soviet Union and said, "But in the last analysis, we all inhabit the same planet. We all breathe the same air. We all cherish our children's future, and we're all mortal."

Next, I want to give you an historical note about the Cuban Missile Crisis, which related a little bit to some of the subsequent discussion and which I think has never appeared anywhere except in my latest book on sale here at the Library in paperback. [laughter] And that is that when Khrushchev pulled the missiles out of Cuba, Castro was furious because he wanted to attach nine conditions to that, which we'd still be debating today if he had succeeded. And in order to calm down Castro, Khrushchev sent his number two man, Mikoyan, to Cuba. He had to send him twice because Castro wouldn't see him. And on the second trip, he came through the United States, believe it or not after that world threatening confrontation. Kennedy invited Mikoyan to come by and visit him at the White House. And when he did, Kennedy asked Mikoyan, why had Khrushchev or the Soviet Union done this? And Mikoyan told him, Kennedy told me very shortly thereafter, "It's because of those" -- remember, this is in the middle of the '62 political campaign -- "It was because of those campaign speeches threatening an invasion of Cuba." Kennedy said, "What are you talking about? I've never made a speech threatening an invasion of Cuba, and I have no interest in that." And Mikoyan said, "No, no, speeches by Nixon." Nixon was running for governor of California that year, and Kennedy said to me, "Imagine, they do that, something so foolish and dangerous based upon a gubernatorial race by a defeated presidential candidate. It shows you how little they understand our system." Then he said to me, "But what the hell, we don't understand their system very well, either." [laughter]

And, finally, I want to say to Professor Rhodes, I have no reason to question the premise he voiced based upon a conversation he had with a Soviet that Kennedy's success in resolving the Cuban Missile Crisis without our firing a shot had spurred the Soviets to

build their missile forces by leaps and bounds and their greatest expansion of their missile force took place in the years that followed. If by that he thinks that I, on behalf of the Kennedy Administration, should apologize for Kennedy's success in prevailing, I ain't going to do it.

I would just say that, finally, that in one of the many biographies of Senator Ted Kennedy that appeared several weeks ago, it reported that during this last 15 months or so of his life, since he received the death sentence from his doctors, particularly in the last several months, knowing that everyone in his household -- because he stayed most of the time on the Cape -- knew what was coming just as he did, that he would rise in the morning, get to the top of the stairs and bellow down in that great booming voice of his, "I'm still here." Having spoken over the years many, many times at this Library, I'm here today just to tell you, I'm still here. [applause]

END OF CONFERENCE