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Human Security and Human Development in the 21st Century: A Post-September 11 Agenda

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Mark Malloch Brown, 'Human Security and Human Development in the 21st Century: A Post-September 11 Agenda'

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This is a transcript of *Human Security and Human Development in the 21st Century: A Post-September 11 Agenda* given by Mark Malloch Brown. Mark Malloch-Brown is Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme

Address by UNDP Administrator Mark Malloch Brown

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Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends

Thank you very much. I can't think of any more appropriate Centre or more appropriate group of people to share these ideas with and certainly not a more appropriate time to do it than now.

Obviously the events of September 11th and what they mean for any of us in our personal lives or professional lives, are still very close, I think we all lack any real sense of perspective on it. But at the same time, we clearly must all try to adjust our activities, to draw the right conclusions and focus on the right things.

For the United Nations I think we have a clear two-track agenda.

First, as an intergovernmental security organisation, we have an extraordinary responsibility not to manage, but at least to try and influence the direction of the military response : to ensure that it is kept within boundaries that make it a justifiable act of self defence and does not allow the conflict to spill more broadly into Central Asia and the Middle East.

But there is a second role. And that is for the UN and its friends to start seeking to raise awareness and to build support for redressing the broader political environment that allowed this terrible tragedy to happen.

By that I do not mean the immediate causes; this atrocity was committed by a group of individuals who have a very fundamental quarrel with the governments of several Arab states about their Islamic integrity and legitimacy. Neither do I mean jumping too generally to the state of the world and the state of world poverty, to explain what happened.

Rather I am referring to the complex ways in which those broader issues of global poverty and un-addressed festering issues such as the Israeli- Palestinian conflict created an enabling political environment which allowed a very small inside issue to resonate across the streets of a very large part of the world.

And my starting point is that I think too many people have made an analytical error in pointing the finger of blame at poor old globalisation, which has clearly taken some early hits as people cast around for scapegoats.

A Changing View of Development

There is some fire behind the smoke.

While the Government of Saudi Arabia may be a more direct political target for what happened there is no doubt that the anger of the Al Qaeda terrorist movement and its sympathisers is in part determined by a broader sense that the global economy is tilted unfairly towards the West, particularly the United States, and the global culture is being consistently and steadily Americanised.

There is some truth to both sentiments. This is a world where, despite unprecedented wealth creation over the past decades, almost half of the world's population lives on less than \$2 a day, and more than 65 countries are poorer than they were a decade ago.

And what this highlights is a growing sense that underlying the global economy is a very Darwinian risk for countries that fail - and particularly for groups within countries that are caught up in economic adjustments which make their particular contribution to that nation's economy suddenly redundant .

These are the 21st century equivalent of handloom weavers. And there are lots of them from Russian miners to Asian rubber planters to US steel workers - people whose contributions to the world economy is suddenly overcome by technology breakthroughs or changes in the terms of trade or changes in labour costs which make countries move to other suppliers.

In my job I am constantly hearing of the social costs of adjustment in this new competitive barrierless global market that we are moving towards. And the reaction of those promoting the global model has been very much to say we need social safety nets: we need to make sure that people are helped through the transition costs.

So clearly any serious analysis of this issue has to go beyond the surface statistics which, while complicated, are I think relatively indisputable. During the 1990's countries who integrated more closely into the world economy as measured by their economy's exposure to international trade grew and those which reduced their exposure to international trade, shrunk. The first group grew at an average of 5.1% a year of developing countries and the second group of developing countries contracted at an average of 1.1 % a year.

Nevertheless, the conclusion that open markets and trade integration are enough, is clearly insufficient. That was the assumption of the so-called Washington consensus - the economic model which dominated the thinking about development in the late 80s and early 90s - and it is flawed.

Recognizing that, the development community has already moved on to a Washington Consensus Mark II - or a Copenhagen consensus, or Santiago consensus or whatever you want to call it - which in essence represents a general view that it is not enough to rely on the argument that the rising tide of global integration will lift all boats. There is a sense that there must be at the very least, interventions to address the weaknesses of certain countries' ability to compete in that global economy and the structural problems that have prevented them from doing so on a level playing field.

That is why we have in recent years seen increased spending by the UN system, by the World Bank and the IMF, by DfID and other donors around the world on health and education. And we have seen developing countries themselves dramatically shift their spending priorities in favour of health and education. Because they all realize that only countries which conserve and invest in their own human capital, which understand that the global market is in many senses a knowledge economy, who are going to succeed in the long run.

But when I put all this together and hear of a modified global market vision of development where we must supplement the operations of the market with some limited social interventions, or when I hear talk - which UNDP among others has been instrumental in stimulating - of encouraging the international corporate sector to engage in some limited social responsibility, I am in the wake of September 11 struck by a sense that even if we once thought this is somehow sufficient to address the scale of the problems we face, we can no longer do so.

However much we agree with the broad principles I nevertheless fear that in a few years time we will look at what people have said today about modifying globalization to make it work better for the poor and see that we were like a late Lloyd George Cabinet Minister in the United Kingdom introducing as a Liberal government the last measures of social reform unaware that round the corner was the first Labour government with a much more comprehensive vision of how to put together a system of globalisation which really worked for all.

That is why I think we need a much more vigorous vision of how to manage the global economy and global society. And I believe we may be on the edge of that real paradigm shift that allows us to do so.

A Revitalized Multilateral Approach

Already a framework for that is emerging. And it is emerging in the form of words and phrases that used to be in the footnotes and have now made the chapter headings of books in a good LSE course. Terms such as "Global Public Goods" that capture the sense that there are certain issues such as climate change, or HIV/AIDS or terrorism that simply cannot be handled on a national level.

They require a global response. A response that starts from the premise that your security is my security, that an HIV/AIDS epidemic allowed to rage unchecked in Africa, will become a health threat in London every bit as much allowing terrorism to fester in Afghanistan contributes to an horrific act of violence in New York.

Take climate change. The real victims of climate change are not those with second homes in Cornwall or Long Island, they are people living in Central America or the

Asian sub-continent who are most vulnerable to the quickening cycle of floods and droughts that it has helped trigger. And without getting deep into the Kyoto debate, we know where to point the finger.

What all this is starting to forge is a new, pragmatic sense of international interdependence.

You don't have to be a one-worlder, you don't have to be a direct intellectual descendant of Woodrow Wilson, you don't even have to think that the UN is the best institution ever created to believe that your immediate personal environment is now at risk because of global problems raging out of control. Political problems, security problems, public health problems, migration problems, crime and drug problems: the agenda of issues which can no longer be contained or managed within the boundaries of the single nation state, however powerful, is growing steadily.

And behind this agenda lies that 800 lb gorilla issue: poverty. Because in today's world, we all live cheek by jowl. It is a world where those 3bn living on less than \$2/day, where the 875 million illiterates, the 325 million kids who are not in school today, are building up a problem not just in their own nation's future but for all of us.

So in that sense these governments - in every corner of the globe - which fail their own people in terms of the provision of jobs and education and healthcare, fail us all. And we can see in this fact the reflection of a new reality of the limited absoluteness of national sovereignty.

The controversial but logical conclusion of that line of thought is that the really fundamental internationalisation of human rights means that the right to development itself - a right lodged very deeply in the human development credo that UNDP holds very dear - has some application beyond an absolute right of governments to manage their own affairs. Just as governments are challenged from above by the fact that they can no longer solve some global problems alone, they are challenged from below by the fact that they no longer have the absolute right to fail that was allowed them in the past.

A Framework for Global Change

I spent last weekend gathered with the heads of UN agencies in New York as we do every six months. Let me tell you it is a pretty odd lot. Some of these agencies go back to the 19th century, long before the UN, and when we start a round table on what they have been doing, usually I have to take a very deep breath and some extra caffeine to see myself through it. But this time it was an extraordinary demonstration of the new multilateralism in action.

The man who runs the Inter-Postal Union, which since the 19th century which has been based in Berne Switzerland, explained at the meeting he had just had a meeting of postal authorities to try and put together measures to prevent anthrax treated mail being sent through the international mail system. The man who runs the International Maritime Organisation based here in London explained the steps that were being taken to try and prevent explosives being shipped in international cargo containers. Gro Brundtland, the head of the World Health Organisation, explained how she had to rush out updated global guidelines on anthrax and smallpox.

The Head of the UN Drug Control Programme explained the impact on the heroin economy of the military action currently going on in Afghanistan. And as we listened to the Head of the IMF and the World Bank describing the likely scenarios for the global economy over the next year, these messages were only reinforced. There was an overwhelming sense of a re-energisation of the rather sclerotic sinews of a multilateralism that has been developing in fits and starts for over 150 years.

But clearly as a framework for a change and a rationale for global management of some issues, this can only work if we have a real sense of what we have to urgently achieve on the global level. It is not enough to say that there may be some kind of temporary, modest re-weighting of power between governments and their citizens and international organisations and international human rights movements. That may be nice, but unless it is reinforced by a real agenda which draws on it, I don't think it takes us very far.

Democratic Governance and Development

Rather, it is an agenda that must first and foremost be centred on the democratic governance gap in so much of the developing world that has left these other problems

unaddressed. That absence of political voice in so many of the countries from which the terrorists hailed is the starting fault-line of our failure in so much of the world today. Go back and read Joseph Conrad writing about the same issues over a century ago! It is that lack of political voice and democratic debate at home which has led us today, as so frequently in the past, to the internationalising of terrorism.

Because this dual vision of a failure to address global problems with much political robustness and a failure of governments themselves to answer the demands of their people, for voice, education and economic opportunity, means that in its broadest sense, the events that we lived with in recent weeks, are not as some commentators would say, a failure of Islam, they are a failure of government.

We live in a world which is not over governed but under governed, in the sense of accountable states which are meeting the needs of their people in a way which people feel responds and is accountable to them. That is the challenge we face. And to meet it our development agenda must be centred on this goal helping developing countries build the capacity, institutions, policies that entrench good governance and rule of law. That give those millions a voice and a sense of opportunity.

Doing that is the means to a broader end tackling four critical issues that lie at the heart of the current development failures:

First, education. This is the one issue in which the revamped Washington consensus is absolutely right. There is no more critical driver of human development. And so much of the clash - or risk of clash - between societies, and so much of the radicalisation which fed this particular reflection of a flawed globalisation, rests not just on the absence of educational opportunity for many, but the direction that education in so many countries is taking. A direction that has shifted away from the critical self-examination of ideas to something which has allowed for many, very little of the kind of questioning or critical thinking so crucial to real learning.

Second, jobs. National and global systems which cannot solve the job crisis in the world are clearly ones in which people will not retain faith in. In too many countries millions of young job seekers are left without prospect of employment due to stagnant economies and positions filled by patronage rather than merit, fuelling the sense of

resentment against the status quo. Addressing this problem requires first addressing the underlying problems in the political economies of these states, not economic measures alone.

Third, gender. What is so true of so many parts of the world where we work, is that half the workforce is disabled. Disabled by gender discrimination from full participation in the economic opportunities and the economic growth of their societies. And the victims of that are the societies themselves. In too many countries women are still denied property rights, denied leadership roles forced to operate either within the household or in a very informal marginal sector of the economy in still too many countries.

Fourth, the environment. From global warming to increasing desertification to growing ecological vulnerability, development simply cannot be sustainable unless it address poverty and environment together.

Human Security and Human Development

Finally, underpinning this ambitious agenda, lies the issue that has been rightly thrust back on top of the global agenda in recent weeks: security.

When we talk about security in the context of a development agenda, of course, we mean something much broader than what happened in New York.

UNDP and its Human Development Reports - which Lord Desai has been so influential in the preparation of for so many years - started using the term Human Security in this sense as far back 1993.

And we use it to describe not just security in our places of work and homes, but of the poor in their places of work and homes. The rise of physical insecurity as result of rising crime in the large mega cities of the developing world. The loss of job security in the rural economy and the replacement of it by very insubstantial marginal cash economy existence in the urban economy. The breakdown of community and family, tied to that rural-urban migration and population explosion and growing vulnerability to social and environmental problems has shown us that the solution to our own security problems is to help other people meet their own security needs.

This can only be addressed if we keep focused on a people-centred plan of action focused on human development. And it requires commitment to a global system which we all feel an involvement in and participate. A system where everybody is guided by a sense that our children will enjoy better education than we did and better economic opportunities than we did.

Having lived in America off and on for the years I have done, I am constantly struck by the enormously important social cohesion that comes in a multi-ethnic world from the sense that we can all improve the lives of ourselves and our families and communities together. That we are not forced into these competitive situations which so often turn violent over how best to share a shrinking cake.

And linked into this development and security agenda is a broader conflict and crisis prevention agenda. Because we have also learned that problems left to fester will come home to roost elsewhere with a terrible vengeance later, if unaddressed. And this applies not just to issues like Palestine or AIDS that I have already mentioned but in other areas from the environment to financial crises.

Look at the current global economy. Problems in Argentina and Turkey left to play out without some kind of global management risk jeopardising international financial markets much more broadly. Already they have had a very damaging impact even on relatively healthy emerging market economies, shutting them out of international capital markets and triggering currency collapses from Brazil to South Africa.

A New Model of Voice and Opportunity

So, to meet the challenge of Human Development and Human Security in the 21st century, we need at both the global and national and community levels a distributive and inclusive model of politics that offers voice and prosperity to all rather than a divisive one, which seems intent on creating a world of winners and losers.

Is there an organising principle that allows us to do this? To move from late Lloyd George Liberals to early Labourites on a global scale?

Let me be clear. I do not believe the answer lies in a huge expansion in international governance. We do not need more international organizations.

Rather we need a new approach with three broad dimensions.

First, a much clearer social compact between citizens and their government, and governments and the international community. A much stronger sense that to fail to address the environment, to fail to address economic stagnation, to fail to provide jobs and education, is no longer a privilege for governments. And to achieve that there has to be a much clear sense of accountability upwards to the rest of the world and downwards to their own citizens.

Second, a vigorous promotion of a vision of global public goods. Not through new institutions but through the right kinds of partnerships between different levels of government in the world and partnerships with non-government players, both the private sector and civil society and others.

And, third, it requires a much more managed vision of globalisation. A model where we preserve the economic opportunities of open markets and accelerated velocity of global trade and communications even as we seek to preserve those gains by managing the impacts and ensuring that the model works for all. And that requires us both to level the global playing field in areas from intellectual property to agriculture and move beyond this minimalist market based sense of globalisation that has characterised the last decade.

Because overall, I think we are on the verge of a shift to a much more activist vision of the role of the international community and the accountability of national governments to their own citizens and to that of the international community, for an inclusive globalisation that works for the poor. And I think the final organizing principle for such partnerships and such an inclusive globalization lies in that phrase **human security**, in the sense that your security is my security. And that allows a much more robust and legitimate and pro-active interventionism in the problems of today's world, whether humanitarian or developmental. Because in the final analysis that is what will allow us to tackle tomorrow's Afghanistans. Because if that terrorism indeed feeds on and exploits the political and security weaknesses of failed states, as I have argued, then the world must be much more vigorous in preventive strategies which address those state failures and try to reverse them.

Thank you.