

16<sup>th</sup> Annual Town Meeting  
Making and Sustaining Peace in the Post 9-11 World

“Watching Washington in 2003”  
Les Janka

I will be focusing on Watching Washington in the past year. Probably like all years in Washington, there was the good, there was bad and there was ugly. But I'd like to look back to where we were here in this room last year, just a year ago, to some of the things we talked about. Major topic was discussing the Bush administration's response the 9-11, particularly as it was expressed in the National Security Strategy document that issued in Sept. 2002. We talked about that document and some of the new ways of approaching the world that the Bush administration had proposed. And it focused a little bit on the objective of reforming authoritarian regimes as the swamp where terrorism breeds. And the response is to what kind of a strategy would do that. This document represented quite a shift from the traditional American policy of containment during the Cold War where the objective was to contain the Soviet Union, contain Communism. But not necessarily to defeat it as much as some parts of our society felt that should be the objective. And Ronald Reagan came in wanting to do that and in fact led to that defeat. The objective here is much different. This is an objective of defeat of tyranny, authoritarianism, and terrorism. Not defeat but really reforming the world through a bold, grand strategy of transformation. Last year we talked about what the strategy might mean. The tools of this strategy of transformation were proactive preemption, military hegemony, and promotion of democracy as a way of transforming the world to make it safer for the United States. The document really proposed that democracy be in effect, the universal solvent for cleaning up the swamps of terrorism. The document contained a vision of empire, really as the U.S. objective and a number of people last year objected to my using that word, empire, but I want to put that “E” word back on the table tonight, because I think if we look back to the year 2003 and where the country is going I think it is perfectly appropriate that we talk about empire as an analytical framework for where American policy is headed.

Last year, we also looked at the objectives of the looming war in Iraq and what we were going to do about Saddam Hussein. We noted in that discussion that the real objective, this was not agreed by everybody, but the real objective was not the weapons of mass destruction. The real objective was not the elimination of Saddam as a supporter of international terrorism. But I postulated that it was the demonstration effect of a smashing military defeat of anti-American forces that was the real objective of our going into Baghdad. I can say in January, we were all expecting it was going to happen, whether it was a week away or a couple of months away but it was already a done deal at that point. That Iraq would become a base for transformation of Middle East regimes through pressure of military bases in Iraq, pressure on Iran, Syria and Saudi Arabia. There is no reason now to back through all the alternatives that we discussed at the time but we did recognize that if we went into Iraq that there was the danger of launching urban guerilla warfare against U.S. forces, destabilizing other parts of the Muslim world

and the costs and the difficulties of building the new Iraq and I think as we look back at the last year we have seen many of those predictions come true.

What really results of American Foreign Policy in 2003? I think there were some very significant short-term gains that we have to talk about. We have a new government in Afghanistan. Al Qaeda has been disrupted, not defeated, but I think there has been a pretty clear case that while they have carried out significant attacks in other parts of the world, their attacks in Western interest have been pretty much so far, fingers-crossed, have been defeated. A brutal tyrant was removed from the Middle East. We have seen shifts of policy in Iran, Libya, Syria, and Saudi Arabia. We have seen increased cooperation in various forms, that of cooperation against terrorism both from our European allies and from our friends in other countries in the Middle East. Despite these short-term gains, which I fully want to credit American Foreign Policy with, I also believe that our actions and the way in which we carried out this policy had larger more serious, long-term consequences, with some looming losses for the United States. I want to submit to you tonight that the United States is arguably less secure at the fundamental level today than we were one year ago. Let me say that again. I want to submit to you that we are arguably, at the fundamental level, less secure today than we were one year ago. Not because of no progress, as I just mentioned a number of areas, but because of deeper, geopolitical, tectonic changes that are policies are leading towards and in the direction in which are policy is going. It is at that deep, geopolitical level that I really want to talk about. We can all add up quotes, pluses and minuses, here and there but I want to talk about some really deep long-term trends and where we are going.

Let me list some of these consequences as a result of our policy in 2003. First, I believe that the Iraq War was a distraction from the real war on terrorism. That is took away from the real enemy, the real threat to America and our civilization which is Al Qaeda and Osama Bin Laden. I also believe that American credibility with our allies and our adversaries around the world has been badly damaged and great costs to our ability to lead the world. The United States is a super power. We have a responsibility to lead the world. I support that and I think all of us do, that American leadership is vital to the world we are living in today. But, I believe our credibility to conduct that leadership has been very badly damaged by a result of the blatantly fraudulent, massively overstated misuse of intelligence about the threats coming from Iraq, weapons of mass destruction, and Saddam's ties to terrorism. I also believe that what was essentially, although covered up with various allies and not to take credit away particularly from our stalwart British allies, but this was essentially a unilateral act of American force in the world in a war of choice. Not a war forced upon us, but an elective war of choice. I believe that it seriously frayed our alliances with our friends It has undercut the effectiveness of the United Nations through our impatient preference for unilateral actions, unilateral statements, unilateral definitions of the problem and its solution. I recently read an article on Foreign Affairs by Secretary of State Powell and a couple of President Bush's recent speeches that indicated perhaps, a re-calibration that perhaps some international cooperation, multilateral activities are the way to go. I hope this is a realization that looking back at 2003 maybe this is a little more positive direction to go.

In the past six months, I have spoken to half if not more than the American Ambassadors serving in the Middle East. The one message coming from every one of them is that as a result of our action in Iraq, a massive increase in anti-Americanism throughout the Muslim and Arab world, a backlash against the very demonstration effect that our administration proposed for carrying out the Iraqi attack. More over I believe that the action in Iraq was a distraction from a solution to the Arab-Israeli problem which is the real issue affecting America's interests in the Middle East and the Middle Eastern-Muslim world's perception of the United States. I don't want to skip over the painful loss of life of our brave soldiers which now reaches 500 or the economic costs of going into Iraq now exceeding \$200 billion, including \$300 million to find weapons of mass destruction, \$300 million for a search that hasn't turned up anything yet. This is a serious problem. We have also suffered through an Arab boycott of American goods. Arab business is not coming to the United States. I was recently at the World Affairs Council in Houston and talked to some of the people in their hospitals. They said Houston hospitals alone have lost \$60 million in Arab patients seeking American help. Our universities our losing Arab students, that is not just the economic cost of Arab students not paying their tuition, but it means the next generation, a group of Arab leaders have not come to the United States. A lot of my business partners in the Middle East will simply not come to the United States because they can't get a Visa or if they do, the humiliation of going through our airports is more than they want to put up just to do business with us. And also I believe that we have to be very conscious that there is a danger of American liberties here at home being eroded. We have 1200 people in the United States - 1200 human beings with no access to lawyers, we have American citizens denied their basic rights of access to lawyers. As much as we have to balance security with our liberties, I believe that looking back at 2003 we can be concerned that perhaps the pendulum has swung too far in one direction.

Just as an example of how I believe the executive branch of the administration has bungled in the foreign policy area, and that is our relationship with Saudi Arabia. All of us Americans have legitimate questions about Saudi Arabia. Why were 15 out of the 19 attackers of the Pentagon and the World Trade Center Saudis? Why we have such evidence of funding from private Saudis going to terrorism and to other terrorist groups? But we have seen an enormous flood of administration, executive branch, congressional media bashing of Saudi Arabia with no attempt to bring back a balance of looking at what our interests really are. I think we run the risk of turning an important ally into an enemy. We are in fact helping Osama Bin Laden reach his objective. We are on course to hand him a major victory in a strategically vital country. The Saudis, despite a slow start, are cooperating with us on terrorism, intelligence, and financial controls. May 12 was a wake up for them. Terrorism came home to them and my friends in the government tell me now that we can't ask for much more in terms of cooperation from them. My friends in the Pentagon tell me that during the run up to the Iraq war and during the Iraq war, every single thing the Pentagon asked for in terms of basic military support the Saudis gave us and cooperated with us and in fact, my friends in the Pentagon say that we couldn't have carried out the attacks in Iraq without the cooperation and support we got from Saudi Arabia. Also, Saudi Arabia has made it a very important part to our energy security and the use of its oil resources, its excess capacity. It is the only country in the

world that has excess capacity; that can turn the oil tap on. That in the run up to the war they started pumping another million barrels a day that kept the price of oil down and, in fact, at a time when everyone expected the price of oil to go up as the war approached, the price of oil actually went down. The Saudis at their own expense filled eight tankers with oil and parked them off our coast here just in case there was some disruption. I think we have to ask the question looking back at 2003 and the recent criticism: do we Americans really want to overthrow the royal family in Saudi Arabia and make Osama Bin Laden the mayor of Mecca? And have 1.2 million Muslims praying five times a day in his direction? Is that really in our interest?

We have been looking back, let me look forward to 2004 and make a few projections as to what we may be looking for as the year ahead comes on us. With regard to terrorism and Al Qaeda, I think we have disrupted, very effectively, much of what they are doing. Looking at it from Al Qaeda's point of view, they feel they must attack, again, to show their viability. One would think that if they are going to do it they are going to do it early in this year. They don't want an attack to occur on Americans just before our elections because we would be so angry we would react against them. But I think that if they are going to do an attack, and I think they must be planning, they must see the reality of the need to do it to show that they are still out there. They will probably do it; I would think the risk is the first four or five months of this year. The danger is still there.

In the Middle East, I think we will see things settling down somewhat, progress will be made in Iraq and other places but it will still remain dangerous. Whether we agreed with going into Iraq or not, the challenge now is to get it right. We have to succeed in Iraq. We have to make it clear to the world that we went in there for the benefit of the Iraqis, to create an Iraqi government that represents its people and becomes a model for the rest of the Middle East. The great danger in this coming year is civil war in Iraq. Many people I have spoken to have returned recently from there saying it is a touch and go question. So the thing to watch for in 2004 is will there be a civil war in Iraq that the United States simply loses control of the country that we occupy?

There is a real danger of an Israeli-Palestinian blowup particularly as the United States is perceived to be paralyzed in an election year that we cannot eject ourselves into an active role between the Israelis and the Palestinians. The settlement activity continues and this gigantic wall pinning in the Palestinians into small reservations is something that I think will lead to a blowup through the year. We may also see a regime change in Saudi Arabia. We may see it in Egypt.

But the key to watch in the Middle East for this next year is Iran. An emerging Irani and American dialogue is developing. The Iranians can really hurt us in Iraq, or they can help us in Iraq. We may see a convergence of interests and an increasing dialogue between them. That is the key to watch in the Middle East.

In Asia, I believe we will probably get through the year without a real crisis. The weapons of mass destruction coming out of North Korea. Despite some American foot-dragging and resistance using the multilateral approach, it does seem to be going forward

and the elements in our administration who favor multilateral approaches to solving North Korea seem to be winning at the moment. I hope they succeed.

We also have to look at elections in Indonesia, the Philippines and Taiwan. Every one of those is going to be a critical test of stability and forward progress in those countries. There will also be opportunities for the bad guys to create real trouble in terms of destroying democracy and eroding democratic progress in those three countries.

In Pakistan, we hope it holds together. We have become far too dependant on the life of a single man, Prime Minister Mir Zarfarrullah. If anything should happen to him, despite progress against terrorism in Pakistan and progress making with relations with India, we are far too dependent. We have to do nothing more than keep our fingers crossed there.

In Latin America, if we just look at recent tensions in the summit of Latin American leaders in Monterey, Mexico this past week. I think one can look at some serious continued social disruptions throughout Latin America, increasing leftist leadership, and in pulling away from the United States over the next year particularly in a time when we are distracted and very busy in other parts of the world.

With Russia and China are the other two big elephants in the international tent. I think most of our issues with these two countries will be economic over the next year. We will have rough patches in our relationship but I don't think project any major change.

In Europe, this is where I think all eyes will be in 2004. I think the major question for 2004, and I will be followed by someone here that can speak much more authoritatively than I can, but I think that the major question that will be answered is: will 2004 be the high water mark for European unity? And will this trend toward unity with frictions between the larger and smaller countries and ten new countries coming into the European Union, will we see the trend toward unity start to recede? Will this failure to reach an agreement on a constitution project people to start drifting away or will they come back to the table? Will NATO suffer an identity crisis as the United States starts to move our traditional bases out of Germany towards the Bulgaria's, the Hungary's, and other East European countries? We'll have to keep an eye out for three big summits this year, the EU summit, the G8 summit, the NATO summit in May and June; I think that is the real thing we have to look for in 2004

Let me conclude by taking a look at where are we right now and where are we going? I want to come back to the "E" word, whether the United States is now an inadvertent or deliberate empire. I think the rest of the world sees us as one. Whether they see us as a benign empire or a malignant one, they see an imperial America reaching out to re-shape the world in its own desires and its own interests. The national security strategy document is still on the table, it has not been superceded. If you haven't read it, I implore you to go read it again. It sees hegemony, military hegemony, as the only way to protect U.S. interests, the grand strategy of transformation using our military power to promote democracy around the world. The real issue for 2004, in American Foreign Policy, is the

tension between a messianic, idealism, wilsonianism versus the more traditional, pragmatic protection of US interests, the responsible use of power

Going back to the deep geopolitical, tectonic level. While I can see dangers looming of imperial overreach in a crusade of global, social engineering. I find a strange irony in the ten years after defeating Communism and its effort to launch a world revolution. Americans are now promoting a worldwide revolution for democracy, for liberty, and freedom. But Americans are promoting a revolution and maybe our 1776 roots are coming back to us but I think we have to be very careful in launching revolutions around the world and see what we really get. I think that a search for security leading to an era, not of Communist, Soviet expansionism, but I think much of the world sees an era of American expansionism versus our traditional American policy based on the pragmatic protection, promotion of our interests, limited use of our power in our own specific national interests. It's quite a difference and I think we'll see in the year 2004, in which direction we are going to go and we can see signs in both directions coming out of the administration.

This leads me to say that I think we have to bare in mind some of the lessons of history. Empires build opposition not gratitude regardless of their intent, regardless of their objective. Other people simply don't like to be told what to do, how to live, how to run their societies and their countries. A second issue of empire - will or can our American democracy bare the costs of empire, cost of lives, costs of dollars? Should we be bogged down in the civil war in Iraq? Are we willing to have the tenacity to stick-to-it-ness and be patience to stand and fight our way through that? Thirdly and most significantly, I think for our society, empires inevitably change the countries that becoming empires from their pre-imperial state to something else. Republican Rome, for example, became a dictatorship as it became an empire. I see the dangers of this not only in our trying to rebalance security and liberty here at home but also in some of the double standards that we preach to the rest of the world. We say bring the war criminals the war crimes court but we are forcing our allies to sign treaties exempting Americans from the jurisdiction of that court. That kind of double standard I think is one that begins to question the impact of our values in an American empire.

So what is required? I think that it is terrific that 2004 is an election year. I hope we have the vigorous and thorough debate on our foreign policy strategy protecting our interests in the world. Some would go back and pose the classic Carter question, rephrase it, are we safer today than we were in the year 2000 at the last election? I would ask a slightly different question to leave with you. Will the United States lead the world through the force of example or through the example of force?