

Effective Mideast Diplomacy in Changing Times

Deborah Jones, Daniel Kurtzer, Robert Pearson, Richard Clarke

00:00

Wendy Chamberlin: Thank you and if I can now welcome the panel up to the table. Richard Clarke, Ambassador Murphy, I mean Ambassador Pearson, Ambassador Jones and Ambassador Dan Kurtzer.

Richard Clarke: Well, no one can substitute for Bill Burns speaking here today to receive his award, we're delighted, however, that he's still a diplomat and still out there trying to get a diplomatic solution for us in Vienna. But we have with us a team of diplomats who between them probably have served, well no we won't say how long.

[laughter]

But a long time. In Turkey, in Israel, in Egypt, throughout the region. Have you all had a chance to look at Bill's ten points? We recommend everybody look at the ten points about diplomacy, the ten guides to diplomacy wrote recently. One of them was accept risk. And Deborah, how do you, when you hear that from Bill, how do you square that with the need to protect embassies? It's a real issue for you personally.

Ambassador Deborah Jones: Hi. First of all, let me just say that I'm the one who took the truck back to Jordan and we would never allow that to happen now, speaking of risk. I mean I went alone, accompanied by two truckloads of muhaberat...

[laughter]

...and a driver named Bashir, and you know it's amazing and we'd never allow that now. I think risk, this is one of the dilemmas we have now, I think it's very frustrating to Foreign Service officers. I think that just as we accept we don't deploy military without risk when we deem their jobs necessary, so I don't understand why we can't deploy diplomats with assuming that there needs to be zero risk if we deem the mission to be necessary.

Richard Clarke: But we see what happens politically back here when risk results in casualties, and so while you're willing personally to run risk, you're running the risk really of the President, you're putting the President at risk if something happens to you. So how is it possible when we have these embassies now that are fortresses, we're moving our embassy in London out to some remote part of the city and literally putting a moat around it, literally. How do you do diplomacy when you're holed up in a fort?

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Ambassador Deborah Jones: Very carefully. First of all, let me say too that because I'm the only active ambassador here and this is on the record, I'm going to have to probably be, well you know me, I'm never contained in what I say, so I'll let it fly and maybe they'll fire me, but you know we were actually able to maneuver pretty effectively in Libya and unfortunately, or fortunately, having been the ambassador in Kuwait as well, the difference in my personal lifestyle is not that marked. I mean you still had to schedule everything in advance, you still went out with large numbers of people, more, and more heavily armed, but I don't think it's the answer per se. I don't think, and at the end what we discovered in Libya was that working out of fortress, working under seize mentality in a sense, surrounded by heavily armed marines, was not the answer because in the end other elements drove us out, which was that while we were not the subject of the attacks, we soon became the object because of the flying rockets and missiles over our embassy, which was located in contested area between two militias that had gone after each other. So you know I think you have to deploy in different ways, electronically as well, I mean in other ways I'm an avid user, unfortunately, of Twitter, I have I think 37 or 38,000 followers right now, that was the way to reach out to Libyans. Although that's not entirely satisfactory and you also get in response you know pictures of severed heads and all kinds of comments that, as I recall working as a staff assistant to Ambassador Murphy, he never had to deal with that [laugh], other things too.

04:23

But I think we have to think in different ways. I really do think that we have to; first we have to decide as a policy, can we operate in places where Vienna just no longer holds, because there's not state security system. You cannot rely on the same protocols that you know were so carefully negotiated in the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries you know to, for nation states. We have to accept the fact that we're dealing in a world where nation states are in competition with other movements and then we have to decide how we're gonna deploy in that environment and what risk we're, how much it's worth to us, like anything else. We drive every day, I tell people every time we get into a car we're at risk, but we know we need to make the trip, it's become acceptable. We need to also look at what we're doing in terms of our engagement with other countries and what we need to do, that doesn't mean taking unnecessarily or foolish risks, but it means that we need to have a better, a clearer sense of what our demands are as a policy, what the framework is and what's important to us.

Richard Clarke: Bob does this mean we have to do diplomacy by Twitter and not go out and meet people in the country that you're accredited to?

Ambassador Robert Pearson: Well you know I think probably diplomacy is one of the most misunderstand words in the American English language. I think in our culture

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most people think diplomacy is the art of saying nothing as long as possible until you reach agreement and then start fighting over what you agreed on. So I think that I would just put a plug in for the hard work of diplomats. It is really important to speak the truth to the people whom you are dealing with. It is really important to be clear about what your interests are and to be clear about what your solutions are, and I like Bill's comment about always look at a problem with the idea of seeking a solution. So I think that for me, when I read his risk statement I wasn't thinking about personal risk, I don't know any diplomat who wouldn't be willing to take a personal risk to get a job done up to the limits of whatever safety is involved. But I was thinking about policy risk and I was thinking about people, like a good friend of mine Ken Quinn, who won two or three awards for dissent in which he challenged the established wisdom of the Department, now there is a risk taker and he's gone out to Iowa and established the World Food Prize, which is essentially the Nobel Prize for agriculture, and he was in Tehran recently talking about the possibility of having agricultural experts from Iran and agricultural experts from the U.S. meeting together. So for me, the risk taking is in the policy and it means trying to be as creative as possible for everybody in this room, the American people to advance our interests and protect what's valuable for us.

07:30

Richard Clarke: Dan you took a lot of risks, both in Cairo and in Israel [laugh], how do you look at this challenge of trying to be a diplomat surrounded by security and how do you look at the aspect of risky policy making?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: Well the reality is that we have a kind of North Star when we travel overseas, and that is U.S. policy and American values. If we can't add value to what our government is trying to think about, then it doesn't pay to take risks. So if we're gonna be risk averse on the policy side, then we should pare down our embassies and do diplomacy from a distance. On the other hand, as both Deborah and Bob have suggested, there's this interaction between the physical risk that you need to take to do your job, but only whether that risk is justified on the basis of the importance of the policy decisions. So you take for example the situation in Egypt the last few years, where unfortunately our embassy I think did act very much in a cautious manner with respect to sending out its political economic officers, it's public diplomacy offers, and I think that ends up handicapping our own policy. I understand why, I understand because the, as you suggested Dick, the second guessing in Washington and then the political maneuvering after god forbid something happens, becomes a politics problem rather than only a policy problem. But that's why we're there and if we're there for a reason that's important to our government and to our interests, then we've gotta do our job and we've gotta send our people out.

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Richard Clarke: Deborah, one of Bill's ten rules is stay ahead of the curve and he talked about two different kinds of things, one which you already alluded to, using Twitter and the social media, but also about being able to understand the new and emerging policy issues, he talked about cyber security as an example, how well do you think the American diplomatic corps does in staying ahead of the curve?

09:56

Ambassador Deborah Jones: I think I have to plead the fifth on that. You know to be frank; I think on an individual basis, the average Foreign Service officer, in my experience, is intellectually curious by nature and is deeply and passionately engaged in the work. And so therefore, it comes naturally to be following up on all of these things, I mean what we read for fun I think is a real snore for a lot of other people. And it's not your book, sorry Dick.

[laughter]

Make a pitch while we're there. But at the same time I also think that what I see right now in the Department is exhaustion, it's exhaustion with chasing the immediate instead of like long term, or I don't even know if it's possible, I think it still should be possible to have long term strategies right now, a framework of diplomacy works best when we work within a framework that we understand what we're aiming, as Daniel, as Dan has said, the load star, you know looking for that and when we become very ad hoc, when everything is so sudden and on the dime and reactive, officers are exhausted just keeping up with producing papers that are never really read or digested, or absorbed or used, because the next crisis has popped up, and I think that is a danger right now that we have. For example, I think that we react to television, I mean my pet peeve is that you know I think when we react to ISIS instead of declaring a vision the way we did during the Cold War, the way to deal, to confront the Soviet Union was not to cower in fear from the missiles, it was to take steps of course, but it was also to articulate a vision about who we are and what we do and to sell that vision to the world and say isn't this the world you want to be part of? Isn't the world of nation states, where human individual rights of religious belief, of political association, of dignity, of all the things that it really comes down to and here I believe in Sigmund Freud, at the end of the day it's all about working and loving with dignity, every single thing we do. And if we can't articulate that vision and make space for us within that to do our jobs then we have a problem, then we're gonna be reactive and then we're worthless.

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: If I may add, one of the earliest lessons that I assimilated in my own career was articulated by Dean Rusk, former Secretary of State, who said that one of the main tools of a diplomat is his or her ears, not just his or her mouth. The problem with the new media, which is I think important in certain

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respects, is that they act as squawk boxes and especially Twitter, where you have a limited number of characters, so it's even limited squawk.

[laughter]

What the value...

Richard Clarke: Limited thought.

[laughter]

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: The value out there is what we hear and what we discern and how we pick up nuance and texture and then we're more informed in order to respond and to talk through a problem. So you know I'm not so much of a dinosaur that I would oppose the use of this new media, but the idea that somehow you can substitute the old fashioned business of actually engaging with people I think is one of the terrible mistakes that we may be making these days.

13:17

Ambassador Robert Pearson: Could I just add a thought to double down on both what Dan and Deborah have said, I served in NATO twice, I was struck by what happens when the U.S. didn't have an idea. People in the world, no matter what they think of the United States, they expect you to have an idea, they expect you to put in on the table and they expect you to take the pummeling they then give you while they're trying to shape it to their interests. But the American idea and the American presence really is critical to diplomacy and if you just imagine that sometimes Americans think that if we don't say anything the event will stop, it doesn't stop. If you say nothing, somebody will fill the vacuum, so the idea, the enthusiasm I will have to say, the willingness to step forward with ideas is an essential part of managing the conversation.

Richard Clarke: Bill also is very frank in some of the things he says because he's on the way out and he can be frank, one of the things is he talks about what Tom Pickering, a great ambassador, I think eight time ambassador, what Tom taught him, which was always write your own instructions, which is great if you can do it. Dan, is that an appropriate thing for an ambassador to try to do?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: A hundred percent. In every one of my big talks with my country team I said that we have not been sent out here to be a post office. Sure we have to deliver instructions, but if we can't add value to those instructions, if we can't modify them to the degree that we think necessary for them to succeed, or to push back against them, if we think that some combination of folks in Washington haven't

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gotten it, then we shouldn't get paid for what we're doing. So there were a lot of times that we would push back for posts, we thought the instructions were silly. We almost, I can't remember more than a couple of occasions where we actually used the talking points that were sent out.

[laughter]

The one time I did was when I got a presidential instruction to go see Prime Minister Sharon and I thought it was prudent to actually use the President's words.

[laughter]

But they were five talking points and then I spoke with the Prime Minister for two hours and those were my talking points trying to explicate and explain. So Tom and Bill are exactly right, you know we're not simply this transmission belt, which would be unnecessary if you only wanted to convey what Washington wrote on paper, you could send it in a Facebook post.

[laughter]

16:10

Richard Clarke: Bob, you mentioned the Ken Quinn and his dissents and one of the things that Bill talks about is the need to speak truth to power, now that's easier said than done, at least in my personal experience. But do you think the Dissent Channel works, number one. Number two, how can you, where are the bounds about speaking the truth to power? How often can you do it, how do you do it without getting cast out into outer darkness?

Ambassador Robert Pearson: That's a great question and I won't even try to begin from the basis of your personal experience.

[laughter]

It is a great question. There's an entire spectrum of how to do this. You can put your thoughts into the words of someone you were talking to, this is what someone authoritative said and that has influence and that's a commonly used device, probably in other diplomatic services as well. So the other thing is you have access to lots of people who Washington hasn't had a chance to talk to and they're hungry to hear that information and you get to interpret it. So there are many, many ways to mold and bash an opinion in Washington that doesn't really confront them, but still changes their minds. I think that the Dissent Channel is most important when there is a prolonged series of events that have been challenged over and over again and

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there's a simple refusal to face it. And in that case I think that the Dissent Channel really does work and if it happens to resonate with a broader opinion in the Department, then it begins to have a grip. Every one of those cables has to be personally read by the Secretary and it has to be answered and responded to by the Department, so I think it's a great device and it isn't a cure-all, but it does give every foreign service office the freedom to think that if he or she has to, here's the cable I have to send to Washington.

18:26

Richard Clarke: Dan?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: It's also not a necessarily a career killer, although you have to go in with the expectation that it may not turn things around overnight. I actually did use the Dissent Channel in the 1980s, of course nothing happened as a result of it, but five years later the policy had moved along, probably not as a result of what I wrote, but the collective wisdom had begun to change and it probably had some small impact in that large flow of policy. So it's very important that it be there, I think the people writing dissent messages have to temper their enthusiasm that they're going to be heroic changers of policy, but that should not stop them from contributing to the policy debate.

Male Moderator: Deborah, I know you've been speaking truth to power, any tips?

Ambassador Deborah Jones: No that's why in in Libya.

[laughter]

Don't follow the, don't do this at home. You know just try to have your facts in order. I mean I think this follows on what Dan has said too and I think what Bob has said, that you know if you're going to speak truth to power, you better be certain that what you're saying has its basis in hard observation and fact that at the end of the day you're gonna come out with people saying oh yeah you were right, I mean otherwise it's, you can end up in Libya.

[laughter]

Richard Clarke: Our friend, the Tunisian Ambassador is here and he was talking at lunch that now one of the great changes that's taking place in Tunisia, little observed I think, is that all Tunisian ambassadors are now career officers.

[applause]

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So I take it you think that's a good idea, Dan? The larger question is how do you deal, when you're a career officer and you're gonna serve under Republicans and Democrats and you know that, how do you deal with partisan politics? People in the White House who are partisan and people who are in the State Department, who are just there for a couple of years and how do you deal with partisan ambassadors?

20:49

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: Look it would be naïve to believe that we can somehow divorce our foreign service and our diplomacy from the reality of politics. We may be at a moment when the partisanship in Washington is peaking, but the reality is that we are agents of a political system. So I'm not of this view that there's some pristine definition of diplomacy that's divorced from the reality of life. My problem is twofold; number one, there is a perception, or maybe I should use a stronger word, there is a sense of denigration of the idea of professional diplomacy, and the idea that anybody can be do it as long as you've contributed a certain amount of money to the government. I was once, to the President, I'm sorry. I was once interviewed by a congressional staff committee looking at this issue and I suggested that if a real estate developer from Florida had the requisite skills to be an ambassador, then as I was about to become an ambassador I had the requisite skills to take over that person's business and we could just switch for a few years.

[laughter]

And that ended my discussion with the house committee members. So problem number one is the denigration of the idea that there's something about professional diplomacy. And secondly, if you look at the combination of what Bill has said and what others have written recently, Marc Grossman, Nick Burns, I've written about it myself, we just don't invest in, even in our professional ranks, training among our diplomats is so poor. Not that the Foreign Service Institute is poor, but unlike the military, we don't attach training to every one of our assignments, which we should. The skills with which we're sending our folks out to post, language skills in particular, are not up to speed, they're simply faulty. So you have this combination of not taking professional diplomacy seriously, not really preparing our diplomats to the job, and then at the end of the day you can have a situation where in 2008, President of the United States, George W. Bush, called diplomacy a form of appeasement, which is absolutely absurd. And if you have that coming from the top, what kind of message does that send through both the political system, but also among the professional ranks of our diplomats?

Richard Clarke: Yeah President Bush wasn't good with polysyllabic words.

[laughter]

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How do you deal with the partisan, you were the Executive Secretary of the State Department, as Executive Secretary you were sort of in the cockpit of the Department and hit by all sorts of turbulent winds from the White House and the Hill and the partisan watchdogs in the State Department, how did you deal with?

23:53

Ambassador Robert Pearson: Well I think that I was, and I think every diplomat would be, I don't think there was anything special about what I was doing, but I think that it's a great way to, just as if you were in a foreign country to be honest with you, you're interpreting what someone's says to you, you're trying to measure how much of that demand is actually real and how much of it is bluff. You're trying to measure the bureaucratic game and whether somebody's just trying to do what we used to call horizontal escalation, which is to complicate the problem so badly that no solution could possibly appear, and then you have a chance to kind of assimilate that and advise people. And it was also very important, for me I think, to let everybody have their say, it didn't mean that you agreed with them, but if you exclude somebody, if you tell them they can't write a paper, then you've made an enemy out of them, so let them have their say, give them the microphone, but manage the problem. So I can't think of, of course I worked for Jim Baker and his relationship with the President was so close there weren't many major issues, but I also worked for George Shultz. So I know that there were times when there were significant differences between the State Department and the Defense Department and the White House, and in those cases I think it was important to be able to be a good scout, be a good intelligence officer, and be able to report exactly what was going on, why people felt the way they did and that would, I hope maybe a little bit, influence the policy process.

Richard Clarke: You mentioned the White House and Bill mentioned the White House and the National Security Council in his comments, and I sense this sort of feeling of us versus them between the NSC and the State Department, and yet the last time I looked most of the NSC staff were State Department officers. And after all, you know we're all working, when we work in the government we're all working for that president. Dan, you dealt with this tension a lot, is there a good way to make sure the State Department and the White House operate more closely together than perhaps they are now?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: Well I think as Bob suggested, we traveled a lot together during those Baker years, when you had a Secretary of State and a president who were both close friends, but also like minded with respect to priorities, and you had a National Security Advisor who clearly understood that part of his role was to make sure that there wasn't distance between the national security agencies.

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Now Brent Scowcroft, who was the National Security Advisor at the time, also understood that he didn't wanna homogenize policy so there was always healthy debate within the ranks, but very few of these petty squabbles about you know who's running the policy or trying to exclude one or the other agencies from involvement. I remember once on a trip with the Secretary, there was a minor squabble because a National Security Council official had put his own little note on top of a Baker memo to the President that disagreed with Baker.

27:13

Richard Clarke: It wasn't me, was it?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: No, no, no.

[laughter]

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: I wouldn't have used that example.

[laughter]

And that person's not in the audience today. And Baker reacted immediately. Now you would think, what difference does it make, it's the Secretary of State communicating to the President, the President's not really going to mind if there's a memo on top, but Baker wanted to establish the principle that communications among principals, in that case not impeded by staff, but at the same time sending a message that it's okay to have divergent views. We disagreed with Baker often during the shuttles leading up to Madrid and as a, one of the strongest Secretaries of State that we've had in a long time, he was open to that kind of a discussion, as Bob said, as long as you had your facts right and you were able to make your case, sometimes he even changed his mind.

Richard Clarke: Well Deborah you can't always have a Secretary of State who is the President's longtime, lifelong best friend, as Jim Baker and George Bush were, do you have any, I know we're getting into a little sensitive area here for you since you're still on active duty, but any thoughts about how the White House and the State Department can row in the same direction?

Ambassador Deborah Jones: You know Dick I'm thinking where can they send me beyond Libya that's gonna...

[laughter]

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...before I answer that question. Actually you know I think that it's probably best I don't say lot here, but what the hell.

[laughter]

You know we actually, one of the reasons I was a little bit late here was I was actually with NSC staff who had come over to the Department to talk. And we've really, I think so much of it depends on your individual relationships, but again, so much has changed since we were younger, or since in the old days, the number of PCs and DCs and how often the President actually gets involved in stuff, I mean it's really different, there's a proliferation of meetings that ...

29:19

Richard Clarke: It's out of control.

Ambassador Deborah Jones: ...it's, yes you've said it and I would agree with that. And I think that somehow if we are able to walk back what will improve that is to get back to more of the policy coordination at the senior cabinet level, which I don't see, maybe it's happening, but I don't think, and sorry my public affairs guy is back there feinting right now, but...

[laughter]

Don't worry [laughs]. But I don't see that and I don't know if it's because people are reacting against so much, so quickly, so immediately to everything that we don't seem to have the same kind of, if we ever did, I think we did though, I think we used to do a better job of having people sit down, talk to each other and actually work things out. And you know and as for cooperation, I mean you know that's how I got to know you as cooperating very closely on a project in a Gulf country that we were you know (inaudible 30:08) on. But I will tell you on the other hand, I was subsequently interviewed for a job at the NSC by a political appointee, although who had worked in the State Department, and the question was put to me, do you think that taking this position will have an impact with your colleagues on your ability to become an ambassador at some point, or your promotions in the State Department? And I was so put off by that question and I responded, I said I think the real issue here is do you trust me? I said I'm a civil servant, I work for the U.S. government, you know there's another word for that too, talking of the oldest paid professions, but I'm were you know close in that on politics sometimes, but you know and I think that's really though what's needed. I get back to the point, we need a...if you have a structure that is agreed to and a coherent policy base, it makes it better for everyone, easier.

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Richard Clarke: So final thoughts, Bob, are you optimistic? One of Bill's ten rules is be optimist, are you optimistic about the future of American diplomacy?

Ambassador Robert Pearson: You better be optimistic if you're in this business really because it's the only way to come up with a better answer than the one you heard yesterday. So I am, I will say that a point Dan made is very important, and that is that diplomacy and diplomats need resources, they need the money for training, they need the money for staffing. When I was Director General of the Foreign Service I found that in the entire consular district of Calcutta, at that time, we had one political officer to take care of a population of 290 million people, okay? We had six political and economic officers to take care of 140 million people in Nigeria. We have to be where our clients are, 95% of American customers in business live overseas, so diplomacy builds the framework for that all to happen successfully and it can't work unless we have the resources and the people to do the job.

32:15

Richard Clarke: Thank you. Deborah, optimism?

Ambassador Deborah Jones: It's a professional defect, absolutely.

[laughter]

Yeah I think so, but I agree with what Bob is saying, I mean you know in our...we don't have the redundancy of the military for the training, we need greater redundancy, we need staffing, we need to have that flexibility and the problem is that there's not an immediate return on the investment in us, we're maintenance. You know the military is operations, whether you know maintenance just is, is actually what it's all about for civilization, maintenance, it's maintenance, it's education, it's infrastructure, it's whatever. We do maintenance, it's not sexy, it's necessary, we need to do a better job of selling ourselves.

Richard Clarke: Dan?

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: You know having spent 40 years trying to work the Arab, Israeli peace process, I'm either an optimist or I'm absolutely insane.

[laughter]

The reality is at 2:00 in the afternoon I'm at the tipping point, because I start every day optimist that we can change the world and make it a better place, you go to sleep a little pessimistic and then you wake up the next day and go back at it.

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Richard Clarke: Yeah when you're in the State Department at 8:00 at night clearing cables it's hard to be optimistic. Let's open it up for a few questions from the audience and particularly if there are any students or interns here, they get first dibs, anybody? Just stand up where you are and we'll recognize you. Yes sir, we'll get a mic coming over to you.

33:47

John Greenfield: Hi, John Greenfield, Seattle U Law School. You know it just occurred to me that a lot of the diplomacy is all necessarily sort of formalized through the State Department, I guess that makes a lot of sense for a lot of reasons, but it was just occurring to me that you know in the Iraq a lot of operation, a lot of things were subcontracted out and I was just wondering how, does that ever happen with diplomacy ever? Or is all just sort of consolidated still with you know in the State Department?

Richard Clarke: Well there's several ways to look at the question. The State Department doesn't really have a monopoly, even if our diplomatic game plan were implemented, the State Department would not necessarily have a monopoly on diplomacy. You have; for example, outside of government you've got tracks one through nine...

[laughter]

...of alternative forms of diplomatic interaction. People to people activities, informal government to nongovernment channels, NGOs, and all of them contribute to the diplomatic process. So I think that part of the question is no the State Department doesn't control all diplomacy, but also doesn't necessarily subcontract it. The other, I'd say flipside of the question is what we've seen in recent years is what I call the militarization of our diplomacy, that traditional functions which state or related agencies, AID or what used to be USIA, used to do were now being handled by our military. And interestingly our military didn't wanna do it and our Defense Secretaries kept saying they didn't wanna do it, but back to resources, with the State Department being underfunded and in some cases mistrusted, the State Department was not given the mandate to do it. So you have to reorient even those places where state is the leading agency and work out better partnerships between what we ask our military to do, what we ask our assistance agencies to do, our trade agencies to do, and our diplomats to do as well.

Richard Clarke: Other questions from anyone? Yes here, right in the middle.

Kim Ghattas: Kim Ghattas from the BBC. I wanted to ask Ambassador Jones a question about you know what happened to the way American diplomats have to

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operate in the world? You were describing that experience of driving the truck back and saying you know this would never happen anymore today. Between that moment and the attack in Benghazi and in the middle the marine barrack bombing in Beirut, what happened? Has the world just become so much more dangerous, or is it that the U.S. has become more squeamish about the danger of doing diplomacy? And particularly if you could reflect, if possible, with the position that you do still have within the Administration, on how those attacks against diplomats are perceived? I mean 240 marines were killed in Beirut and it didn't seem to cause the same diplomatic, political uproar in Washington that we saw with the Benghazi attacks.

37:26

Richard Clarke: That's not my memory of what happened after the Beirut bombing, but I was involved in that and my memory's a little different than the questioner's, but Deborah?

Ambassador Deborah Jones: Let me just thank you for that easy question, Kim, as always. First of all let me say about the change, let me give you another anecdote and if Ted Kattouf is here, he'll remember this, I'm about to quote him. We were in Baghdad during that period during what they called the (inaudible 37:48), the war of the rocket, the Scud missiles going back and forth between Baghdad and Tehran and Ted was the Deputy Principal Officer at the time and all of the airlines except for Air France and Iraqi Air had ceased flying and our windows were being shattered and the buildings shaking every morning when the Scuds fell, but we knew it was in a kind of a defined area, and Ted called the Department of State and he talked, I think it was to, I don't wanna say, but I think it was Joe Melrose in (inaudible 38:18) at the time, and said you know look Joe you know this has happened, the airlines have stopped and we're being shelled here kind of and things are happening, do you think we could get a little danger pay for our diplomats and Joe said well has anyone been hurt yet?

[laughter]

And this was the old NEA, but I do think that were changes that began with the marine, there was a huge change in the way we built our embassies, began to structure our embassies and these things evolved over time with different attacks. I think one of the big changes for many of us was when we actually segregated our Foreign Service national employees within the embassies from the rest of the embassy, moved us into other sections, divided and segregated. So there were changes that weren't always so apparent, I think to the outside world and I can let Dick probably comment on the White House, on the view you know from a more senior level than I had at the time, but we could certainly see the changes. I just think that you know with...look there's political opportunism as well as, there's real concern for the safety, but frankly all of us have known of colleagues who've been

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killed and there was never an uproar. So I think you have to, some of this is situational, some of it's personality driven, but by and large I would say that the trend has been, in the three decades that I've been in this business, actually increasing caution and increasing effort to protect the individuals and increasing constraints on them, with increasing demands also on our diplomatic security, which I think are, you know they can't meet the requirements of them to give us no risk, risk free engagement in the world. And as we try to tell our military friends, you know they believe in force protection until they're deployed and they're deployed with weapons and all kinds of security, you know to be effective we must be deployed. I mean we are not doing our jobs unless we're deployed and I think that's just the dilemma, but I'll let you add to that if anyone else wants to.

40:24

Richard Clarke: Well I think you're absolutely right, but the issue that no matter what party is in power, the other party in Washington looks for political opportunity and political advantage. And I experienced this working for Republicans who thought I was a Democrat and Democrats who thought I was a Republican, it's hard to be a career officer. One last question. Yes sir? Ambassador.

Mohamed Alhussaini: Mohamed Alhussaini. It's very difficult really for an ambassador not active in duty to ask a question, but I will. For Ambassador Kurtzer, you worked in a very, in two very interesting posts really for any diplomat, in Israel and Egypt. While you were there did your values as a person conflicted with the policies of your government and vis a vis Israel or vis a vis the Palestinians or in Egypt. Like for example in Israel the way the Palestinians, the occupiers and in Egypt regarding the Egyptian attitude vis a vis the normalization of Israel? Thank you.

Ambassador Daniel Kurtzer: Look serving in the two countries you had to be schizophrenic and therefore there was never a problem.

[laughter]

Sure you know I served in Egypt in the late '90s into the early 2000s and then moved over to Israel almost directly during a period of intense internal conflict, it was the Second Palestinian Intifada. And the debates within our government, whether with respect to Egypt, which was in a milder period in that time, but still questions relating to whether or not Egypt was going to open up into a more pluralist system and how the Egyptian economy would, we have Shafik Gabr here, with whom I worked very closely in that period, with the Gore-Mubarak economic partnership. Sure you always have crisis of both conscience, but also of policy debate with Washington. They were certainly in many respects much more intense in Israel

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where, and especially after 9/11, where our own societal views about terrorism ended up having our Administration and much of our population, associate more with Israel's problems that they were facing with terrorism, when in fact those problems were not necessarily the same. When you had terrorism is terrorism, but you also had an effort on the part of the Palestinians to come out from under occupation and you had a long negotiating history and some of that got lost in the shuffle of defining terrorism as being the same in both places. But it goes back to the earlier discussion, it's part of the way I think the three of us have defined our jobs, or two of us in the past and one currently, in that you're not, you're not simply an agent of messages coming out from Washington, you are also potentially an agent of change, both with respect to policy and with respect to what you do on the ground and that kind of keeps the schizophrenia under control.

43:51

Richard Clarke: Thanks and I think we'll end on that note and end optimistic, as Bill suggested. Optimistic that we have Foreign Service and a diplomatic corps that can produce people like Bill Burns and Dick Murphy and our three guests up here on the stage. Thank you very much.

[applause]

44:14 Discussion ends