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High Level Brainstorming Session on
**“Responsible Governance, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
for Progress and Sustainable Development”**

Remarks by Ravi Batra

Thank you, A/S Cihan Sultanoglu,

Minister Valentin Rybakov, Minister Yerzhan Ashikbayev, President Peter Thompson, President
of EcoSoc Shava, Excellencies all, Ladies & Gentlemen,

Permit me a moment of personal privilege - Today, in Astana, Kazakhstan, our dear friend Kairat Abdhakmanov, foreign minister of Kazakhstan is hosting the Syria Talks - which included an invitation to the United States to participate. This gives me and Amb. Andrei Dapkiunas something wonderful to toast at our next lunch. I am also delighted that Kairat Umarov, a world class diplomat, like his namesake predecessor, and a man with an endearing soul has become PR and will assist the all-powerful Security Council to be even better - in its vital task to do good, and not make things worse. Lastly, I salute the Permanent Missions of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Suriname for their leadership in convening this High Level brainstorming discussion with UNDP. Finally, I, for one, despite being a Democrat, am happy Donald Trump was elected president, as the status quo was becoming un-tenable, with social unrest and debt explosion killing the American Dream softly. Moreover, I look forward to Gov. Nikki Haley being confirmed as our ambassador to the United Nations, so that we don't honor a policy in the Security Council, as we did on December 23rd, knowing that the Policy is changing less than a month later. I congratulate President Abbas of Palestine for not attending the Paris Conference on January 15th, as despite its good intentions, it was now counterproductive to achieving a 2-State Solution - something every nation wants and the Palestinian people deserve.

Let me also give a disclaimer up-front: Hiroshima, Chernobyl and Fukushima (with its 300 tons of radioactive water daily entering the Pacific ocean) raise an issue in my mind: would I like more of them, more often? The unambiguous answer, I think for all of us is: NO, not ever!

Today's Topic - **Responsible Governance, Disarmament and Non-Proliferation for Progress and Sustainable Development** - is being ably addressed by distinguished speakers, and listening to them informs my judgment. However, I wish to focus on Responsible Governance, and merely give a hat-tip to Disarmament and Non-Proliferation, which I admit are critical pathways for



Progress and Sustainable Development.

The mother of all things good and bad, let alone ugly, is Governance. It has remained a core goal achieved and lost, repeatedly, even when the best governance was discovered. Take your pick in human history when governance was the best. Some think it was Louis the 14th; for some others, the Pharaohs of Egypt, Genghis Khan, Alexander the Great, King Solomon, Ashoka the Great, Akbar the Great, King Saladin, the Ming Dynasty, the Ottoman, Persian and British Empires or the Shogun Era of Japan. **My favorites, however, are the aggregate of presidents George Washington - for he gave up power willingly to allow a young republic to mature, and Abraham Lincoln, who in his Gettysburg Address gave the best recipe for governance.** But, before I dig deeper, let me mention just one really bad government of recent vintage: Adolf Hitler, who caused “bad” and “evil” to be enshrined as the Nuremberg Laws, let alone the Holocaust.

To make Governance better, is to peel back this Governance-onion, for it contains every human characteristic: **ego; ambition; power; wealth; knowledge and faith.** If you focus, you will discover each of those attributes are Good; they are also Bad; and with extreme abuse, really Ugly. This leads to but one conclusion: We The People - are capable of being Good, Bad or Ugly. Hence, governance must focus on, and militate against, human motives AND human vices. The only such systemic effort - that absorbed humanity’s weaknesses and promoted humanity’s strength - was and is the United States Constitution’s Separated Powers regime that seeks to harness “enlightened self-interest” to maximize the “public good” to “form a more perfect union.”

Counterbalance.

Yet, Statecraft, the methodology of governance, seems to make a core mistake: use of Counter-Balance as a tool to control or affect the outcome of a given challenge. Its great on a chessboard, where the worst result is merely to lose a game. In real life, however, the very principle of Counter-Balance is fatally flawed as it produces a loser every time, sometimes by Boomerang! One can look recently to events in Syria, Lybia, and Iraq, let alone Afghanistan - which effected both the then-Soviets and us, the United States to this day. Let me gloss over the fine and critical nuance differences in a Revolutionary or Freedom Fighter, as it is the Terrorist that most of us can agree to defeat - as sovereignty & public safety is a casualty.

Globalization.

If the purpose of Governance is world or regional domination, then lets us continue as we are. If, however, governance is to better permit the human family to co-exist peacefully and securely in our lives, liberties and properties, then we are doing it wrong. Every nation or region of the world has a social and cultural eco-system, which when disturbed by practices foreign to it, causes reactions beyond the expected. Globalization, while applying Ricardo’s Comparative Advantage, is also disturbing national identities given our digital connectivity that has turned the



earth flat and Galileo wrong metaphorically - as in our Information Age there are no shadows and no secrets. Never mind “hacking,” which seems benign if data was merely copied, and not altered or added-to as in real “cyber-war.” Making it infinitely worse - politicians have bypassed their borders and traditional international media, as a truth-filter, to talk directly and unfiltered to the people of every nation, well beyond their own border, such that “true news” and “fake news” can be politician-created and publically consumed, resulting in national borders being altered - as in Crimea.

Population explosion.

For people to become successful Leaders they must have ego and ambition driving them, among other traits. Yet, it is always unbridled ego and ambition that ruins success into failure - with human misery commensurate with how big the Leader was. The problem is now magnified even as population is at an all-time high, especially with scientists predicting human life to rise dramatically over the next 100 years to perhaps an average age of 120. Just 200 years ago, life expectancy was merely 40 years of age.

In this condensed world, with neighbors on top of neighbors, with their individual rights irritating each other - this is the 21st Century - which caused Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev to issue his 21st Century Manifesto, which during an Inter-Faith event organized by Amb. Kairat Umarov I characterized as “War on War.”

State-sponsored War: Trial By Combat.

Three days ago we celebrated the Trump presidency, as he put the world on notice that the sole superpower was going to put “America First” and revisit how we define “enemies” and “friends.” Secretary of State-nominee Rex Tillerson in his confirmation hearing said it clearly: sometimes we will partner on an issue with friends and other times with enemies to achieve our goals. There was even a clear statement as to the 9-Dashes in the South China Sea. To paraphrase John Lennon - just imagine if the United States, Russia and China, let alone with additional allies Japan, Germany, India, England, and France were to dance together, cheek-to-cheek, or in a group dance. It would put the marketplace of state-sponsored dissension and strife to take a holiday, if not close down. Even R2P, with lofty and self-laudatory imperative, is merely “majority rule” - or “might is right” - the very definition of a successful war. I am no pacifist, as I remain in favor of “noble wars” - such as in WWII to defeat fascism. But, compare, how humanity has progressed on a civilian level to solve disputes: almost 500 years ago we replaced “Trial by Combat” with “trial by jury.” Maybe, its time to bring state-sponsored Wars to act like “trial by jury” to minimize humanity’s suffering from their Leaders’ collective folly. That would really be the real “war on war.”

I, for one, am very hopeful. The established order has been disrupted by a popular uprising - which President Trump gives a clear and loud voice to - even as he nominates establishment-steady and superb cabinet members.



Maybe, like Trump's supporters, we should take ourselves seriously, but not literally. This creates - flexibility; and flexibility is the vital vehicle of wise governance as it allows one to pullout of a mistake, before it's a tragedy.

Conclusion.

I suggest that: 1. Counter-balance as a tool of statecraft be banned; 2. Globalization be done carefully so as to respect local culture; 3. Population explosion makes remedial change urgent and necessary; and 4. State-sponsored wars be replaced by something similar to "trial by jury," and free up military budgets to be used to support Sustainable Development Goals, especially, SDG 16 - as PGA Peter Thompson so eloquently suggested.

Thank you.

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