

## **Remarks by Ambassador Betty King**

*U.S. Ambassador to the UN*

*and Other International Organizations*



*An Address*

*at the Opening of the*

***Global Challenges Forum***

*U.S. Mission Geneva, Switzerland*

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## Transcription of Ambassador King's speech

Welcome to Geneva and the U.S. Mission. As the co-host of this event with the University of Geneva, I am very pleased all of you have taken time out of your busy schedules to participate in this inaugural planning session of the Global Challenges Forum. The U.S. Mission welcomes the opportunity to be a co-host for this important event and appreciates the efforts of the Naval Postgraduate School and the Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Organization to make this event a reality. My formal co-sponsor, University of Geneva Rector Jean-Dominique Vassalli, will formally welcome you at the reception this evening.

This is the second meeting of the Global Challenges Forum at the U.S. Mission, the first having taken place a little over a year ago in September 2009. At second meetings, which I believe are always important because they often determine how effectively an initiative can or will be followed up, the co-organizers of the Global Challenges Forum have set the goal of shaping the contours of a future institutional membership organization that will address the emerging global challenges of the twenty-first century.

This is truly an ambitious and laudable task. It is also an important one because it seeks to address new global security challenges in a new way.

Today, in addition to traditional security challenges such as wars between states, nuclear proliferation and others, we are facing a range of new challenges to global security, new threats, such as cyber security and the protection of critical infrastructure, energy security, and human and economic security. Your task, as I understand it, is to devise new ways to address these challenges more effectively.

The two decades since the end of the Cold War have been marked by both the promise and perils of change. The number of peaceful democracies has expanded; the specter of nuclear war has diminished; the global economy has grown; commerce has stitched the fate of nations together; and more individuals can determine their own destiny.

Yet these advances have been accompanied by persistent problems. Wars over ideology have given way to wars over religious, ethnic, and tribal identity; nuclear dangers have proliferated; inequality and economic instability have intensified; damage to our environment, food insecurity, and dangers to public health are increasingly shared; and the same tools that empower individuals to build enable them to destroy.

Today, we need to be clear-eyed about the strengths and shortcomings of the international institutions that were developed to deal with the challenges of an earlier time and the shortage of political will that has at times stymied the enforcement of international norms. We must focus our efforts on strengthening international institutions and galvanizing the collective action that can serve common interests such as combating violent extremism; stopping the spread of nuclear weapons and securing nuclear materials; achieving balanced and sustainable economic growth; and forging cooperative solutions to the threat of climate change, armed conflict, and pandemic disease.

The starting point for that collective action is engagement, not just with other countries but with non-government actors. This has been a priority for President Obama from day one, and it continues to be a hallmark of this administration. While a cornerstone of this engagement is the relationship between the United States and our close friends and allies in Europe, Asia, the Americas, and the Middle East—ties which are rooted in shared interests and shared values, and which serve our mutual security and the broader security and prosperity of the world, we know this is not enough.

Therefore, we are also working to build deeper and more effective partnerships with other key centers of influence—including China, India, and Russia, as well as increasingly influential nations such as Brazil, South Africa, and Indonesia—so that we can cooperate on issues of bilateral and global concern, with the recognition that power, in an interconnected world, is no longer a zero sum game.

This engagement will underpin our commitment to an international order based upon rights and responsibilities. Rules of the road must be followed, and there must be consequences for those nations that break the rules—whether they are nonproliferation obligations, trade agreements, or human rights commitments.

But in the 21st century we also recognize that governments alone cannot solve all of these problems. We must work broadly, with the academic community, with civil society, with the private sector, and with the media, to come up with comprehensive and complex approaches to our most difficult challenges.

Speaking for the United States, I can say we have made the pursuit of engagement among peoples—not just governments—around the world a priority; we are making a sustained effort to engage civil society and citizens to facilitate increased connections among the American people and peoples around the world—through efforts ranging from public service and educational exchanges, to increased commerce and private sector partnerships, to international conferences and initiatives such as this one.

This initiative, the Global Challenges Forum, is a very good example of this and offers the potential to yield substantive international cooperation and international platforms to address new global challenges. I want to thank you all again for taking the time to participate this week, and I want to wish you all the best over the coming two days of what I expect will be some hard work.

With that, I will leave you and let you begin.