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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

The Pearson Global Forum

Part III. Consequences of a Breakdown in Social Order

Making Peace and Restoring and Strengthening the Social Order featuring George J. Mitchell, Former U.S. Senator and Inaugural U.S. Special Envoy for Northern Ireland, in conversation with Steve Edwards, VP and Chief Content Officer of WBEZ

ROBERT ZIMMER: Good afternoon. For those of you who don't know me, I'm Bob Zimmer, I'm president of the University of Chicago and our next speaker has a distinguished and in fact, not just distinguished, but I would say remarkable record of public service, someone I had the privilege of meeting recently at the conference in Belfast on a global conflict and human impact conflict. Senator George J. Mitchell served as US Senator from Maine from 1890 until 1995, during which time, he also, for part of that time, served the Senate Majority Leader. After this, he was appointed by President Bill Clinton as the inaugural United States Special Envoy for Northern Ireland. He chaired the peace talks that led to the Belfast Good Friday agreement in 1998, an agreement that has endured for 20 years. For this work, he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Truman Institute Peace Prize, and the United Nations UNESCO Peace Prize. In 2000 and 2001, he served as chairman of an international fact finding committee on violence in the Middle East at the request of President Clinton, Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Chairman Yassir Arafat, and from 2009 until 2011, he was the special envoy for Middle East peace, appointed by President Barack Obama.

Among the many appointments he's held in his career, he's served as the chancellor of Queens University Belfast, the inaugural chairman of the international crisis group, president of the economic club of Washington as a senior fellow and senior research scholar at Columbia University Center for International Conflict Resolution and is currently an honorary chair of the World Justice Project. In 2016, Queens University Belfast launched an interdisciplinary global research institute dedicated to research on peace and conflict named the Senator George J. Mitchell Institute for Global Peace, Security and Justice in his honor and this institute was, of course, the partner for the Pearson Institute at the conference I mentioned in Belfast. Senator Mitchell's had a remarkable career, he's a remarkable human being, the University of Chicago is honored to welcome him to the inaugural Pearson Global forum. Please join me in welcoming him to the stage.

GEORGE MITCHELL: Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen, for your warm reception and for your presence here today. My thanks to President Zimmer for his kind introduction. It's a pleasure, really an honor for me to participate in this program here at the University of Chicago, one of the great institutions of higher education in the world, and the Pearson Institute, as well. We, in Maine, are developing an increasing admiration for the University of Chicago. In the past few years, two of our finest small colleges have chosen, as their presidents, people from this university. David Green is now the President of Colby College and Clay Rose is the President of Bowdoin College, and I want to report to



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

President Zimmer and all of you, they're both doing a great job and are highly respected in their communities and all across our state.

I do speak often, so often that, for me, the highlight of any program, including this one, is the introduction and so I'm very grateful to President Zimmer for giving me such a kind introduction. It's always nice to hear people say good things about you, particularly in front of a group of strangers who don't really know me. The risk, of course, is that if you hear that stuff often enough you begin to believe it and that's a very dangerous thing.

So, I like to begin with a story about introductions and an occasion on which I was brought back down to earth. Over a span of five years, I chaired three separate sets of negotiations in Northern Ireland. When they were completed, I returned to my home in Maine and wrote a book about my experience. When the book was published, I traveled the country doing book promotion events. In that process, I received a very large number of invitations and discovered the interesting fact that, in the United States, there are more Irish-American organizations than there are Irish-Americans and every single one of them invited me to come. I couldn't go to all, but I went to as many as I could and as I traveled the country, speaking to these Irish-American groups, they developed among them an informal competition as to who could give the longest, most fantastic, frequently quite ridiculous, introductions of me.

The proper reaction, of course, would have been for me to show some humility, to ask them please, to keep it short, but I had an improper reaction. I loved it, I encouraged them, I scolded them when they left something out. I had one Irish-American club, a guy got up and for 35 minutes, read off everything that I'd ever done in my life. It was very interesting to me because I'd not been aware of many of my exploits until he described them, but when he finished, I scolded him for leaving out the fact that I received an award in my junior year in high school.

So by the time I got to the final stop on this tour, it was in Stamford, Connecticut, the Irish-American Society there, I was so overly impressed with myself that I had a hard time squeezing my head through the front door. When I get in, the first person I encounter was an elderly woman who rushed up to me, very nervous and excited, shook my hand vigorously, spent several minutes praising me and then she said "I don't live anywhere near here. I drove three hours across the whole state of Connecticut just to please ask you, will you autograph my poster?", and she handed me a poster with a big photograph on it and a pen. I looked at it, I said "I'll be very happy to autograph your poster, but before I do, I think there's something I should tell you". She said "What is it?". I said "I'm not Henry Kissinger". It was a picture of Kissinger. She was taken aback, she said "Well, you're not, but who are you, anyway?". And when I told her she said "Why that's just terrible. I drove three hours to meet a great man named Kissinger and all I've got is a nobody like you". I told her "I'm sorry you feel so bad. I wish there was something I could do to make you feel better". For a moment she thought and then she said "Well there is", and when I asked what it was she leaned forward, I leaned forward, we were in a conspiratorial crouch, and she whispered "Nobody will ever know the difference". She said "Would you mind signing Henry Kissinger's name to my poster?" And so I did and it's hanging today on her living room wall in



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Eastern Connecticut, a daily reminder to me to enjoy these kind comments by nice people like President Zimmer, but don't take them too seriously and neither should you.

Well, I want to say a few words today before we go to a question/answer period. On the subject of Northern Ireland, and on lessons for we Americans. It was 20 years ago this year that the government of the United Kingdom and the government of Ireland had eight Northern Ireland political parties added to the Good Friday agreement. When I announced the agreement, I described it as an historic achievement, which it was, but I also said on that day that, by itself, the agreement did not guarantee peace or stability or reconciliation. It merely made them possible, but achieving and sustaining those lofty goals would require of future leaders, the vision and courage that the leaders of Northern Ireland, UK and Ireland demonstrated in 1998. Today, I hope that the current leaders of Northern Ireland, of Ireland, of the United Kingdom and of the European Union as they reflect on their responsibilities, will look back 20 years to what their predecessors did. Much has been said and written about the long and difficult road that led to the agreement. Many have deservedly received credit for their roles, but ultimately, the real heroes of the agreement were the people of Northern Ireland and their political leaders. The people supported the effort to achieve the agreement and afterward, they voted overwhelmingly to ratify it. Their political leaders, in difficult, indeed very dangerous circumstances, after lifetimes spent in conflict summoned extraordinary courage and vision, often at great risk to themselves, their families, their political careers. Today all across the western world it's fashionable to demean, to insult, to ridicule political leaders and certainly, much of it is well deserved, but we don't pay enough attention or pay tribute to those political leaders who do dare greatly and succeed. In Northern Ireland, these were ordinary men and women, the equivalent of what would be our state legislatures, but after 700 days of effort and failure, they joined in one day of success and they changed the course of history.

Today I want to talk about what lessons we Americans can learn from our experience in Northern Ireland. The United States played an important role. Thanks to the courageous decision by President Clinton to get involved in a conflict which every previous President had avoided. Not with troops or bullets or bombs or missiles or large amounts of money. It was rather through political and moral support, through an unwavering dedication to the principle that political differences should be resolved through democratic and peaceful means, not through violence. Through our strong and unwavering encouragement and support of the people there, our trade and our tourism, all reflecting a deep American devotion to the cause of peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland. We must, of course, as the dominant power, be prepared to use military force when necessary and appropriate, but even then it is usually most effective as part of a larger approach that includes diplomacy.

All human beings and all human institutions are fallible and the United States has made many serious mistakes, but overall, in the last half of the 20th century and the early years of the 21st, we have been a powerful force for good in the world. In the 75 years before 1945, Europe was devastated by three major land wars. After the second world war, the western democracies, led by the United States, helped Germany, Italy, and Japan to rebuild and become durable democracies. We led the western world into



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

the creation of international institutions, whose goals were peace and, in part through increased trade, stability and prosperity. The United Nations, NATO, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and crucially, the European Union. They sought to prevent a repeat of past conflict by promoting increased trade and collective security. And look back through the lens of history, they have been largely successful, but that success is now threatened.

The decision by the United Kingdom to leave the European Union was unwise, but it was made in a free and open election in a democratic society and must, therefore, be respected. Now, we must do all we can to ensure the continued existence and prosperity of the European Union after Brexit. Hopefully, with some continuing role for the UK. Despite their anger and frustration, leaders of the UK and the European Union must extend themselves in their negotiations. A hard Brexit is no one's interest, especially with respect to the border between Ireland and Northern Ireland.

European Union and the UK government, as far back as December of last year, publicly promised that whatever the outcome of their negotiations there would not be a hard Irish border and they must keep their promise. I believe that Brexit will have a negative effect on the British economy, but the initial fallout could be to encourage other unhappy Europeans to leave the Union. A weak and divided Europe would mean the loss of a valuable democratic ally for the United States in its dealings with hostile powers and with the massive upheaval that is certain to continue across Africa and much of Asia.

We have a huge stake in the outcome. In his stated belief that they are not in our country's best interest, President Trump has stalled a trade agreement with the European nations, has withdrawn from the Paris Climate Accord, has withdrawn from the agreement with Iran on its nuclear program, and has withdrawn from the Trans-Pacific partnership. I believe to the contrary, that these, and other cooperative efforts with our historic allies are in America's interest. These recent agreements and the Post-World War II institutions have been largely beneficial to those who participated, including and especially, the United States. Any American who thinks the world is unsafe now should contemplate a world in which there is no NATO, no European Union, no World Trade Organization, no UN. In that world, constant trade wars would lead to real wars and the United States, as the dominant power, invariably would be called upon to lead alone. Just as our allies around the world look to the United States for leadership, so do we look to them for help and support.

Our ties with Europe predate the establishment of our country. We gained our independence from England by revolution, but we retained England's language, the spirit of its laws, and many of its customs. Although our early relations were hostile, over time the two countries formed what has become a special relationship. As our country grew, as the population rose to settle a vast continent, we welcomed millions of immigrants from England, Ireland, Germany, France, Italy, Greece, Poland, the Scandinavian Nations and many more. As a result, we share deep bonds of blood with Europe, not just legal relationships. And while we compete in many ways, we should not think of Europeans primarily as adversaries, nor should we think of Canada as a threat to our national security. In fact, I think most countries in the world would like to have Canada as a neighboring nation. And these are also our



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

partners. They don't always agree among themselves, they don't always agree with us, but for the most part they admire our country and they share our values and interests and they like American leadership. It is in everyone's interest to do all we can, politically, economically, militarily, and otherwise to help the people of Europe and elsewhere remain democratic, united, at peace, free, and prosperous.

I cannot speak for others, but I have confidence in the American people. I believe that our democratic institutions remain strong and that science and reason will prevail over looking backward as they have in the past. I believe we must and will devise the policies to deal effectively with the challenges of the coming decades. But if we are to do so, we must remain true to our principles. Our democratic ideals distinguished our nation from the very beginning. They have appealed to people around the world and they still do. Our economic strength and our military power are, of course, crucial to our security, necessary and helpful in our dealings around the world, but our ideals have been and remain the primary basis of American influence in the world. They don't easily summarize, but surely they include the sovereignty of the people, the privacy of individual liberty, our highest value, an independent judicial system, the rule of law applied equally to all citizens and crucially, to the government itself, and opportunity for every member of our society. We must never forget that the United States was a great nation long before it was a great military or economic power. We acknowledge that we are not always right, we can never be perfectly consistent, but we can and must work harder and better to live up to our principles as individuals and as citizens of our country. We must especially work to fully realize here at home and abroad the aspiration of opportunity for all people. No one should be guaranteed success, but every single one should have a fair chance to succeed. From the experience of our daily lives, all across our great country, we know that equal opportunity for all remains an aspiration. We must make it a reality. We must raise our actions to the level of our aspirations. Our goal should be a society which encourages striving, celebrates success, is conducive to innovation, and enables us to benefit from the talent, energy and skill of every single person in our country. That's our challenge and we must make it our destiny.

Thank you very much for your attention and for having me here today.

Where do you want me to sit?

STEVE EDWARDS: Why don't you sit down on the far side.

GEORGE MITCHELL: Okay, right here?

STEVE EDWARDS: Senator Mitchell, thank you so much for sharing your perspective and insights on, not only your own past involvement in an important piece of negotiations, especially in Northern Ireland, but also, your insights on where we are at this important political moment. There's much to pick up on and I should point out we'll be taking some of your questions here before the end of our chat, but let me start by diving into Northern Ireland. You said in your remarks that one of the critical ingredients for the



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

success of the Good Friday Agreement was really the leadership and the people believing in and working through the framework to ensure a lasting sustained peace. I want to get your thoughts on some of the comments that have been made now in the context of Brexit, we have the DUP leader, Foster, just this past week saying that the Good Friday Agreement was not [sacro-sanct 04:38:12] in her view. What's your reaction to the kind of rhetoric that's been swirling around Brexit as it relates to Northern Ireland?

GEORGE MITCHELL: Well, of course, Brexit has sparked a debate within the United Kingdom, the entire European Union and within the constituent parts of the United Kingdom, and within Ireland and everyone is trying to make the case that the society would be better off, depending on your point of view, with their favorite position. So, yeah, the Good Friday Agreement gets tangled up in the internal debate. Of course no political agreement can be said to be never subject to change. We rightly revere our Constitution, one of the great political, literary achievements in all of human history, in my judgment, and we regularly amend it. We idolize the founding fathers and we revere our Constitution, but our Constitution condones slavery. So, no one could argue that the Good Friday Agreement somehow can never be changed. It was a political agreement, a compromise, the best that could be achieved at the time. By its very terms, it did not purport to resolve all of the problems that were then pending. In the document itself we created other entities to deal with issues that weren't subject to determination at that time, particularly dealing with the court system and the policing of Northern Ireland.

STEVE EDWARDS: ... System and the policing of northern Ireland. So I don't question the argument regarding permanence or impermanence. The real question is, how should it be changed, and for what purpose? And that's where I think you get wide-scale different-

And based on your history and what you know around the current landscape, what do you think the important priorities are and directions, as we think about a lasting piece and a context of all the Brexit negotiations. What are the key principles?

GEORGE MITCHELL: Well, I think that the removal of the hard border between the north and the south was a very important achievement for several reasons. One, tangible, or some tangible, some intangible. The tangible reason was, it permitted trade, movement of people across borders, to the huge economic benefit of both societies. To give you just one tiny example, representing a vast economic area of activity, every year in northern Ireland, six million liters of raw milk are produced on dairy farms. All of it's transferred to the Republic of Ireland, where it's processed into dairy goods. Cheese, yogurt, things like that, and then redistributed throughout the UK and throughout Europe. You multiply that by almost every error of human activity.

When I first went there, I was shocked to find that people who lived within hundreds of yards of the border had never been across it. And when you have a separation, you permit, indeed encourage the creation of stereotypes and demonization. You enhance the concept of them and us. And that's what

happened over the years of poor relations between the UK and Ireland, and the conflict within northern Ireland. The removal of that border ... They haven't taken down the fortifications, they've just moved the road. So now, you drive from the Republic of northern Ireland, it's like driving from Illinois to Wisconsin. And it has had a remarkable effect on the attitudes of both, both of whom were locked in stereotypes that, whatever validity they may've had in the distance past, didn't reflect the reality, now.

STEVE EDWARDS: And what's the likelihood that if there were to be a hard border we impose as a result of these negotiations-

GEORGE MITCHELL: It would be a disaster.

STEVE EDWARDS: It would be a disaster.

GEORGE MITCHELL: It would be a ... It would be-

STEVE EDWARDS: Even despite the twenty years?

GEORGE MITCHELL: It would be an economic and a political disaster. You would go back to the time of the stereotypes. You would go back to the time when you didn't have commerce between the two, or the amount of activity between the two. And I ... Well, the people of northern Ireland voted 56 to 40, by 15 points against Brexit. They don't wanna leave the European Union. So the problem is, the other parts of the UK, the votes were enough to pass it, against the will of the people of northern Ireland. And where the huge iron is of the whole thing, is that the UK dominated Ireland for 800 years. And finally, after the Irish gained their independence, defying all odds, they have a very successful society, but is thoroughly integrated into the economy of the UK. So if a hard Brexit occurs, the British economy will suffer, but the Irish economy will suffer much more. And so it would be a truly tragic irony of history, that after dominating for 800 years, then finally leaving, now they're gonna take steps that will effectively severely harm the Irish economy. Not intentional, of course, it's not they're objective in doing so, but that's the inevitable result.

STEVE EDWARDS: It's interesting, just to pick up on the theme of economics, because I know that's something you've emphasized time and time again. Often times, when it's reported or in the public eye, we look at large, intractable conflicts, and we think about them in terms of ethnic divides, religion, other things that speak to harder to quantify issues. What role did economics play in just really understanding the viability of peace and the likelihood of conflict, for you?

GEORGE MITCHELL: I've been involved in major conflicts in the Balkans, when I was in the Senate. Did two tours of duty in the middle east. And I spent five years in northern Ireland. They all have surface similarities. No one of them could be described accurately, as exclusively economic. But underlying them all, is a huge economic factor. I recall clearly, although it occurred 23 years ago, my first day in northern



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Ireland. I went to Belfast, and I was asked to meet on each side of the huge wall that divides the two communities, in Belfast, the capital city, an ugly reminder of the past, 30 feet high in place, is topped in barbed wire with places, it physically separates the two communities.

In the morning, I met with predominantly nationalists. They are predominately catholic, who want a united Ireland. In the afternoon, with unionists, predominately protestant, who want to remain as part of the Union with England, Scotland, and Wales. Their messages differed in some respects, but there was a striking degree of similarity. And they were best summarized, in the afternoon, a truly brilliant orator, we've since become very good friends, and anybody from northern Ireland here will recognize the name of Jackie Redpath. He was a young protestant minister. And after we finished, I told him he gave such a powerful oration, I said, "You really could do a heck of a job in the US Senate. You'd have plenty of time to talk, there." But he came, and he made this argument, and he brought two maps to emphasize it.

The first map was titled unemployment in the urban areas of northern Ireland. And the second map, which he tacked on top of it was titled violence in the urban areas of northern Ireland. And they fit like a hand in a glove. And both sides made the point, when men and women, in their cases, mostly men, have no employment, no education, no prospects, when they don't have the self-esteem to look themselves in the mirror in the morning, let alone the eyes of their children, they are prone, much more available for the men of violence and demagogues who say to them, "Here's a gun. Here's \$100 a week. You're in charge of these two blocks." Every human being needs food, sustenance, and shelter. But more importantly than that, they need self-esteem. They need a sense of self worth. They need a sense of belief that they are a functioning, contributing member of a society. Human beings are social animals, whether a family, a neighborhood block, a church, a religion, a nation, a state, some identifying category other than themselves. And you cannot overestimate the importance of economics, job opportunities, the chance to succeed in life, in creating, ending, or preventing conflicts.

And we Americans are not immune. Every American student of history recalls, in the late '20s and early '30s when thousands of men who were veterans of the first World War, and were out of work, camped out on the mall in the nation's capital, and the government brought out the Army to disperse them violently. It's part of all of us. And so peacemaking, peace building, peacekeeping efforts that ignore the realities of life for the people cannot possibly succeed in the long run.

STEVE EDWARDS: I wanna take questions from some of you for the Senator. But as we do, let me pivot into another region that you reference in passing, and you've been very involved in here and there over the years. And that is, just the middle east, broadly speaking.

GEORGE MITCHELL: Yes.



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

STEVE EDWARDS: Does your comment suggest that we need a completely different approach to how we look, largely, at the sectarian violence, about the issues between Israelis and Palestinians, about the political repression? How do we wanna think about strategically advancing the prospects for peace in that region, given all that's complicated there?

GEORGE MITCHELL: Right. Well, as I said, I did tours of duty there. I have a certain number of beliefs, which I think some people may agree with some, disagree with others. First, I think it is a mistake to view the Israeli/Palestinian conflict in isolation, in a silo over here, and the rest of the middle east is over there. It is a part of the region. The conflict arises from region-wide attitudes and views. What happens between the Israelis and Palestinians affects the countries in the region, and what happens in those countries affects Israeli/Palestinian relations. So you have to view it in a broader context.

I believe that the policy of the United States over the past half century has been fundamentally the correct policy. And that is, we favor, we support, we are committed to the safety and security of Israel behind secure and defensible borders. And everyone in the middle east knows that whatever else they may wish, Israel is there to stay.

The second part of it is that we also favor the creation of an independent, sovereign Palestinian state. Demilitarized, so as not to pose a military threat to Israel, but allowing the Palestinian the dignity and self respect that come from national identity, and a state of their own, and making decisions on their own futures.

And we also believe and advocate that that's good for Israel. Israel would be better off with an independent Palestinian state. Now, that's a source of contention. The two societies are about equally divided on the two state solution. In both societies, support initially was strong, about two-thirds percent. In both, it has declined to about half, and it continues to decline, obviously out of frustration with it not having been achieved.

But I wrote a book about this in cooperation with a co-writer, a colleague, a young man who worked for me, analyzing other possible options. And the other possible options are far worse, far less practical, far less feasible than the two state solution.

I think it's going to happen because it would ultimately be seen as so much in the interest of both societies. It may take a change in leadership in both countries. What I've just said is reality. What I'm about to say is speculation based on, I spent hundreds of hours with Prime Minister Netanyahu and equal time, first with Chairman Arafat, and then with President Abbas. And I'll tell you what I said to both of them. I said to Netanyahu, "Your concern about the collapse of the Palestinian authority and a possible takeover of the West Bank by Hamas ... " The difference between the Palestinian authority and Hamas, of course, is that the Palestinian authority recognizes Israel, opposes violence, and is committed to accept all prior agreements. Hamas is no on all of those. Israel is equally divided. About half of Israelis



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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

want a two state solution, and about half do not. And within that half, there's a growing group that wants simply to annex all of the West Bank and to somehow, somehow, evict the Palestinians.

So I said to the Prime Minister, "You're worried about it, but the best thing for you would be a sovereign Palestinian state in which the view of the Palestinian authority could flourish." But the Prime Minister doesn't think that an agreement can be reached with the Abass, because he thinks Abass doesn't have the personal strength or the political will to make the compromises needed to get in agreement.

And so he says, "Well, I can't do that because there might be a [inaudible 04:54:01] state. Look at Syria. Look at Iraq. Look at these other countries." My answer to him was, "You're more likely to get a Hamas takeover of the Palestinian [inaudible 04:54:09], the absence of agreement than if you get one." 'Cause Abass's support has been declining steadily. Large numbers, particularly of young Palestinians now view him as an enforcer of the Israeli occupation, not as someone that's for peace. So Netanyahu figures, "Look, I'm gonna get a lot of flak from my right wing," and he's always worried that his threat is to the right, "If I make any compromise, and I'm not gonna go through that, when I know we can't get in agreement with this guy."

Abass has the same view for different reasons. He does not believe a word Netanyahu says. He believes Netanyahu is untruthful and that does just enough and says just enough to placate the United States. And he cites the fact that Netanyahu was against a two state solution, then for it, then against it, then for it, and now he's for it, but not now. And so you got two leaders who had divided societies and are unwilling to get into a serious discussion, 'cause they don't think an agreement can be reached because of the other guy.

Someday soon, I think someone's gonna come along, some strong Palestinian leader and a strong Israeli to say, "This is in our interest," because the alternative is far worse. And I believe that to be true in both cases.

Now, let me tell you what I told ... And I'll close this long answer ... What I told both Arafat and Abass. In 1947, the United Nations proposed the petition. Two states, and Jerusalem an independent city. After much internal debate, the Israelis accepted. It was very controversial. Begin was in the Parliament. He refused to vote for it. The Arabs, six countries with scores of millions of people, looked and they saw, "Well, there's only 600,000 Jews in the [foreign language 04:56:04]," the Jewish community. They thought they could easily defeat them. As they put it, "Throw them into the sea, and end the Zionist enterprise." Well, they were wrong. Israel won that war. How did they win it? When Ben-Gurion was challenged by those who felt it was too risky to go to war. He exuded confidence. He said, "We're gonna win because I have a secret weapon." He was asked, "What's the secret weapon?" He said, "The Arabs." And they did. They disagreed among themselves, six of them, and Israel defeated them one at a time, and then won every war since.



THE PEARSON INSTITUTE

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So I said to Arafat, "You've been waitin' 60 years for the perfect solution to come down from heaven. It's not coming. And the deals are gettin' worse as time goes on, 'cause the circumstances on the ground are changing. You gotta get into negotiations. Make a deal. Less than what you want, you might think it's fair, but you can get a state. And you can build on it. Now, I say to you, the Palestinian are ingenious. They're able to govern themselves, their own affairs. They'll work hard, they're family-oriented, they're very committed to education. They can have a state, but they gotta have leaders who've got the courage to grasp it and not insist that it's gotta be 100% decided in advance in their favor. Unfortunately, Israelis now think it's gotta be decided 100% in advance in their favor.

STEVE EDWARDS: Let's take a couple of quick questions here. We've got microphones that we'll pass around. We've got a hand right up here in the middle. We'll start there. Just ask that you keep your questions and to the point so we can get to as many of you as possible, here, in the little bit of time we have left.

GEORGE MITCHELL: You're gonna have to repeat the question 'cause I can't hear it.

STEVE EDWARDS: Sure.

KIM DOZIER: Kim Dozier with the Daily Beast. A contrarian question. Those who work for Donald Trump say that he has thrown out the rule book and that that, in some cases, has produced unique opportunities like dialog with North Korea. I would love your take on that.

STEVE EDWARDS: I don't know, are you fairly-

GEORGE MITCHELL: He's gotta repeat it, 'cause the acoustics comin' this way aren't good, and neither are my ears.

STEVE EDWARDS: She was saying, essentially, that in many respects, people would say that the Trump playbook has been to depart from past convention, as was the case in really playing a hard line stance against North Korea. But that's actually created new openings, and that that may actually do the case in other issues. What's your response to the Trump playbook? Did I paraphrase?

KIM DOZIER: Yeah, I'm quoting Trump [inaudible 04:58:41].

GEORGE MITCHELL: Yeah.

STEVE EDWARDS: Yeah.

GEORGE MITCHELL: Well, I hope it works, but I think it won't. Let's take Jerusalem. By far, the most controversial, difficult issue. Of all of the final status issues, each of which itself is very difficult,



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FOR THE STUDY AND RESOLUTION OF GLOBAL CONFLICTS

Jerusalem is by far, the most difficult. And it's the only one on which the Palestinians do not have a free hand. Palestinians could decide for themselves their borders. They can decide what to accept or reject on the right of return. Palestinians cannot, on their own, reach a decision on Jerusalem, because it requires the approval of the Saudis. Requires the approval of Jordan. Requires the approval of Morocco. And there are now, 1.8 billion Muslims in the world. By 2050, there'll be twice that. And so Jerusalem requires a broader consensus. Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, has been the capital of Israel, will be the capital of Israel. There is no doubt about that in anyone's mind. The only doubt about Jerusalem is whether or not it ever will be the capital of an independent Palestinian state. American policy is to achieve that result through negotiations between the parties in which the decision are made by the parties, not in advance by the United States.

So while it is true that the decision to move the embassy merely ratifies a reality, it is equally true that the decision makes it far more difficult for the Palestinians ever to enter into the negotiations that are needed to bring about the result. It is not a mystery that the two groups most pleased with the Jerusalem decisions were those on the right in Israel who are adamantly opposed to there ever being a Palestinian state, and in the Palestinian, Hamas. The group that doesn't like it are the people in Israel who are for a two state solution, and the Palestinian authority, which has, once again, been locked out high and dry.

STEVE EDWARDS: Let's take one other quick question if we have a hand up, or time. I'm looking, scanning. I don't know that we have a hand up. Let me actually shift gears really quick. Do we have one here? Forgive me. Sorry. The lighting's just a little tough.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, it's alright. Senator, I wanted to ask you what you feel like are viable and tangible concessions or redistribution of spending that global powers can take with regional influences in order to better promote peace or lasting development initiatives.

STEVE EDWARDS: The question is, what steps can global powers, particularly global economic powers, to fundamentally redistribute wealth in ways that will create lasting peace and more equity.

GEORGE MITCHELL: You mean on a worldwide basis?

STEVE EDWARDS: Yeah, on a worldwide basis. Right? Yeah.

GEORGE MITCHELL: I think it's very difficult to organize an international plan for redistribution that would be applicable in all societies. I frankly have never been asked that question, so I'm not certain of the response. But I think far more effectively would be for the more developed countries to lead the way, both internally and in international terms. There have been some steps in that direction. The Paris accord included some degree of that in the effort to control emissions, because largely, what we are suggesting to developing countries is that they not follow the path that we followed, and go a different



and more effective route, for which we and other wealthier countries would provide some degree of compensation in some form.

But I think each country probably has to decide how it moves in that direction in its own way. And it's an area where I think where the United States, as the dominant power, by far, and I believe we will be the dominant power for as far into the future as human beings can see, that if we were more effective in doing it, we might lead the way for others, as we have done in so many other areas.

STEVE EDWARDS: On that note, we'll have to leave it here. But Senator Mitchell, thank you so much for-

GEORGE MITCHELL: Thank you.

STEVE EDWARDS:... Taking time to be here and share your insights-

GEORGE MITCHELL: It's a pleasure, truly.

STEVE EDWARDS: Thank you.