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## **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS**

### **RESTORING THE VITALITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS**

**SPEAKER: BAN KI-MOON, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE, REPUBLIC OF KOREA, AND CANDIDATE FOR THE POSITION OF UNITED NATIONS SECRETARY-GENERAL**

**PRESIDER: WARREN M. HOGE, FOREIGN AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT AT THE U.N., THE NEW YORK TIMES**

**COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS, NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK**

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#### **BODY:**

**MR. HOGE:** Good afternoon. I am Warren Hoge, the United Nations bureau chief of The New York Times, and I am here to introduce our speaker and have a conversation with him, and then throw the session open to your questions from the floor.

One piece of business to begin with: Please make sure that all cell phones, BlackBerrys, et cetera, are turned off now.

Normally we have to tell people you cannot say what you hear here or say who said it, but this meeting, happily, is on the record, so you can today.

It is fair to say, I think, that there is no more telling single action the United Nations will take -- will make -- in 2006 than choosing a new secretary-general. They're doing this in the absence of any process that any of you who have ever participated -- in your businesses, institutions, schools, whatever -- in choosing a new leader would ever recognize. Allan Rock, who is the ambassador of Canada, a country that has made a point of studying the process, or the absence of it, and making recommendations on how it ought to be done in the future, called the present process "opaque, ill-defined, unpredictable and unsatisfactory."

My favorite story about how secretaries-general are chosen involves Dag Hammarskjöld, who didn't even know he was a candidate when he was told he had won. He was told he had won on April 1st, 1953, and his first reaction was it was an April fools joke. (Laughter.) But to give you an indication of the free-for-all nature of the present race, at the moment the people who are being talked about include a Jordanian prince, a Turkish economist, a Nobel laureate from Sri Lanka, Sweden's most accomplished diplomat, two Eastern European presidents, and even, as you all probably know, Bill Clinton. Don't hold your breath on the last one. (Laughter.)

There is this year a wish at the United Nations for an early decision. Kofi Annan, the last new secretary-general to be chosen, was ratified by the General Assembly on December 17th to take over a job 13 days later. That's not much of a transition. And a number of countries, including the United States, other countries on the Security Council, have expressed a wish that this year the decision be made in September or October if possible, so that the new person will have a chance to learn something about the job before she or he takes it over.

There is an acceptance at the United Nations, though not in the United States and not in some European countries, that this year is what they call Asia's turn. The reason for that is the last Asian secretary-general, U Thant, left office in 1971. The second reason I think is the recognition that there is no more dynamic region in the world right now than Asia. And, finally, in United Nations terms, the Asian group of nations is now the largest, with 54 countries -- the African, by the way, is the second, with 53 countries.

There are three announced candidates, and they all happen to be Asian, and I will just mention their names to you in the order in which they have made their candidacies public. The first is Surakiart Sathirathai, the deputy prime minister of Thailand. The second is Jayantha Dhanapala of Sri Lanka, who is a former U.N. undersecretary for disarmament. And the last, but only in order in which he announced his candidacy, is our guest today, Ban Ki-moon, the minister of foreign affairs and trade of the Republic of Korea, which we commonly call South Korea. He is going to speak to you for 10 or 15 minutes. He and I will then have a conversation for 10. And then after that we'll throw the questions to the floor. Please join me in welcoming Ban Ki-Moon. (Applause.)

**MIN. BAN:** President Haass, members of the Council on Foreign Relations, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, it gives me a great honor and pleasure for me to have this opportunity to address a prestigious group. I know that the CFR has been the host to many eminent leaders and thinkers. I'm grateful to President Haass and the members of the Council for this very kind invitation. And I also thank Mr. Hoge for your very kind introduction. I look forward to having a lively exchange of views following my opening statement.

Today I'd like to talk about the United Nations. I hope that this subject will not surprise you, given the fact that I'm an official candidate to succeed the Mr. Kofi Annan, the current secretary-general of the United Nations.

I will first share my thoughts on current state and future prospects of our global organization. Then I will value hearing your suggestions and views on how we could

make reforms of the United Nations organization. I know that most of you are residents of New York City, the home to the United Nations, and I'm sure that you all share my condition that this world organization needs a strong and more dynamic and vigorous United Nations. This is all the more so for these very challenging times ahead.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, less than a year ago, the heads of state and government all around the world gathered here at the United Nations for the World Summit. They reaffirmed, I quote, "the vital importance of an effective multilateral system." And they have also reaffirmed their faith in the United Nations. By doing so I think they emphasize the need to go beyond the zero-sum games that divide the world into winners and losers. Instead they (called winning ?) solutions to common problems and shared responsibilities. They reminded us that multilateralism must be made to work within the halls of the United Nations.

The leaders also made the urgent call for progress and reform. The organization is overstretched and fatigued. It must find new vigor to effectively meet the growing expectations of the international organizations. Indeed, I think the United Nations has been engaged in a most comprehensive reform process in the history of the United Nations. Initiated by the secretary-general in 2003, the reform drive has touched all the functions of the United Nations systems. It is still in progress, and we have gained some achievements. Good examples are the creation of Human Rights Council and Peacebuilding commissions, and steps are under consideration to strengthen the accountability of the United Nations systems. However, the reform process has also brought to the fore an ailment that needs to be cured if the vitality of the organization is to be restored. By this I refer to the deep political fault lines that have hardened over the years. This was demonstrated by the divisive debate in the Fifth Committee, and later by the General Assembly Plenary over secretary-general's proposals for reform and management. Indeed, many assert that this is a crisis of confidence enveloping the United Nations between large and small powers, rich and poor countries, and between member states and secretariat, and the governments and civil societies. Well, I would not be too much pessimistic. But I would join fully the voices calling for a greater sense of trust and common purpose. For this, each and every stakeholders, players, must stop blaming each other and start taking responsibility. We must all share the blame. We must all be accountable -- to ourselves and to others, and to our future generations.

Beyond this appeal for greater trust and collective responsibilities, I believe we should proceed along the following path. First and foremost, the United Nations family must stay the course of reform. In particular, on management reforms the secretary-general is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations. He or she must make most of the powers given by the charter and the member states. Bold leadership should be taken. Measures must be promptly introduced for enhancing the integrity, professionalism and morals of the secretariat. In the end, the reform needs to be integrated into the daily work of the management and staff in the Office of the Secretary-General. The divisiveness over some aspects of the proposals initiated by the secretary-general should not be permitted to hold back others, the progress on others. Indeed, tangible advances need to be made quickly wherever possible. The momentum for reform should be sustained. And the direction should be greater flexibility matched by greater accountability.

The secretary-general needs greater flexibility to effectively respond to the changing circumstances. But that must be underpinned by increased accountability. In this regard, oversight and procurement reforms are particularly important. An external review of the current oversight system is currently under way. I hope it will offer concrete ways to make oversight and audit more credible and effective. More action should also be taken to strengthen transparency and accountability in the procurement regimes.

Ladies and gentlemen, beyond the reforms the coming era should be a time of consolidation and coordination and implementation for the United Nations. The U.N. under past secretaries-general reflected their times, as well as their personalities and preferences. The incumbent, Mr. Kofi Annan, has certainly embodied the organization's ideas and values, reflecting the tenor of the Cold War times. Fulfilling the commitments of the World Summit last year will be a tall order in itself. The next secretary-general must firmly commit the organization to delivering results in the hundreds of pressing (times ?) already on his agenda. The strategic focus should be more on achieving the goals already set rather than identifying new frontiers to conquer. Indeed, for each of the three pillars of the United Nations -- namely, the peace and security, development, human rights -- there are pressing measures to undertake. Let me just take a few.

First, terrorism continues to be the greatest security challenge of our times. The possibility of linkage with WMDs amplifies the potential dangers many times. The United Nations can lose no time in presenting to the world a comprehensive convention against international terrorism. We should muster the resolve and solidarity that enables the General Assembly to promptly adopt a resolution condemning the terrorism immediately after the September 11th. I feel proud that I was part of the process when I was working as chef de cabinet to the president of the General Assembly immediately after September 11th. I am also very much frustrated until today that this organization has not been able to present a comprehensive convention -- even after our experience of this September 11th.

In the meantime, we must stand ready to take effective action against the terrorism. In this regard, I believe the secretary-general's recent report offers a rich guidance.

Second, the work of the Peacebuilding Commission should produce real value on the ground. The first cases will be pivotal for the future shape and scope of the United Nations peace-building work. All stakeholders are urged to embark upon the task with a strong sense of mission and dedication.

Third, the United Nations' work in peacekeeping and complex emergencies should be more firmly grounded in humanitarian principles. Human sufferings should be alleviated and human dignity should be safeguarded at all times. The moral authority of the United Nations depends on its ability to help people most in need, and it must do so with the highest ethical standards and professionalism.

On the immediate case in question, it is a humanitarian crisis in Darfur. There the enormity of human tragedy demands effective and expeditious U.N. intervention. Before coming to New York yesterday, I went to Rwanda, the site of an atrocious genocide 12 years ago. I was horrified and very saddened. It was a solemn reminder of what we, the international organization of the United Nations, the international community, failed to do

for Africa, for humanity. Greater political will must be mobilized to ensure that the tragic failure to protect innocent people should not happen again.

In the years ago, the concept of the international community's responsibility to protect, as endorsed by the World Summit last year, should be further substantiated.

Fourth, one of the most important thing is the Millennium Development Goals. This MDG should be advanced. When the target year of 2015 arrives, I hope that the United Nations will be able to credibly claim that the mission is accomplished on the most heralded goals it has promised for the world. The Korean experience in this regard shows that the development goes hand in hand with security and human rights, that development is the key to preserving peace and security and human rights. Political will must be mobilized to increase developmental assistance, including for capacity building for good governance. Progress in this regard will be vital for convincing the public that the United Nations can effectively deliver. Tangible progress in MDG's implementation will also help bridge the South-North divide.

Fifth, the new Human Rights Council must meet the heightened expectations of the international community. The inaugural members of the Council, including the Republic of Korea, should work with the entire membership of the United Nations to chart the path ahead. They are urged to do so with a renewed commitment toward greater respect for human dignity and enlargement of freedom.

Ladies and gentlemen, different times and circumstances call for a different style of leadership. At this point the secretariat I believe is in need of hands-on guidance from the secretary-general, who leads by examples, who demonstrates leadership by example. He thought our presence should be felt by always -- by all members at all levels, in the field as well as the headquarters. The staff needs a clear sense of mission. Reassurances should be given that their work matters and their professionalism is valued. The next secretary- general must be prepared at any time to act as an impartial and astute mediator and facilitator. This role is both required in New York and around the world. It will continue to be vital on the global stage. The expectations will continue to increase for the services of the secretary-general's good offices in resolving conflict and bringing countries together. At headquarters, the secretary-general should strive to bridge the divide and rebuild the trust among memberships. This is critical for the success of the reform agenda and restoration of the United Nations' vitality.

There is no magic formula for this or any other task required of the secretary-general. But it all begins with the hard work, accountability and open ears. It requires humility and moral rectitude to earn the trust of all the stakeholders.

The secretary-general's leadership holds together the cooperation among principal organs of the United Nations. It is also the catalyst in rallying the political will of the member states. In particular the commitment of the United States is vital. It is the host country, it is the most important country in the world at this time. Also, in our times now, global challenges call for global responses. The United States cannot do it alone. The United States needs the United Nations, and vice versa.

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, looking ahead, I'm an optimist, and am convinced that the best days for our global organization have yet to come. Confidence in

the face of adversity comes naturally to Koreans. We Koreans have quite literally risen from the ashes of this war. We have done so through hard work, commitment, dedication and the help of friends, and particularly the United Nations. Now we stand ready to pay back what we have owed to the United Nations and international community. We wish to become the strongest advocate of the agendas of the United Nations, be it peace, development or human rights.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished members of the Council, the forward march of the history is a process of crises being turned into opportunities, of challenges being met with insight and fortitude. The United Nations was created amid the destructions of the World War II. It was truly a wide response to an unprecedented human calamity. The footprints of the United Nations during the last 60 years are eminent proof. At this time the biggest challenge facing the United Nations is its own revitalization and upgrading. The United Nations needs to be reenergized to live up to the growing expectations of the international community. The search for the wisest response must begin at home for each and every stakeholder. The answer will emerge from our deep reflection: What could be lost if we were to miss this opportunity? And what could be gained if we join together for the vitality of the United Nations organization, such a remarkable institution in human history? The choice is obvious, and the choice should be made now. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

**MR. HOGE:** Mr. Ban, I think I will just limit myself to one question. But, since I'm a journalist, you will find three questions inside this one question. (Laughter.) It is this: This is a campaign you have to conduct now. I have a question about three countries, or one region and two countries. The way a secretary-general is chosen, I am sure you know, is the Security Council makes a recommendation of one name, and the General Assembly ratifies it. The -- so that means the Security Council has the first responsibility. Within the Security Council the five permanent members are the ones who really will make the decision. And then within the five permanent members there are two countries: the one that's known as the P1 -- and we all know who that is; and the other one in this case is China. So there are a lot of people in the U.N. who believe that the winning candidate will be the person that China and the United States can agree on. So my question is this: What has been the response in Beijing and in Washington to your candidacy? And then, finally, the countries that have right now standing in the way of the realization of the reforms which in your speech you describe -- and they are very similar to the reforms that the current secretary-general has put forward and had been voted down by -- largely by African countries. You've just been in Africa, and you've just been in South Africa, which was the country sort of leading the opposition.

The question is: Response to your candidacy in Beijing? Response to your candidacy in Washington? And, finally, were you able to satisfy the Africans that you could meet their objections while still moving forward with the kinds reforms that you describe in your speech?

**MIN. BAN:** First of all, the questions, two questions, seem to be very sensitive one, and I'm not sure whether at this time I'll be able to characterize the responses of the United States and China. First of all, I'd like to tell you that this is a part of my ongoing effort to make myself available, known to you, and let my visions for reform and other measures, systems of the United Nations, known to the outside world, in response to a call for a more transparent process of selecting a secretary-general.

Now, about the United States' and China's positions, I know that it seems to be the tradition and position of P5s that they like to keep their positions always -- keep until the last minute their voting and selection process. And I have been discussing this matter with a number of leadership people in the United States and China in view of the sensitivities of the positions of the respective countries. I'll refrain from making any comments on this.

But at this time I would say that we, Korea and the United States, are close allies and we have maintained such an excellent relationship not only in security but economics and social and all sectors of our life. We have been maintaining this comprehensive and dynamic relationship during the last over five decades.

And with China I think we have maintained a very substantially important relationship, particularly in terms of economic cooperation -- a lot of people-to-people exchanges. Also, our relationship has been very young -- since 1992 -- but it's a substantial relationship. I have discussed this matter with Chinese government officials, and I think that I hope I will be able to reasonably count on support and positive considerations from both countries who are very important members of the Security Council in selecting a future secretary-general. I'm going to continue my consultation with not only two countries, but all the members of the Security Council, as well as other member states of the United Nations.

**MR. HOGE:** And about the Africans?

**MIN. BAN:** Africans --

**MR. HOGE:** That's 53 votes at the United Nations.

**MIN. BAN:** And it's very unhealthy that member states have been divided on some major proposals of the secretary-general, as I just said in my earlier remarks. I think I'm basically a harmonizer. During my 40-year-old public service in important positions, policymaking positions, particularly the last 10 years in leadership positions. I have been involved in coordinating and harmonizing all differences of opinions, positions, inside Korean government as well as in harmonizing, reconciling our bilateral relationship with many important countries, including the United States. And I served for many years with the United Nations work, most importantly and most recently as the chef de cabinet to the president of the General Assembly. I had to talk with all the member states of the United Nations during that time. I think immediately after the September 11th terrorist attacks the United Nations faced the most serious challenges in its history, and I was able to discuss all difficult issues with member states harmoniously, and I think I can use this kind of experience and know-how if I'm elected secretary-general.

**MR. HOGE:** We're going to go to the floor now. Mr. Ban has made it clear that he's happy that we've been talking about the U.N. -- happy to talk about anything involving Korea. So please identify yourself and wait for the microphone.

Q Thanks. Jim Traub with The New York Times Magazine. Sir, you mentioned Darfur, which obviously is a great preoccupying issue. And I think it's been a source of tremendous frustration to Kofi Annan, because the Security Council has acted so timidly and so hesitantly, and only now really is beginning to do anything. Now, I know South

Korea was not on the Security Council during these past years, so you were not called upon -- your country wasn't called upon to express a view. But I'm curious, if you had been, if these were decisions you also were being called on to make, what is it that you would have advocated? What is it that you would not have advocated?

**MIN. BAN:** I think my quick answer is that the United Nations must make a decision, must move to act to help prevent a further suffering on the part of millions of refugees. The refugee camps have been swamped by the millions of refugee people who are suffering from basic needs of life. And if we delay this action I think it will only prolong the sufferings of the human dignity. As I said when I visited Rwanda and visited this memorial site of the genocide, I was really horrified by all these delayed actions, and some kind of misjudgment of the international community which could have prevented all this massacre. Now, as time goes by, I think we will be losing our times.

When I visited last March Sudan, I had a talk with my counterpart, Sudanese foreign minister, and I met many Arab League member states to discuss this matter, but though we are not sitting on the Security Council, but I wanted to contribute myself as a foreign minister of Korea, a member state of the United Nations. I'm just calling for some immediate action to be taken by the United Nations and the Security Council. Even before this peace agreement was signed earlier this month -- and it is fortunate that the Security Council has adopted the resolution asking for the preparations to take some actions on this Darfur region, I think we should take actions at this time.

Q Thank you. Mr. Minister, it's been suggested that two people function out of the leadership of the U.N., one to be the figurehead and to be the diplomat and a negotiator, and someone else to run the operation as a business administration, as you have in many businesses, because there's so much to do in that regard. Would you endorse that kind of a policy if you were named secretary-general?

**MIN. BAN:** Well, there is the charter saying that -- proscribing that the secretary-general is the chief administrative officer of the United Nations. And as the work volume has been expanded during the last 60 years -- recently there was an agreement to establish a deputy secretary-general's office who has been required to take most of the daily business operations from the secretary-general -- I think there should be some team, harmonious team, between secretary-general and also deputy secretary-general, undersecretaries-general -- to have a team and some reasonable distributions of the work, delegating the powers to his subordinates. Then secretary-general, while responsible, being responsible for all daily management of so big huge organization, he can or she can concentrate on resolving regional conflicts and concentrated on more important security related matters. That's my ideas. But should I be elected, then I will try to discuss on this matter how best and how efficiently we can organize the teamworks.

**MR. HOGE:** To the back of the room -- all the way back there with the yellow pad.

Q Herbert Levin. Nice to see you again, Mr. Minister. And I respect your courage of wanting to be secretary-general of the U.N. But I want to ask you about something in your ministerial role. Please help me understand the handling of North Korean refugees into China. The North Koreans don't seem to shoot them as they're going across the border. The Chinese don't shoot them as they come into China. If they get a visa to the U.S. or to Australia or something, the Chinese let them leave in strange ways. The South

Koreans give passports to South Koreans to go to China to encourage the North Koreans to come, but then they don't seem to be allowed to go to South Korea. I'm very confused, and I would like you to straighten me out, understanding the cameras here and some restrictions on what you can say. Thank you very much.

**MIN. BAN:** First of all, it's been the consistent position of my government to accommodate any North Korean refugees who'd want to come in South Korea and resettle there. We have so far accommodated more than I think 8,000 North Korean refugees in our honest and genuine hope that this will really help enhance and promote the human rights situation in North Korea. This involves a lot of difficulties for my government too. We have been discussing this matter with the Chinese government, and any Southeast Asian governments where North Korean refugees may try to find their shelter -- temporary shelter. We have been discussing this matter on the humanitarian grounds and we have been accommodating all the refugees.

Now, the American administration has enacted a law recently, and it began upsetting some of the North Korean refugees who really wanted to be resettled in America. There was a case where the American administration has upsetted six North Korean refugees. Now, as the economic situation of North Korea has not yet fully overcome, I think we hope -- we expect there is some continuous flow of North Korean refugees. We have been very closely coordinating this matter with the countries concerned, and UNHCR and other governments concerned, and that will continue to be our position.

**MR. HOGE:** All the way back in the corner with a striped tie.

Q Hi, Lane Greene with The Economist magazine.

You said that terrorism is the most important piece in the security issue facing the world, and you cited your own work with the General Assembly after September 11th. Yet, as you know, last year at the World Summit the member states failed to write a definition of terrorism, which seems important in finding where it is in the world and doing something about it. So my questions are: Do you see the need for a definition of terrorism? What do you see the definition of terrorism to be? And how would you go about getting the member states to agree on them? Thank you.

**MIN. BAN:** I think how to define terrorism, that has been the core issue that has prevented the international community not being able to agree on international convention -- comprehensive convention on terrorism. As I told you, I was very much frustrated by the inability of the organization to agree on this term of -- definition of terrorism. Now, there are two different ideas that some groups of the member states argue that we should avoid to define this -- definition of the terrorism. Why? There are certain members who'd like to have a clear-cut definition of terrorism.

Now, there are at this time 12 international conventions or agreements dealing with respective areas of terrorism, and I think that they are all in effect, and I think the international community is now trying to find out to address the challenges of terrorism by joining these very different conventions. There is another one still working for ratifications. The Korean government has joined all 13 conventions and agreements. I think until such time when we will be able to agree on a comprehensive convention, it would be desirable at this time we use this term existing and another authoritative

convention agreement to address and to cope with the international terrorism. But we'll have to work continuously to be able to agree on this comprehensive convention, and I will try my best, as I did a few years ago.

**MR. HOGE:** That table -- just wait for the -- it's right behind you.

Q Thanks. Richard Thoman, Corporate Perspectives and Columbia University. I want to turn to the subject of the six-party talks. First of all, I have a three-part question in the spirit of our moderator. How would you characterize the nature of those talks today? Secondly, what improvements would you like to see done on them, what changes and improvements? And then, finally, if nothing works, how acceptable is the alternative of the nuclear armed North Korea to your government today, if nothing works out?

**MIN. BAN:** First of all, we have been very much frustrated, as you have been, by the slow progress or lack of progress in implementing the joint statement, which was adopted September last year. The international community was very much hopeful that we could be able to resolve this issue. At that time I was busily engaged in consulting with Secretary Rice in New York to make that joint statement able to be adopted.

Now, in the course of six, seven months after the adoption of the joint statement there was illicit activities which had been discovered by the international community that North Korea had been engaged in counterfeiting U.S. currencies, and because of that the financial accounts of North Koreans which were being kept in a Macau bank had been frozen and sanctioned. And North Koreans have been arguing that these frozen bank accounts should be lifted and should be opened for their transactions.

While we regard that this is illicit activities, which need to be addressed and regulated according to international financial frameworks, we have been urging North Korea that this is a totally separate issue -- North Korean issue and this illicit activity issue separate, should not be linked. But unfortunately they have effectively linked these financial transaction issues to the progress of the six-party talks. We have been discussing and consulting with other five members participating in six-party talks. We have been trying to devise some creative ideas, and we have been trying to find out some realistic ideas, but have not been able to do that.

We are in the process of continuing such diplomatic initiatives, diplomatic endeavors, to make the breakthrough in the stalled six-party process. Now it's been the consistent position of my government that we will not accept -- we cannot accept North Korean nuclear programs, and we want to have the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. Now, North Koreans in fact they have committed themselves to abandon all nuclear weapons and programs by this joint statement. We are ready to provide economic assistance, security assurance by the United States and other members, and also some good prospects for normalizing or improving their relationship with the United States and Japan. By then I think the North Koreans may be able to join the international community as a responsible member, and will get all the incentives. And this time I'm urging North Koreans again to return to the six-party talks process without any preconditions.

**MR. HOGE:** Betsey?

Q Hi, Mr. Minister, I'm Betsey Pisik with The Washington Times. I have a question. You mentioned that management reforms would be a priority for you as the next secretary-general. And you also talked about your distress at the divide in the General Assembly between the North and the South or the richer and the poorer nations over these management reforms. And I'm wondering how you as a harmonizer would be able to get past that ill will. And, in that same spirit, could you tell us how you would divide -- how you see the role as secretary versus general? Would it be 50/50, or 60/40, 40/60? Thank you.

**MIN. BAN:** First of all, in principle I think the secretary-general should be both a general as you said and secretary -- in minding all this, managing all this business of the daily operations of the United Nations. And I think normally it's not the virtue of Asians, or particularly Koreans, to say anything good for oneself, but I think I can claim to be possessing both ability as a manager or as policymakers or leaders, having served during the last four decades in public service.

Now, I think secretary-general should really be a harmonizer, try to demonstrate leadership by example -- that's what I have been doing in the past. And I think I can coordinate and reconcile all the divisive opinions among the member states. It would be extremely difficult to reconcile all differing opinions among 191 member states, but at the same time the member states should also be prepared to demonstrate maximum flexibility and sense of cooperation and sense of participation. That is required of the member states while demanding or requiring the secretary-general of strong leadership or harmonizer. But I'll try my best as a future secretary-general to combine with all these kind of abilities, to talk with easiest accessibility and open minded and sense of humility. That's one thing I can promise you at this time, and I am really committed to make myself available for the complete reform process as well as to have a very harmonious progress of the operations of the United Nations' agenda.

**MR. HOGE:** Please.

Q Jamie Metz with the Asia Society. Welcome, Mr. Foreign Minister. In your remarks you gave a very comprehensive overview of your agenda for the United Nations. As we think forward over the coming years and decades, it does seem likely that a new set of issues will face the United Nations that will need a response. And at the top of that list, at least for me, are the challenges of new developments in science and technology.

Your government has taken a lead in investing in stem cell research, and I would imagine at some point in the future there will be increasing calls for the international community or the United Nations to get more actively involved either to promote stem cell research and other biotechnology research that is promising for our species, or to limit or regulate or promote the regulation of that same research. Do you have any thoughts on what future role the United Nations might play in the stem cell debate?

**MIN. BAN:** Well, first of all, I'm not an expert in this. I will admit that I am not an expert in this stem cell science and technology. But I know that the United Nations has been engaged in discussing this matter. And, at the same time, I know there's some division of opinions on this -- what to do with this, particularly on the points of ethics. I think we need to continue consultations and discussions on this matter based on the scientific achievements and merits. But, at the same time, when people talk about the ethical

aspect of this issue, we should also listen to their views. And Korea, as you said, is a far advanced country in this stem cell science and technologies. And unfortunately last year there was a certain unfortunate incident. But that also has given us alarm and good lessons that we need to be very careful. We need to address this issue with the maximum sense of verifications as well as appreciation and understandings on these ethical issues. So I think the international community is still in the process of discussing this matter, and I will try to see what kind of role -- how the United Nations can help in this process of consultations.

**MR. HOGE:** Gillian?

Q Gillian Sorensen from the United Nations Foundation. Mr. Minister, you know very well that the United Nations has done remarkable work around the world on behalf of the rights and the health and the opportunities for women and girls. And most of that has been focused on the developing world. But the rights and the opportunities for women within the U.N. proper, within the U.N. Secretariat, are really -- leave a lot to be desired. Kofi Annan began with the very best of intentions. Numbers of appointments were made in senior ranks. Right now the women in the senior levels number something under 12 percent. That is lamentable. And I'd like to ask if you would commit -- if you would reflect on the role of women within premier posts, and if you do support a proposal that is now being put forth to combine the several women's agencies -- UNIFEMME, Department for the Advancement of Women and U.N. Population Fund, among others, into one large and well financed agency.

**MIN. BAN:** Well, that's a very important question at this time when we need to have enhanced the status of women. I think the United Nations as an international organization has contributed significantly to the advancement of women's status, particularly when we adopted the important Beijing Declaration and platform for action. By that, I think by year 2000 we are supposed to have 50/50 women in parliament. But I think the target yet has come and gone a long time ago, and we are still, as you have suggested, still low percentage of women in parliament.

If we look at the women's role in the United Nations, I think as you go down the ladder I think that there are quite many women working in the United Nations system -- maybe well over 60 percent -- 62 percent. But as we go up the ladder, the percentage is going down. Maybe it should be around 18 -- less than 20 percent, from 12 to 80 percent. It's my firm position and vision that I'll try my best to level out, to try to meet the standards and goals of 50/50 women in parliament. But I'm not quite sure how long it will take. It may have to be gradual. But start from maybe the levels when we cannot fully accomplish the such 50/50 level and -- (inaudible) -- level -- but I will try my best to increase -- enhance the status in parliament of women within the United Nations systems.

**MR. HOGE:** Mr. Foreign Minister, I'm going to exercise my prerogative to ask the last question, because we're out of time. You spent a lot of time in the United States. You won't be surprised from a good, blunt question from a journalist. Whether you like it or not, you're in a campaign. Are you going to win this job? (Laughter.)

**MIN. BAN:** That depends upon the judgment of the member states of the United Nations. And my campaign has not been long. It's been a little over three months,

compared with other candidates who have been campaigning for the last two years. (Laughter.) But if I may just generalize my campaign, I think I have received very positive responses from all round the world, and I'm encouraged by this. But since, as you said in your earlier remarks, the process of selecting a secretary-general is very complex and very sensitive, and I'm just ready to follow all the guidelines and suggestions by the member states. And I'm just making myself available and known -- my visions -- and this is part of my ongoing effort. And I'm going to do that until such time I will be able to serve the United Nations as secretary-general. That's my goal, and I hope my dream can be realized with the strong support and cooperation from all of you attending this luncheon today. Thank you very much.

**MR. HOGUE:** Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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