Grand Strategies: Literature, Statecraft, and World Order
Charles Hill

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Introduction

JOANNE MYERS: I'm Joanne Myers, director of Public Affairs Programs, and on behalf of the Carnegie Council I'd like to thank you for joining us.

Professor Hill is known as a superb diplomat, who recently became even more celebrated as the architect behind a very popular course at Yale, called Grand Strategy. It is a class that restores literature as a tutor for statecraft.

Following his distinguished career in the foreign service, the State Department, and even a stint working with former Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali at the United Nations, Professor Hill relocated to Yale to teach and address the gap he saw in university education, especially for those who wanted to pursue a course in leadership, strategy, and statecraft.

It wasn't so long ago that great literature was the school of statesmen. But for some decades now this hasn't been the case, and the study of statecraft has suffered.

In his fascinating new book, *Grand Strategies: Literature, Statecraft, and World Order*, Professor Hill addresses this lag by recapturing a tradition that instructs one how to be a leader. This book is intended almost as a primer for the use of power, fate of alliances, war and peace, and the ideas about them.

"Grand strategy," our speaker says, "is knowing where you are coming from, where you are going, and taking everything into account." He believes that the immersion of classic texts can familiarize one with real-world experiences. This understanding may then be brought to bear on contemporary issues as we train young diplomats for tomorrow.

Professor Hill effectively looks at the intersection of great literature and politics as he focuses on three main themes.

- First, he tries to recover a lost dimension of education and leadership, strategy, and statecraft. He writes that "because leaders must decide what to do in a crisis before all the facts and ramifications can be known, works of literature should be studied, as they are full of such examples."

- Secondly, he tries to show how a grand strategy needs to consider all possible angles of the situation, considering that all the facts may be unknowable at the time a decision needs to be taken.

- Third, he shows how through the centuries there have been common patterns that have established an international system capable of maintaining world order. In the past, political circumstances were not only the backdrop for drama, but authors often thought about ideas as they took pen to paper.

As Professor Hill takes us on a literary journey traveling through the great books of Western history, literature, and philosophy, he finds insights about power, order, and strategy which seem to have one thing in common: They all

illuminate the grand political developments of their day. It is no wonder that our speaker sees literature as the tutor of statecraft.

If you share a belief that the past can inform the present and that reading great works of literature is a source of instruction for governing during these turbulent times, then you would be smart in choosing *Grand Strategies* as a place to begin your own personal tutorial.

Please join me in welcoming our guest today, Charles Hill.

Thank you for coming.

Remarks

CHARLES HILL: Thanks very much, and thanks for coming.

I will talk for a little bit about the book and then I hope that we can have some discussion.

This was a difficult book to write. I came to the idea of it quite a long time ago, when I was a college teacher, which I began to do while I was working at the United Nations for the secretary-general in the 1990s. I became aware then that literature as I had been taught it, in the sense of the great works of literature of the Western tradition, but beyond that as well, was really fading away from the curriculum. That seemed to me to be a great loss.

So I looked into this. I went back to my own readings of a long time ago.

It seemed to me, from my experience in the foreign service of the United States and as a United Nations official, that the things that really mattered to people in roles of high statecraft were above and beyond the reach of most of the policy studies that were being centered in university education.

How would you get at those higher, more difficult issues? To me it seemed that literature, many great works—not all of them, but many of them—were written and were speaking with a strong sense of the international strategic context. They ought to be looked at, perhaps re-interrogated, from the point of view of high statecraft to see if they revealed more of this than the usual critics of literature have found.

It has been pretty obvious that over a period of generations literary critics have not looked at major works from this angle. They have been looked at from the point of view of interpersonal relationships, maybe religious issues, of sociological trends, but not really from the angle that I was trying to get at. So I began to do that.

It was a lot harder than I thought it would be. I wrote this book, by my count, about four and a half times. Each book was legitimately almost a different book.

I have come to realize that when you want to write a really good book, the idea is to make it look easy. To make it look perfectly obvious, like this is the way that it would come out if you set about doing what I was setting about to do. I hope that I have achieved that. I can just tell you that it wasn't easy. Looking easy is one of the hardest things you can possibly do.

The main topic or issue here is represented in or by the book jacket. Although I knew the painting, it didn't really occur to me until the book was just about finished that the painting by Rembrandt of "Aristotle Contemplating the Bust of Homer" was really a summation of what I had written.

The painting is in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. You may remember when it was purchased, three decades or so ago. It was a big event. I think it was the highest price paid for a painting at that time in art history.

Aristotle is portrayed by Rembrandt with his hand on the bust of Homer. It's clear from that bust that Homer is blind. He is a poet of the classic sort. You can sense that something is coming out of the poet's head into Aristotle. Homer is the author of *The Iliad*, which is the great work on war—the "poem of force."

This knowledge and revelation is somehow coming into the head of Aristotle, the great philosopher, and it is being transferred through him, down to what he is wearing, which is a golden chain around his neck. It's hard to see in the painting, but on the seal at the end of the chain is the depiction of Alexander the Great. Aristotle famously was the tutor of Alexander the Great before he became great.

Here you have philosophy and literature in the form of poetry, you have war, and you have statecraft. This is history, politics, and literature pulled together.

Rembrandt is also depicting Aristotle in the dress of a Dutch stockholder of Rembrandt's time, which is significant because the Netherlands at this time was becoming one of the first real states in the international system.

Rembrandt painted this at the end of the Thirty Years War, which produced the Treaty of Westphalia, and established the starting point of the international system that we now inhabit ourselves. It has gone through a lot of trouble, a lot of vicissitudes, but we are still in that international system that came out of the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648.

This painting was painted in, I think, 1650 [editor's note: 1653]. The Dutch costume shows the modern commercial state coming into being after the Thirty Years War, which was a war between states and the Holy Roman Empire. The war marked the beginning of the downfall of the empire as the fundamental unit of international affairs and the rise of the state as the fundamental entity of international diplomacy and international affairs. All of that just compresses what this book is about.

It's also important because the putting together of these different categories—poetry, literature, philosophy, history, war and peace—is what I have called pre-disciplinary. In the university, a time comes when the body and totality of knowledge is fenced off and disciplines come into being.

"This is my field. I've got a fence around it. I'm a political scientist." Or I'm a historian, sociologist, economist, literary critic, or whatever. "I'm in my field, you're in your field, and we don't have a whole lot to do with each other. You actually are not supposed to come into my field because I'm the expert about this and you are not." So it is a kind of enclosure of knowledge.

What I am writing about, depicted by Rembrandt, in this book is pre-disciplinary. It is before the fencing-off of these different categories. When you look at a great work of literature such as *The Iliad* or *The Odyssey*, you become, if you are attuned to this, immediately clear that they are all mixed together. What is a matter of personal morality, what is a matter of theology or religion, what is a matter of poetry, of generalship—they're all in there together. No one says, "Now we'll talk about this but we won't talk about anything else." You've got to put them together.

That's what statecraft really is, because you can't only say, when you have got to make a decision, "I'm only going to address this one part of it." You've got to put them all together in your mind and make some sense out of it.

In the subtitle "literature," the first word, is that. The best way to describe that is the person who has to make the decision and has got to decide before knowing. You have to make a decision before you can know all of the ramifications, before you can have all the studies made, before you have all the data, before all the policy wonks have come forward to give you their advice. You can't wait for that to be done because the course of world events will simply overwhelm you. You've got to decide.

I first became aware of this when I was working in the policy planning staff at the time when Henry Kissinger was secretary of state. That was a time of economic crisis not unlike the one we have been going through in our time, with the oil embargo and long lines at the gas pumps. This is the mid-1970s.

The secretary of state and the president had the advice of all of the best economists that they could bring together. Four or five of them were my colleagues in the policy planning staff. I was taking notes in the meetings.

Secretary Kissinger said totally flat-out, "I don't know anything about economics. But I've got to make a decision,

I've got to make recommendations to the president, and what do you guys think I should do?"

What comes forward are six different economic proposals that don't match each other. What then does the practitioner of statecraft at the highest level do about that? In a sense, that's what you will see when you probe into some of these works.

When you read *The Odyssey*, you know that you've just got to act, you've got to make that decision. You can't say, "Well, let me think it over," or, "Let me ask some more experts before I make my decision." That is literature at the highest level.

The second word in the subtitle, statecraft, is a kind of corollary to this. That is when I say "you," I'm speaking really of decision-makers at the top. The statesmen—"you" have to take everything into account. You've got to realize that everything matters.

This seems to change in the course of American foreign policy and world affairs from one era to another. In some time that I have been involved with, the leaders have taken pretty much everything into account, and at other times they have not. I have seen that shift between the Cold War period and the post-Cold War decade.

In the Cold War everything that happened was given some serious attention. There could be a coup rumor in the Seychelles Islands and bells would go off in the operations center of the State Department. People would be called in at 3 o'clock in the morning to look at the cables coming in and to decide whether there was really something going on there or not, and whether to wake the secretary of state up, or even notify the White House. It mattered.

The end of the Cold War brought a pretty sharp change in that, when Secretary of State James Baker pretty openly said, "I am really going to focus on these three or four major things. The rest, I'm not. I'm going to leave the rest to the State Department. They'll do that. I'll just do these three or four major things."

It's a very different way of looking at it. It seems to me that that's not the best way to do it.

You can see this when you look at business. I've been an outside director of a Silicon Valley corporation for about ten or twelve years. I gave that up when we sold the company a few years ago. But it was clear that the CEO of a major company has got to take everything into account. You can't say, "I'm not going to bother with quality control. I'm only going to bother with manufacturing."

You've got to deal with your suppliers. Every angle has to be covered. You've got to be able to move across that range of issues.

This, too, relates to education. I mentioned my perception that literature was fading from the curriculum. This question of statecraft is also something that most of the curriculum does not address, because we are now in an era of great advance in social science, and the social sciences are in some sense encroaching upon other fields. I have seen that happen at Stanford and at Yale. It is happening everywhere. There is more pressure upon the humanities—"Why don't you adopt social science techniques because we can push those into your field and have good results?"

When you do that, you find that the social scientists are trying to eliminate variables. They are trying to produce an irreplicable scientific-like result in a social issue. That means you're going to focus on a small corner of a problem, where you screen out many of the variables, because only with that can you get a result that is replicable.

In statecraft you can't do that. You've got to consider all; It's nothing but variables. Variables are inundating you. You can't say, "Stop. I only want to consider these three or four issues and not the others."

This is hard for students to grasp. Maybe we can talk about this a little bit in the discussion time, because it is so assumed by them that empirical studies, social science studies, those methodologies are the way you do everything, and that if you go through that methodology you will find the answer.

This comes from our course called Grand Strategy, which we have been teaching. I do this with Professor Paul

Kennedy and Professor John Lewis Gaddis, and we have recently been joined by Ambassador John Negroponte, Walter Russell Mead, and Paul Solman of *The Lehrer News Hour*, as part of our faculty.

We find that when students are brought into the literary realm they don't quite know what to do with it, because the answers aren't clear. That's the main point in a way, that we are dealing in a realm where the answers aren't clear, where you can't just decide to do some research and come up with the proper answer. It's much more complicated, uncertain, and risky than what they are used to doing in their own work.

There is a drop-back factor, that when you are up in that realm and you are dealing with trying to make sense out of just what really is going on in the section that I take from *The Iliad*, at the start of the book, called "The Embassy to Achilles." There are three ambassadors sent to Achilles, who is sulking in his tent because he is angry. He has left the Greek forces in the Trojan War, and they know that if he doesn't come back to the Greek army that they are going to lose.

So the three ambassadors come out: Odysseus, Phoenix, and Ajax. Each one has a different way of approaching Achilles. There are personal things involved and sexual things involved. There is kind of a theology, strategy, philosophy, and even economics and technology behind it. What does all this add up to? What is going on here? How do you unscramble this?

Students tend to want to drop back into a more comfortable zone where you can just do your methodology, do your problem sets, and get the answer.

The third thing from the subtitle of the book is world order. You can see across the range of the works that I am dealing with in the book, that there is a slow accretion of ideas, techniques, and incipient institutions, that begin to build a structure of world order.

The early part of the book deals with the ancient works simply to show that the modern world order, which we can call the Westphalian state system, is not based on nothing, it doesn't just spring full-blown. It is based on matters that were recognized, that are familiar to us when we read about them, that go back to the earliest works of antiquity.

It takes shape with the end of the Thirty Years War and the Treaty of Westphalia. The creation of the beginning, the outlines, of an international state system that is very simple. You can see this in the book, although I don't explain it. It's not a didactic book. You've got to read it, think about it, and begin to pull these things out of these works yourself.

The genius of this modern system is that it is procedural, it's not substantive. If you are a state and you agree to try to adhere to international law and are willing to participate in international organizations, sign on to certain very basic norms, like no slavery, and if you agree to field a professional military and professional diplomatic service, then you are, at least you are presumed to be, a good citizen of the international state system. It doesn't matter what else you do.

Your political theory, politics, religion, culture, and language doesn't matter as long as you sign on to these basic procedural requirements.

So how did that happen? The book mentions this with some examples.

It happens because the Thirty Years War of 1618-1648 takes place at about the culmination of what might be called the reconnaissance of the world. Suddenly people around the world were made aware that there were other people around the globe who were very different from us. They were so different in culture, religion, practices, languages, and everything you can think of, that how can we possibly ever get along? How can there be any cooperation in such a maniacally diverse situation?

The answer that comes forward in this achievement of our world order is the only way to do it is to make it just procedural. Don't try to tell others what to do in terms of how they think, just how they act, and the basic structures that they will adopt and interchange their doings with each other.

The other item that comes forward out of this time deals with religion. In the 1648 Westphalian system you can have, speaking to the states who are going to be members of this system, whatever religion you may wish. You may have an established religion, you may be a Buddhist state, you may be a Catholic state, you may be a Muslim state. You can all be legitimate, welcomed members of the system. But don't bring your holy book to the negotiating table. Just keep that off to one side. That worked pretty well.

In the book I turn to some of non-Western literature to show the strains, the very painful and difficult situations, that have arisen around the world in different societies because of the international system's demands. We also begin to see that our world system is not in good shape. It has been damaged from the inside as well as it has been assaulted from the outside.

In some way, every major war of the modern age has been a war against the established international system. This includes the wars that we are in today, because in its Islamist form it is an assault on the established state system with the idea of undermining it, overthrowing it, and replacing it.

Perhaps most detrimental has been the lack of good stewardship from within the system itself.

At the end, there is no clear answer. The book is about statecraft and decision-making at the highest levels as seen through literature, which can give you guidance but it can't give you the flat-out answer. It points in the right direction.

I hope it's an invitation for thought and discussion. I would hope that book clubs would take a shot at this, because we need to think in these terms and at these literary levels in order to understand the situation that is all around us today.

I'll stop there and hear from you.

Questions and Answers

QUESTION: My name is Samir Sanbar. I was a former head of the UN Department of Public Information.

CHARLES HILL: I remember you.

QUESTIONER: Thank you. And I thank you very much for this very enlightening statement, and I look forward to reading your book.

You spoke at length and rightly about the new world order. In a sense, would you not think that there may be also something like an international world disorder? That is, the old order is not yet totally crumbled, but the new one is not yet taking shape, and we are in between. Rather than a new world order there is still an unclear, vague order. Thank you.

CHARLES HILL: That is a profound question, and in a sense the book is about that as well.

There is certainly a new world disorder, and the 20th century in some sense is that. It has been pointed out again and again how horrendous the 20th century was, and it doesn't look as though we are coming out of that. We were in the long 20th century that is creeping into our 21st century, and disorder is certainly there.

We remember at the UN when governance just suddenly stopped in Somalia in 1992. That was a shock then. We are now so used to disorder that it doesn't shock us as much anymore. But then, not quite 20 years ago, the idea that a state could fail was utterly shocking.

I remember it was a colleague of mine from the foreign service, Jerry Hillman, who in an article in a journal coined the phrase "failed state." People said, "Failed states? States don't fail. They may have a coup d'état, they may change their government, but there is always going to be a state."

But states were failing. We have seen in several cases, the loss of control over the territory of a state by its government. Not the whole state failing, but perhaps that the hinterland is gone. That has been a big assault on the established world order.

The United Nations is very much involved and concerned with this, because the UN is the world organization of its member states. The UN is predicated on this world order that I am talking about. So, if there is disorder, what is the UN going to do about that?

One of the most troubling developments in some sense, although we have favored it, has been the attempt since the end of the Cold War to get a new world order ahead of the one we have now.

In some important sense that's what the European Union is. The idea that the elements of the established Westphalian state system were really no longer needed or obsolescent, or perhaps troubling, and that Europe could essentially get away from them.

They could transcend them, downgrade the state, give away state sovereignty, either devolving it below or passing it up to Brussels, so there wouldn't be sovereign states as there used to be, and that will change our military approach. You see that in Europe as well, "It will be all diplomacy, and we'll create something that will be a model for the world to follow which will not be the established order." That is showing itself not to be working.

It has done some damage intellectually, because it has created in many minds the idea that the world system that we now have should be done away with. This has been a matter from the intellectuals within the system.

I'm not arguing that this system is ideal or wonderful or perfect. It really is not. It's pretty rickety and it's shot through with problems. But there's no other system around.

In some sense, the book without arguing that, does kind of show that there are things that are revealed in literature that just happen to seem very much akin to this international system.

For example, when you look at *Robinson Crusoe* from the angle that I'm looking at, you can see that what he's doing is building a state. At a certain point in *Robinson Crusoe,* 80 percent of the way through the book, he says, "Now I have the first principle of a state, which is population," because there's Friday, and then behind Friday come other people onto his island.

If you've read or taught these books, a big clang goes off, because that's what Aristotle says in *Politics*—you've got to have a population first if you're going to have a state.

That kind of thing begins to give you a sense that we shouldn't lightly dismiss some of these fundamentals.

QUESTION: Allen Young. Until the beginning and maybe the middle of the 20th century, there was a common canon, at least in the West. Most students who later went on to statecraft and diplomacy studied that common canon, but it seems to be disintegrating today.

The question is whether the students who are now not exposed to a common canon will be able to work together later when they go into the foreign services in their respective countries, in the way that they did 100 years ago?

CHARLES HILL: Yes, that's the major aspect of intellectual history. The canon wars really flamed up in the late 1980s and early 1990s. I was just coming out of the diplomatic service then and going to Stanford. I don't think that they were any more fiery or disputatious debates at universities anywhere in the country than at Stanford.

Essentially, the canon there was destroyed. Then, one way or another, talking about great books and courses on Western civilization, were really ravaged and largely seemed to be on their way out entirely replaced with other forms of learning. The situation is recovering now somewhat.

At Yale we have had a great books program for freshmen all the way through. It has gone for something like 70

years now. The reason why we have survived with Yale's great books program is that we have not called it "Great Books." We have not called it "American Civilization" or "Western Civilization"; we haven't even called it "Civilization." We have been moving under cover of boredom, because we have called it "Directed Studies."

No one knows what that means so they can't blow it out of the water. So we're still there and really thriving.

Because of that record, we are asked to talk to other universities and colleges that want similar programs. We know pretty well where these other programs are coming. They are springing up here and there, often in universities that have a religious tradition behind them, but in small liberal arts colleges as well.

I'm not so pessimistic about that. In some sense, this book may be starting to ride a little bit of a wave that's bringing us back to that.

QUESTION: Daniel Chin. I'm a midshipman at the United States Merchant Marine Academy.

My question is: In your study of successful statesmen, do you see a common set of experiences that they had that made them successful statesmen? In other words, if we wanted to create a generation of successful statesmen, how do we go about doing it?

CHARLES HILL: One thing that I find to be common to them is that they read. At the beginning of the book, I go through a list of "Queen Elizabeth I read this," and "Saint Thomas More read this," on and on down.

Most notable is Winston Churchill. Winston as a young officer in the Malakand Field Force in the northwest areas of the British Raj, when he was in his early 20s, instead of going off to play polo in the afternoon with the other officers, he would stay in his quarters and read Gibbons' *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*.

That's the Rembrandt painting too. The painting shows Aristotle passing through the knowledge of Homer to Alexander the Great. That is in some sense book learning through a teacher.

This is an important thing. Machiavelli tells you in *The Prince* what you need to do to be a successful statesman. He says that the greatest things in statecraft are the founding and the preservation of a polity. That, in the American sense, is Washington and Lincoln. But in doing this he says, "Go back and read this." He doesn't give you citations, but when you are reading Machiavelli's *The Prince* you know that, although he's not giving you the title of the book, that he's talking about Pericles in Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War*, or he's talking about Dante.

But an important point is that Machiavelli is not saying: "Go to this book because it's like a guidebook." You can't go to it and look up where my particular problem in statecraft today can be solved by looking at page 194 of Grotius or Virgil. But Machiavelli says it's a central part of becoming a successful practitioner of the field.

QUESTION: Hello my name is **Sandra Curtain**. My question is in terms of a shifting world order. An interesting phenomenon happened at the UN recently when sanctions against Iran were brought up. Whereas people expected certain countries to go against it, two countries that are not considered by the world big powers were the ones who said "No"—Turkey and Brazil. I wonder how you see that in terms of the changing world order that we are in now.

CHARLES HILL: Thanks. Those are important points.

On the first one, I can be pretty pessimistic about great books too. My pessimism is in the field of literature. I can see the great books coming back in the categories of Thucydides, or maybe Homer. But in literature, particularly American literature has been almost eradicated from the curriculum. I mean it's an astonishing thing. I can't account for it.

Just on the edges, not as part of my courses, I have given a kind of a literature literacy quiz to students now and again, with about 100 simple identifications questions on it. Yale students with unbelievably rich educations in secondary schools, are getting scores of six and seven out of 100. I can tell that they're just making stuff up to try to get one more. They're so used to getting 100 in everything they do, that they realize it's blank, blank, blank.

I was told the last time that *Moby Dick* was written by Charles Dickens. They never heard of Emerson. They can't identify Hemingway.

The one thing that every high school student in America has read in American literature is *The Great Gatsby*. It must be the one token book that has been allowed into the high school curriculum. American literature is in a devastated condition.

On the question of Turkey and Brazil, Venezuela, and a few other countries, this is a very deleterious sign. It relates very closely to what we are talking about here tonight. We, the United States, and our friends and allies in large part have really sought to aid, and encourage, and want to see Turkey and Brazil and other countries in that same category rise to positions of really substantial world power.

When they now are doing with that in the case of Turkey and Brazil? They turn in support of an international renegade and against established international law that is trying to be shored up by a multilateral group of good-citizen members of the international system—the United Nations, the United States, the British, the French, even Russia and China in some cases.

Why are they turning in that direction? It comes from their assessment that the other side is on a roll, that the established international system is not the wave of the future, but that the future may lie with Iran. It is not merely Iran, but out there is a new model—and this is a new model that you hear a lot about—the so-called Chinese model. The Chinese model is one of a voraciously open economic approach and a closed political world. It is a one-party state.

If you look at what Charles Taylor, the philosopher, calls the "social imaginaries of the modern world" that have really held it together, that are sort of the content of this international system, they are open trade and open expression of opinion and sovereignty in the people, which adds up to democracy eventually.

Those three good things, if you follow the Chinese model, are all going to be gone. The Chinese model is really attractive around the world, because if you are the strong man running your one-party African state, this is giving you tremendous legitimacy, because wouldn't it be great to be just like China and get rich and powerful and not let any political freedoms take hold?

You've put your finger on something that is a real worry for me.

QUESTION: You made a quasi-judgment about the European Union. I would be very interested in your assessment of the regional organizations that exist, such as the Organization of American States, African Union, ASEAN, and even NATO, which has been expanded. A couple of them have been used as instruments for at least an attempt at conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and peacekeeping.

I'd be interested to know your assessment of this world order, and if you will for the future use this structure more.

CHARLES HILL: The regional organizations are very important. They are written into the UN Charter. They are recognized as an essential kind of middle ground for international cooperation.

You've got to look at them one by one, because there is no clear commonality among them.

NATO, I'm afraid, is going in the wrong direction. The defense budgets are being cut. We have a lot of NATO allies who are participating in Afghanistan, or they were in Iraq, but they are pastry cooks or laundry units. They're not allowed by their home offices to do much, and it is not going in a better direction.

One of the important things with the African Union, if it is really taking hold, is that the old OAU, Organization of African Unity, has turned into the African Union. That may be something as simple as saying that an organization that did not have an office that was open every day of the year in one place now does**.** So that's a step forward probably. You see the African Union doing things in East Africa that are pretty impressive.

ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, has been the most admirable through the years. That's something that American foreign policy took very seriously, its relationship with ASEAN 30 years ago. American foreign policy more recently has kind of stepped away from that, not recognizing ASEAN as being as important as it is.

What has taken place just this past summer is maybe bringing ASEAN to a new level. That is the Chinese assertion of its longstanding claim that all of the South China Sea belongs to China as territorial waters. In other words, "The boundary of China runs along the coast of Vietnam and along the coast of Indonesia and Brunei and along the coast of the Philippines, and that's all ours, that's all China's."

ASEAN has said, "No, it's not yours. These are international waters. You can't do that."

That has brought ASEAN together in a stronger way, because China has said, "This is a problem that has to be solved bilaterally between China and the Philippines, China and Vietnam, and China and Brunei."

ASEAN has said, "No, this is going to be an ASEAN cause. We are going to do this together." That is a very strong statement by a good regional organization.

QUESTION: Thank you. I'm John Brademas of New York University. I'm a Peloponnesian. My late father was born in Kalamata and I am the first Greek-American elected to the Congress of the United States.

My question: Given your experience at the United Nations and in diplomacy generally, do you see ways in which the United Nations could play a more effective role in building conditions of peace and security?

CHARLES HILL: It certainly can play a more effective role. It has to come from the member states, and there's no way around that.

The United Nations is not a free-floating institution that is up there untethered to the states. Too often, people who are the best friends of the United Nations have said that it is. That only causes states to pull away from their own institution.

So it's got to be something where the leadership from within the Security Council has got to be more focused on the United Nations and more dedicated to making the United Nations work.

That has improved a great deal since I was working at the United Nations.

When the United States went to war in Kosovo in 1999, bombing Belgrade, for what was it, 80 days in a row? Can you imagine that? In 1999 the U.S. Air Force and NATO air forces bombed a European capital for 80 days. It didn't even go to the Security Council for any kind of authorization whatsoever.

In 1995 the Dayton Accord that was designed to provide a resolution for the Bosnian war deliberately said no UN representatives are going to be allowed into this conference.

Tremendous damage was done to the United Nations in the 1990s, particularly in Bosnia, because they had an ongoing war or conflict situation. The United Nations was forced by its leading member states to send blue helmets as peacekeepers into an ongoing war, where they were kidnapped and chained, and it was a disaster.

It is getting better. We have talked about reform of the Council, which should be done, but you can't get it done because as soon as it goes forward some nation will stand up to block it. Argentina will block Brazil, China will block Japan, Pakistan will block India, all the other European countries will block Germany. So you can't get that done.

It is there to be worked with, because in fact without reform, the Security Council still works well. They're used to each other. It's not the way it ought to be, it should be reformed, but it's a kind of a Burkean thing. It gets

established, people understand how it works, it works reasonably well, and there is some kind of collegiality. It's not a disaster that reform has failed twice in the last couple of decades. So I am sort of hopeful about that.

JOANNE MYERS: Thank you very much for illuminating some of the great works in history.

I'd like to thank you all for joining us.

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