

**Remarks by Deputy Secretary-General Mark Malloch Brown
to the press at UN headquarters
June 7, 2006**

Q: This speech that you gave, you probably knew that it would provoke a confrontation. Why now, when the United Nations is in the throes of such a big crisis, financial crisis? Why are you provoking this confrontation?

DSG: Well I think that is exactly why. You're right the speech was very, very carefully worked. I struggled with every word of it, and some of you know that I normally only speak spontaneously from notes. But I felt this was something very important to say and to say now, because we are in crisis. And I don't need to tell any of you that I've been deeply criticized by the G-77 over the recent months for telling them that they too need to get their house in order, and engage around this reform agenda. But you know it takes two sides to make a bargain, and to me it was enormously important to deliver that call to my American friends. But to do it in a way - and this is where, I'm sure you all have, but I really do urge you to read the speech - to do it in a way which is not, I don't think can possibly be characterized as anti-US but which is intended as a very pro-US speech in that its central point is an appeal for more consistent public leadership by the United States in the United States in the United Nations. And it is a critique not just of this Administration but of Administrations going all the way back to [Harry] Truman, although in my delivery of it Ted Sorensen sort of made a pitch [that] maybe [John] Kennedy should be exempted from this. It has been very hard for Administrations to stand up and publicly avow the extraordinary use they make of the United Nations. And so that was the appeal which was, engage here, engage consistently, and go out and engage with the American public to say the UN matters. And, you know, for the life of me I can't understand how that can be construed as an anti-American speech.

Q: Maybe it is not anti-American, but it is definitely not pro-American. It is also confrontational because you are picking up issues where you know it would have provoked such a reaction from the United States. The question is, why at this juncture?

DSG: I don't need to tell you, the men and women of the press here, that this Organization is slipping towards a very serious crisis. We have a budget gap which expires at the end of June. We have two sides to the debate talking past each other, not engaging in finding solutions. And as someone who has devoted most of his working life to the UN and to international organizations in different ways, I feel very, very strongly that we have to stand up and appeal for engagement, sanity, by both sides. And this was part of that strategy. And as I say it is a balanced strategy, because as you know the G-77 think that I've been a little bit of a pain in the neck for demanding the same of them too.

Q: Mr. Deputy Secretary-General, do you believe that the statements and ideas that you spelled out in the speech are notions that are commonly shared by diplomats, ambassadors, people who study the UN, but no one else has really had the courage, or forthrightness to speak about it openly for fear of exactly the type of response you got from Ambassador Bolton?

DSG: Well, you know, you move in the same diplomatic circles that I do. I think it has been a dynamic of the UN for a very long time - this desire to see America lead, and yet at the same time frustration when the leadership is not always felt to be there. So you know, I certainly think I was speaking to views which are much more widely held than by me alone.

Q: As a freelancer in this building for 16 years for both American and British papers, I've had a hard time getting American editors interested in stories from here. Aren't you giving the press a pass there? Because it is not the Government. The Government does set the agenda to an extent making speeches, but should we be blaming the Administration for not trumpeting their involvement with the UN and middle America? But American papers are not interested in running stories, and there is some independence from the Government supposedly.

DSG: Well look, I think you have a fair point and you know after all we have lots of press officers here and in the Funds and Programmes like UNDP, who are also trying to push those stories. But, you know, I used in the Q&A after the speech the example of the Marshall Plan. When the Marshall Plan was launched it was not popular with American popular opinion. American soldiers had just come back from the exhausting war with many losses and the Americans, less than others, but still significantly, had borne the cost of a huge war and suddenly America's leaders turned around and said we need to invest significantly abroad. And the way that happened was, you know, General Marshall himself, President Truman, but also people like Averell Harriman, barnstorming America to build support. And I think the UN is always going to be a difficult sell in America. And that is why I say it is a bi-partisan issue. I was not signaling out Republicans. I think for any Administration, it is always a bit of a hot potato, kind of easier to not deal with, because it does provoke a lot of negativism in certain parts of the country. But, you know, my point is, now more than ever with the emerging new global security order of global warming, of illegal immigration, of drugs and crime, of terrorism, America needs a global foreign policy. And the UN is a critical part of that. And, you know, this was not a speech addressed to America at large. Your attention today shows that it has become that, but it was a speech addressed to foreign policy makers and political leaders to say, look, both parties, you're going to need us more than ever. Therefore you have to engage to help make this institution a better institution. And you need to engage, if I dare say so, with your own public opinion to explain better why the UN matters to American interests. And, you know, that was the message and it was not intended to be either partisan or provocative in the way it seemed.

Q: Aren't you picking on Fox because the rest of the media ignores the UN?

DSG: We'll let Fox News ask their own question.

Q: Why did you, Mr. Malloch Brown, why did you single out Fox News for criticism? And also, after you answer that question, what sort of response are you giving to Ambassador Bolton who is obviously outraged by your speech?

DSG: Well, on the first - flattery. I praised you last year for the strength of your investigative reporting and I stand by that, and you know probably like everyone else here I'm a heavy user of Fox News. I proudly appeared on Chris Wallace's show and I've had more calls on that appearance than almost anything else that I've done. I have many, like any one else, many

favourite commentators, and some less so, in the Fox stable. But, you know, Fox, in addition to being a very strong reporting enterprise, is one with a strong editorial line. And, you know, I actually think there are alternative points of views. So actually if you read, it was not criticism of Fox, it was just saying, get alternative points of view out there. Why is the rest of the media, and those who talk to the rest of the media, not doing a better job of engaging the debate with an alternative editorial point of view on how we do? And so, I suppose I'm going to pay you a further tribute, which no doubt, I will live to regret, Jonathan. You know for better or worse, Fox has become one of those terms, like you have a Sony, not a walkman, you send a FedEx not a package, and for better or worse to a sophisticated policy audience, it's a symbol of things beyond just Fox and what it does. But if you somehow think it is inappropriate, was improper to say it, and you've read what I said, and somehow do feel it was an attack on Fox, my apologies. Because it certainly wasn't intended as that.

Q: The interpretation, having read it several times, and among colleagues, and what not, is that, yes indeed, Fox was singled out for criticism, and takes the brunt of criticism for having criticized problems at the United Nations that certainly the American public and taxpayers want to get corrected.

DSG: Let me just be clear. And again to the point that Fox has, as I have acknowledged much more openly I expect than any other UN official, Fox has broken stories, and very good stories in a news sense. They haven't always made my life easier but they've been fair stories, fair scoops. But that doesn't mean that I should be happy with your editorial line being the only one heard. It is a reflection of my respect for its power that I am encouraging others to get out there and have stories about the UN as well.

Q: Taking your point that it was not an anti-US speech, it is being seen that way certainly in Washington, certainly by Ambassador Bolton this morning, who went further and said he thought it was illegitimate of you to be criticizing the American public. You were patronizing them, etcetera, etcetera. My question is will you have, have you had, any direct communication with Mr. Bolton or another member of the US Government? And if you haven't, will you?

DSG: Oh, I have no doubt. As I said in the speech, my job requires me to be in contact with the American Government, both through the Mission here and the State Department. But on this, we have talked to a member of the Mission about it. I have not talked to John Bolton. He has talked to the Secretary-General about it, as I think he said this morning. So it is evident we haven't heard the last on this. But, you know, again, Warren if you will forgive me, you did a good job of reporting my speech but my impression was, that, perhaps, at least when he first spoke to this, he had read your article and not the speech. And, as I say, I think the speech speaks very well for itself in a balanced position which does not deserve the characterizations it was given this morning.

Q: I think that Ambassador Bolton in a curious way has done you a favour here by elevating your speech to a level that it may not have reached otherwise which then allows you to have an ear in Washington that you might not otherwise have had.

DSG: I think, as I argued in the speech, we have tremendously good relations with the State Department and Secretary [Condoleezza] Rice. I don't argue in the speech, but it is the case, we have lots of open doors on Capital Hill and I think all those open doors will be as open as ever. The worry for me is that the reaction to the speech will polarize things in Washington and this was not meant to be a polarizing speech. Let's step back here, this is the senior official who is routinely described, in fact was described as I was introduced to speak yesterday, as the most pro-American senior UN official, one who has taken other stakeholders here to task. So I think it is incumbent on everybody to step back and say, why would such an individual give a speech like this? And I hope that that is what will remain from this speech, which was a call from a friend to think hard about how the US could handle the UN better.

Q: Ambassador Bolton said this morning that the UN could be the victim if the Secretary-General doesn't repudiate your remarks, and I'm wondering what you would take that to mean, and if that worries you?

DSG: This is a time where it is important that truth be spoken, and that everybody understands each other, and you know, I think this speech - I hope - will contribute to that. And, you know, the Secretary-General is not going to repudiate me. As Steph said in his comments at noon, these are issues for those of us trying to steer this ship - the UN - towards safe harbour. We have to speak to these very threatening storms that surround this organization, and I don't want to look back in a few months' time to have some kind of shipwreck over this budget issue, and to be accused of not having spoken up and warned people that we face a very difficult moment in this organization's life.

Q: Would you say that you wanted to encourage a certain editorial position as opposed to that of Fox News, and you also mentioned Rush Limbaugh? The editorials are affiliated with political ideas. Don't you think that, in a way, you are? You said you don't want to polarize, but don't you think that you are playing American politics by doing that and that it is actually violating the UN staff rules, I would say?

DSG: I was just trying to get the [New York] Sun to go national.

Let me just say that I don't think so. My point is about choice, and in terms of ideas about the UN, and obviously trying to promote better stories about, better support for the UN in that discussion across the country, and I think there is plenty of bipartisan support for that. I do not think the UN has to be a partisan issue, and my greatest regret would be if the speech contributed to that, because this was an appeal to the Republicans, and in fact the closing oration of the speech came back to the name Vandenberg, and John Foster Dulles, precisely because this mustn't be partisan. This must be about what always is American foreign policy at its best - a bipartisan understanding that the UN matters to the US, and that the US without a strong UN involvement is a completely handicapped institution. But to secure that investment of US leadership you have to speak up for it, that it's not an institution whose capital can be sustained without a strong political investment in talking up the case for the organization.

Q: Isn't the problem that you are too closely identified, as the UN Deputy Secretary-General, with the Democratic Party, and the Democratic Party establishment? You were chosen for the

Chief of Staff originally in the meeting that was held in the house of former [U.S.] Ambassador Dick Holbrooke. You live in a house of George Soros, who is a major Democratic donor. You were speaking yesterday to a group that was basically former Clinton administration officials. Isn't it you who is polarizing the debate, and making the UN aligned with one political faction in the United States? Not only one political action, but the faction that happens not to be in power at the moment. Isn't that undermining the UN?

DSG: They happen to be the people who had asked me to this speech, but if you were to look at the speeches I have in the past given to AEI [the American Enterprise Institute], or to others, you will show that I am a genuinely bipartisan animal who will go wherever I have to go to make the case for the UN. I don't consider myself aligned with any American political establishment. I am British. I have worked in the UN and in international jobs all of my life. I just don't accept that characterization. But as I have said before, the one area where I would feel that this speech had failed was if indeed it was characterized as partisan, because that was not the purpose of it.

Thank you.