



THE CAIRO REVIEW INTERVIEW

THE ELUSIVE INTERNATIONAL ORDER

Ex-Slovenian President and candidate for United Nations Secretary-General Danilo Türk discusses the problem with superpowers, Europe's shortcomings, and the dangers of Middle East disintegration

On his recent visit to Cairo, **Danilo Türk** headed for the famed Egyptian Museum in between official meetings and public appearances. Among the objects that held his fascination was the mummy of Ramses II, whose 1259 BC accord with the Hittite kingdom, Türk knew well, is the oldest known peace treaty. Türk had lectured his students about the accord as an international law professor, but on this occasion his interest in diplomatic history carried a little symbolism: a few weeks earlier, the Slovenian government had nominated Türk to be a candidate for secretary-general of the United Nations.

If he wins the election later this year, Türk, 64, won't need a guide to show him around United Nations Headquarters, where a bronze replica of the Egyptian-Hittite treaty is displayed. After a distinguished academic career at the University of Ljubljana, he became newly independent Slovenia's first ambassador to the United Nations in 1992. During his tenure, he served as his country's representative on the UN Security Council. From 2000 to 2005, he served as assistant UN secretary-general for political affairs, under then-Secretary-General Kofi Annan. In 2007, he won election as the Republic of Slovenia's third president, serving a five-year term.

Türk has a long involvement in human rights, starting in the mid-1970s when he collaborated with Amnesty International on rights violations in the former Yugoslavia. In 1987, he initiated the Council for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms of Slovenia, and would go on to draft the human rights section of the country's first constitution. *Cairo Review* Managing Editor **Scott MacLeod** interviewed Türk in Cairo on March 8, 2016.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What are the failings of the United Nations? How would you critique its performance?*

DANILO TÜRK: The UN did not fulfill all expectations regarding, for example, prevention of armed conflicts, prevention of violence. This, of course, is a difficult task, but it is central in the system established by the Charter of the

◁ **Former Slovenian President Danilo Türk, Cairo, March 8, 2016. Scott MacLeod for the Cairo Review**

United Nations. It pertains to the work of the secretary-general, the Security Council, and also the General Assembly. And each of these bodies could do more in order to manage international relations in a way which would prevent armed conflict. Prevention is one of the deficiencies—well, it's one of the areas where the level of achievement is not adequate.

I think that the UN has not adjusted to the needs in the field of development sufficiently quickly. We have seen some progress but certainly there is more to be done. Let's take for example the communicable diseases and the epidemics that we have seen in recent years. Now the threat of epidemics has been known for several decades, and scientists have told us about this. The UN has not adjusted to these new needs, and clearly, as the Ebola crisis showed, the system is not well prepared to address this sort of situation quickly in a crisis management mode. Then, in the field of human rights we have had a kind of a haphazard development of various treaty regimes and institutions to address human rights, and over time this has made the system complicated—complicated and remaining weak. Now here, of course, the Charter didn't provide much guidance. But the seven decades of development have shown the importance of human rights, and I think the system has to be reformed in order to address these questions more effectively.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Are these shortcomings that can actually be addressed? Let's take the prevention of conflict.*

DANILO TÜRK: They can be addressed. And the question is, in what combination? Take for example the situation in Burundi these days. There are fears that the situation may deteriorate into violent conflict within the country and then of course that could lead to tensions, to further destabilization, in the Great Lakes region. And the discussion is, who ought to do more, and when? Now the Security Council and secretary-general have moved recently. There was a mission to Burundi. They have worked with the leaders of Africa, and this perhaps would be sufficient. But certainly the UN could have moved earlier than this into a higher gear, so to speak, sending missions and also figuring out with regional leaders on what to do to prevent that situation from deteriorating. So that's one example. The diagnostics work can be done in all situations, but moving from diagnosis to meaningful action requires a different mode than is being used at present.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Speaking of conflict resolution, you were assistant UN secretary-general for political affairs at the time of the Iraq invasion in 2003, which was carried out without a UN mandate. In hindsight, what could the UN have done that could have prevented the invasion?*

DANILO TÜRK: I'm afraid that this is a situation which the UN could not prevent, because there was a political decision to go for war—a decision that is regretted nowadays. I don't know anybody who would continue to believe that this was a wise decision, but it was a very powerful decision made in a very powerful place, and the UN has been against that. As you know, the idea of seeking Security Council authorization was there. That effort to obtain the authorization of the Security Council for military action in Iraq in 2003 did not succeed, and that was a very important signal from the United Nations that there is something essentially wrong with this policy. But of course that signal, that advice, was not heeded. In situations like this, it is very difficult for the United Nations to do something very effective. Now, the United Nations cannot be blamed for the war in Iraq. It was involved in post-conflict stabilization to the extent it was possible, but of course a lot of damage was done. Iraq is in a separate category altogether, I would say.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What other cases would you point to where the UN could have done more to prevent a conflict?*

DANILO TÜRK: Clearly Rwanda is such a case. In 1994, the UN was warned about the danger of genocide. There were specific reports to that effect coming from the human rights segment of the United Nations, and also from the peacekeeping operation which was deployed in Rwanda. But those warning signals were not properly understood by the Security Council that already had the situation in Rwanda on its agenda, and had regularly discussed the situation. The Security Council decided even to reduce the number of peacekeepers, instead of augmenting the mission or making it robust. And that was probably a big mistake on the part of the Security Council. Of course, it's always easy to be wise in hindsight. I don't want to suggest that this was an easy situation. Rwanda was happening at the same time when other situations were really very bad also, like the war in Bosnia, and so forth.

CAIRO REVIEW: *There's always going to be a political decision by some nations, especially superpowers, that will be a game changer in many situations. So what role can the UN or the secretary-general play—in the case of Iraq, to have saved America's decision makers from themselves?*

DANILO TÜRK: Probably it's very difficult to save the decision makers of the main powers from themselves. I'm not sure whether the United Nations can be expected to achieve this in all situations. The United Nations can be a wise advisor but cannot force a major power to change its policy. That's probably beyond the reach of the United Nations. One has to be realistic about that. We live in a world where there are great powers, and the great powers have their ways of resisting or ignoring the will

of the United Nations. That we have to be aware of, and I think the way to deal with these things is to work through the United Nations in a timely fashion.

CAIRO REVIEW: *How do you see the role of the secretary-general as a moral force in the world, to make a difference?*

DANILO TÜRK: This is a matter of a combination of techniques. Sometimes the main emphasis should be on quiet diplomacy, sometimes on telephone diplomacy, very quick work. Sometimes problems do not happen because they were prevented. This happens very often in the context of quiet diplomacy, quiet communication with the relevant states. The secretary-general also has to listen to the countries that are affected by problems. Sometimes more has to be done in that direction, in other words to understand the nature of the problem better and to have a more sophisticated approach to its solution. And sometimes it is necessary to speak publicly, to make a public case, to point out that there is something that has to be addressed.

Let's take a successful example from a recent time. There was violence after elections in Kenya in 2007–08. All the relevant leaders including the then-new Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, and the leaders of the African Union, the leaders of the region, thought that it would be useful to send Kofi Annan, the previous secretary-general, to Kenya; to mediate an effort for reform of the country, to stop violence, and provide for constitutional changes which would put Kenya on the path of peaceful development. And that has worked, because essentially, as Kofi Annan later explained, the whole world was behind him, the whole world was supporting him, there was no forum-shopping, there was no way of saying, "Okay, this mission should not be successful, let's try something else." And that's a good example, which says how important it is for the secretary-general to help orchestrate a kind of a generalized support, which is then a very important political asset in a mediation effort. I think that this example should be really given proper thought because in a variety of ways it is relevant to other problems in the world as well.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What does that imply about the style of a secretary-general? Should the secretary-general be largely a servant of the Security Council and the membership, or really take the lead and be an activist, a politician, if you will, in pursuit of global peace and development?*

DANILO TÜRK: Sometimes the latter, but not always, because one has to understand that the UN system gives primary responsibility for international peace and security to the Security Council. So the secretary-general always works in the framework of the Security Council. Now sometimes that work requires public statements, also pointing out the moral aspects of a particular problem, the moral dimension or the

need for a moral approach to a certain problem, and therefore public statements can be helpful. But this is not a general rule. Very often quiet diplomacy would be a better option. So moral voice, yes, and that has to always be on the mind of the secretary-general. But it cannot change the secretary-general into a kind of moralistic figure. I mean, moralizing and moral commitment are two different things. It's important to take a deeply moral approach to all problems, and then think what helps. Sometimes quiet diplomacy helps better than public statements. Public statements can also erode the authority of the secretary-general if they are not sufficiently thought through, if there are too many, and so forth. So one has to have a good sense of the measure with which one approaches this problem.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Are we entering a new phase in international governance?*

DANILO TÜRK: This is a question of what kind of global order we are likely to expect. Following the ending of the Cold War, the world entered into a long period of rather a fluctuating type of international relations. There is no firm international order established since the ending of the Cold War. The world has been changing constantly since the early 1990s, and it is quite possible that this type of situation will remain for a longer period of time. I remember a lecture given by George Kennan back in the mid-1990s. He was of course a very senior statesman and thinker. He was asked, "When can one expect a crystallization of a new order after the kind of seemingly orderly time of Cold War?" And he said, "Well, I don't know. We can expect a very long period of instability and changes because the kind of stable basis of the order which emerged after World War II is gone, and the new situation will take time." So I think that this was really a profound wisdom and a good understanding of the course of history. We should not eagerly expect a new crystallization quickly. I'm not sure whether quick crystallization would be a good thing for international relations.

So the question is, what is the basis of an international order that we can try to build, and then use for creating a good international system? I would say the basis is sovereignty of states. Again, we come back to the Charter. Sovereign equality of states remains the basis of international order for the future. Secondly, international norms. There is good reason to work for strengthening of international norms. We have seen unfortunately some regression in the past, especially in the norms relating to the use of force and law in armed conflicts. This is very unfortunate. We have seen certain situations when creation of norms was too slow, for example in the area of global warming. We had a Kyoto Protocol which did not fully succeed, and now we have the new Paris Agreement which hopefully will succeed. That shows that international norms are necessary and that this is accepted, but their creation is not always progressing with the right pace. The third element would be new forms of cooperation. If you take, for

example, the UN Sustainable Development Goals, they are very ambitious and they have universal applicability to developed and developing countries. Now how does one design international cooperation around those objectives, which are agreed to by everybody by consensus?

Let us take the very specific example of China. China is discussing their thirteenth Five-Year Plan right now. Obviously it would be very important if the plan incorporated the objectives set in the Sustainable Development Goals. China was very serious about the predecessor goals, the Millennium Development Goals, and was very proud of their success in lifting six hundred million people out of poverty. The question then for the United Nations is how to design its activity, its policy, to help? In what ways can the UN more effectively advise governments? Where could the UN more effectively organize official development assistance to the least-developed countries? How does the UN work in times of natural disasters which devastate some of the countries? These are the questions which cannot be defined by legal norms but have to be a matter of policy. And for policy to be established, you need policy instruments. For the future, the UN will have to design policies which are statistically and otherwise better informed, and advice which is more authoritative in the sense of substantive developmental authority. How does one mobilize financial resources? These are going to be big questions of international cooperation.

CAIRO REVIEW: *You have major powers like India and Brazil seeking a permanent seat on the Security Council. Is expanding the permanent membership essential, if the UN is to maintain a kind of moral leadership and effective governance?*

DANILO TÜRK: I think that adjustment of the UN structure is desirable. The question is how far are the current permanent members prepared to agree, because it depends essentially on them. If you want to change the Charter, you have to have agreement of the five permanent members. So this is really a question for the existing permanent members. Secondly, all candidates for additional permanent seats are facing a degree of opposition in their own regions, which is a political factor. It has to be recognized very directly. There is no way of denying it because we have seen this being expressed many times in the United Nations and elsewhere. So the political situation does not look very promising for expansion of the group of permanent members. The question is, do we have credible alternatives? I think that it would be desirable to change the composition so as to allow the Security Council to reflect, to be more representative. But we also have to understand that being more representative does not necessarily mean that it would be more effective. I know people who are saying: well we actually have to reduce the number of Security Council members in order to make the Council more effective. There is also an argument suggesting that

if you go too much beyond the number of fifteen [total council members], let's say mid-twenties, then you are likely to have a less effective organ, more representative but less effective, because the agreements will be more difficult to reach. So one has to understand all these aspects of the proposal for reform.

CAIRO REVIEW: *If you were living in the Middle East region, you wouldn't have a very favorable view of the UN. About seventy years of UN resolutions that have not been effective in settling the Palestine issue. The Iraq war. The current Syria crisis.*

DANILO TÜRK: The endemic problems of this region are really very serious and the UN has had limited progress in that regard. But there was some progress. There were some solutions, if you think about the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon in the year 2000. That was largely organized through the United Nations. For Syria, the only way forward is peace talks in Geneva organized by the United Nations, conducted by the United Nations. What we really need to do is to strengthen the resolve in the region itself for peace, because eventually peace has to be concluded by those who are at war or who are involved one way or another. And they have to be prepared to agree. The UN can help, but the UN cannot substitute for them and their will to make peace. Peace would require really very strong cooperation of a large number of countries from this region. And it seems to be possible that we shall have not only progress but also peace agreement in some time in the near future. And that I think is a good example which shows how much the UN can do. The UN is the convening power that can bring all these actors together, and can help them to find an agreement.

You take another example, Afghanistan has been at war since 1979 and the most important part of making peace in Afghanistan was a conference organized by the United Nations, the Bonn Conference, in the year 2001, which provided the framework for peace and the constitutional basis. Now that has not produced definitive peace in Afghanistan, but it certainly has created conditions through which the parties in Afghanistan and in the neighborhood can work for peace. I think that the talks the Taliban and the government are now starting are the key to future progress, and again, the platform created by the UN is the only platform that can help them. Now peace has to be made by those who are at war, not by the United Nations. The United Nations does produce a basis, a framework, a guidance, a mediation, and other instruments.

I think that the same applies to Libya. The UN is there, the UN has a political mission. It is doing everything humanly possible at this point and the only way to peace is through the political process that was established last December based on the effort of the United Nations. So, I understand frustrations, I understand criticism, and it is clearly true that the UN could do more, especially on the Palestinian issue in the past years, where not much effort was visible from the United Nations. More should have

been done, but where additional efforts are needed, they can take place. I'm sure that in the coming years we can revive the peace process.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Is it dead?*

DANILO TÜRK: I don't think that it is dead. It is, how should I say, it is dormant, but it is not dead. And of course, in one way or another it can be revived, either directly or through an international conference which would then have to have some follow-up again with the kind of partners that were brought together in the Quartet formed in the past. So I think that there are good reasons to revive this activity and I understand the criticism for lack of effort in the past years.

CAIRO REVIEW: *You don't think what has happened in Palestine is an irreversible process of the settlement of the West Bank?*

DANILO TÜRK: Some people would conclude that this has become irreversible already. I don't agree with that. I think that the need for settlement freeze is still not only there but the way to a two-state solution.

CAIRO REVIEW: *To follow up on Syria, what would you see as the core of a peace agreement?*

DANILO TÜRK: There has to be a political agreement, and the basic ingredients for that have been defined by the Security Council, which has spoken about a representative, inclusive, and non-sectarian political system in Syria. Now how exactly that should be constructed again is for negotiators. The UN can guide them but cannot replace them. That kind of system has to be established in Syria. Whether that would require some kind of a territorially defined reorganization within the borders of Syria, that's for the parties to decide. Syria has not been a federal state but may become a federal state. Maybe that's the way forward. Again, the guidance that is provided through the UN resolutions and Geneva and Vienna communiqués does not prescribe what exactly should that system be. It speaks about general contours of it, and leaves the necessary scope to negotiators to define what that system should be. And of course one can visualize a possibility of some sort of territorial definition within the borders of Syria that would answer this question.

CAIRO REVIEW: *How does the UN deal with non-state actors, particularly in this crisis? You have a very important non-state actor in the Islamic State group that is a major factor on the ground.*

DANILO TÜRK: There are two types of non-state actors. There are those non-state actors who are necessary partners for peace, and they will be at the negotiating table

in Geneva. And there are some who will not be there because they cannot be seen as a part of the solution and the current cease-fire does not include them. I think that that shows the direction which the international community will go in the future. It will be necessary to continue to fight Daesh, and fight probably to the end. Now those non-state actors certainly are not going to be invited to the negotiating table.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Do you see a UN peacekeeping role in Syria?*

DANILO TÜRK: I would not exclude that. Some kind of peacekeeping role could be a possibility. It's too early to speak about it now. It all depends on the type of political solution.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Should the UN be fairly expected to manage and handle all these crises?*

DANILO TÜRK: On the humanitarian side, the UN has been in the past decades fairly effective, I would say. Now of course the needs have grown exponentially in the past few years. There has been an independent panel which has produced several very good recommendations regarding the prevention of conflicts to start with—because of course humanitarian problems can be addressed effectively only if the political things are settled. But in the more narrow area of humanitarian assistance, there is a need for greater resources and there are proposals of how to obtain them. You should also remember that in the recent conference in London for Syria, the pledges reached the level of, I think, \$8 billion, which is unprecedented. So the international community can mobilize serious resources. There are additional ideas for additional resources that would come either from better mobilization of the private sector, and from certain financial centers that have not been sufficiently active so far—including some in the Middle East. The third element in the picture would be a better organization and better management of humanitarian work itself. Now that work is not done only by UN agencies, like the UN High Commissioner for Refugees or the World Food Programme. This is also done by a whole industry, if I may put it this way, of non-governmental organizations. There is a need to better coordinate their work, to streamline their work. Of course it cannot be done directly by the UN because many of these organizations are completely independent and they would have to define their roles in the new situation, and improve their own coordination mechanisms. In short, activities which are aiming at a more effective international humanitarian assistance are taking place. We have to be realistic, we have to know that humanitarian assistance will be necessary in the foreseeable future. For example, in Libya, it is estimated that 2.6 million people need humanitarian assistance out of the population of six million, in a country which used to be among the richest oil exporting countries.

CAIRO REVIEW: *As a European yourself, what is your understanding about Europe's reaction to the refugee crisis?*

DANILO TÜRK: I am concerned and disappointed like many other people in Europe. I think that the European institutions did not respond adequately. We've seen over the past years an erosion of what could be explained as the community method. Community method of course was the way in which decisions are made in the European Union, and that matter requires a central role for the European Commission to come with proposals, to make sure that those proposals are accepted by the Council, by the member states, or implemented directly by the Commission depending on the powers involved. Now we have seen a movement of decision-making capacity from the Commission to the Council; more and more questions are discussed directly at the Council and the Commission has taken the back seat. This is not good. Of course, one can ask oneself, why has that happened? Certainly not only because of the Commission; I mean there was the whole situation which member states wish to handle directly through the European Council. But the side effect of that process, which started much before the current humanitarian crisis, has been the weakening of European institutions, including in particular the Commission and European Parliament. Now what we have seen in the humanitarian crisis in the last year, 2015, was a kind of culmination of this problem. States have resorted to individual measures, to domestic measures, restrictions of different kinds, restrictions relating to the status of asylum seekers, support to asylum seekers, admission of asylum seekers, and that has accumulated over time. I think that the awareness of the problem has grown and the Council now understands that the crisis is really very deep and it has become a crisis of the European Union. It's no longer the crisis of refugees. It's a crisis of the European Union. So I think in these circumstances it is possible to expect that the European Union will become aware of the threat to its own structures, and that the Union decision-making bodies will start building a common policy which does not exist at present.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Why have Europeans reacted the way they have?*

DANILO TÜRK: I think that European countries were not prepared for the numbers of refugees. I mean the systems that the EU has had in place, the Dublin arrangements and the Schengen, they were simply not designed to deal with this kind of numbers of asylum seekers, migrants, and refugees. Of course there are different categories of people involved in this large movement, so the system was simply not designed to deal with that, the system which required the country where asylum seekers arrive to take the decision on their status.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Is this a sign that Europe as a project is really not viable?*

DANILO TÜRK: No, I think that Europe as a project is viable. The EU would have to simply redesign its system. We have to find the solution to the current problem and that's doable, with the centers for reception of asylum seekers in countries where they first arrive, in reducing the flows because there is much smuggling of migrants going on, and in creating a new system that would deal with this sort of situation in the future. And I think this is doable. We are not yet beyond the point of no return.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What is the human rights dimension of this crisis in Europe?*

DANILO TÜRK: When you talk about human rights in this kind of situation, you have to understand that the right to freedom of movement constitutes the right to move within a country in which a person finds himself legally, or the right to leave one's own country or any country, and the right to return to one's own country. No element of the right to freedom of movement allows an individual to enter another country. That's not part of the right to freedom of movement. So when one talks about human rights one has to understand that aspect of human rights as well. Freedom of movement is not an absolute right, and if you look at the literature, the documents, the treaties of human rights, you will not see a provision saying that there is no derogation of freedom of movement. There are non-derogable rights like the right to life, the right not to be tortured, the right to have freedom of thought, conscience, and religion, and so forth. There are non-derogable rights but freedom of movement is not among them. Now I'm mentioning this because in the current discussion about human rights, this is kind of neglected. The European rules which give the asylum seekers the right to enjoy certain protection during the time when waiting for the decision of the host country goes beyond the universal standard of human rights. Now of course all that doesn't mean that people who find themselves in the situation of refugees should not be treated humanely and with the utmost care. Obviously there are big problems nowadays in Europe because the countries were not prepared for the numbers and therefore the kind of care which is offered to refugees is not adequate. But this can be remedied. When one talks about human rights, one has to be really precise about which rights one wishes to be discussed.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Don't they have a moral right to protection and asylum if in their own country they're under imminent threat of death and destruction?*

DANILO TÜRK: They have the right to seek asylum, not to obtain asylum. The asylum is given by the host country depending on its own decision. And of course Europe has been rather consistent in granting asylum to people who are fleeing from wars. But in the current flows, there are many who do not come from countries at war. We have seen people coming from North Africa or from countries which are not at war.

You cannot say that every individual who finds himself among the flows of migrants is fleeing from war, from a situation where the life of people is directly threatened.

CAIRO REVIEW: *But many are.*

DANILO TÜRK: Many are, certainly. But you have to figure out who is who. You know there is a need for procedure at the entry. And that has to be done but has not been done sufficiently.

CAIRO REVIEW: *You have Europe as a political project, and you have a refugee crisis on the border of Europe, and you have Europe resisting to assist those refugees. A couple of individual countries have been supportive but Europe as a whole has refused to step up.*

DANILO TÜRK: What did Europe not do that should be done?

CAIRO REVIEW: *Many countries in Europe are not providing anything for the refugees.*

DANILO TÜRK: But providing haven for the refugees is not a general obligation.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Morally it's not? If I'm in Europe and I have a European project, and Europe faces this demand from people who are seeking asylum from torture and death in their own countries, doesn't Europe have that responsibility?*

DANILO TÜRK: That's a good question. Europe has responsibility to assist people who are actually fleeing from death and destruction, but as I explained before, not all of them are. There is a fair amount of smuggling of migrants going on. Criminal networks are fully engaged. Human trafficking is going on, and all this has to be really looked at very seriously. Of course, one has to provide asylum to those who are fleeing from war, no doubt about it. But many of them are not in that category.

And then of course we have learned certain things at the time of war in Yugoslavia. Slovenia for example at that time hosted seventy thousand refugees. It was at that time much easier to determine who is fleeing from war, because the war was close. And secondly, at that time, we discovered that the countries in the immediate neighborhood are much better placed to have these people, for two reasons. First of all, the cultural distance is much less, and secondly, the idea of return stays much more alive. People who move far away are much less likely to return after the war. People who stay closer are more likely to return after the war is over. So in that period of time, we have hosted many refugees, most of whom have returned, and we received very little international assistance for that. Now our lesson from that experience, from twenty and more years ago, is that of course the international community has to do its utmost

to help refugees in the neighboring countries, much better than was the case in the Syrian crisis. There was too little assistance to Jordan, to Lebanon, to Turkey. Much assistance was pledged but not really carried out. And that was the first problem. That helped the flows of refugees to grow. So one has to see that as a matter of policy. We are not talking about human rights primarily here. We are talking about sound refugee policies and they were not fully in place in the case of Syria.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Considering the rise of the right in Europe now, is human rights going to become a vulnerable point in Europe?*

DANILO TÜRK: Human rights is something that can never be taken for granted. One has to work for human rights. And it is possible that the situation of human rights will deteriorate. That's quite possible in Europe as it is anywhere else. You can imagine more people in jails with worse conditions. That's happening in some European countries.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Even in France we saw the huge reaction in the security sphere after the November 13 attacks.*

DANILO TÜRK: I don't think that has affected human rights, any of the human rights, too directly. I mean it may have had an effect on freedom of movement, but I don't think that that has affected human rights directly. One has to be quite precise which rights were affected and how. I don't think that much has really happened in France.

CAIRO REVIEW: *The move to strip citizenship from some French citizens who were involved in terrorism would be ...*

DANILO TÜRK: But is this prohibited by human rights law?

CAIRO REVIEW: *Would you be in favor of that?*

DANILO TÜRK: Not necessarily. But I wouldn't say that this is a core human rights obligation of states to maintain citizenship. I mean citizenship is after all a relationship between the state and an individual, and taking citizenship away may be a violation of human rights but not necessarily.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What would you identify as the most critical challenges facing global security in the coming phase of history?*

DANILO TÜRK: There are of course regional dangers, especially in this [Middle East] region. One has to be very careful about how to construct peace in Syria and Libya in order to prevent the possible disintegrations—social disintegration of states, and further security threats resulting from social disintegration. This is one type of threat which one has to take very seriously and work through development

mechanisms and everything else to make sure that this does not happen. And then secondly I would say communicable diseases and other threats to peace which have no passports, which cannot be located territorially but can produce instability in various parts of the world. These are the two things which I would consider the most dangerous threats to international peace at this time.

CAIRO REVIEW: *What about nuclear proliferation, economic inequality?*

DANILO TÜRK: You asked me to identify those that can be considered as the first priority the most dangerous. I would say that obviously nuclear proliferation is a danger, but we have instruments and the question is how do we use them and how do we develop them further. The non-proliferation treaty has been a successful instrument, and I'm sure that it can be built upon and the non-proliferation regime strengthened. We haven't had enough success and there would have to be more work in the future.

CAIRO REVIEW: *Do you consider the Iran nuclear agreement to be a success?*

DANILO TÜRK: Yes, I consider that the Iran agreement is a success. It's not necessarily politically accepted everywhere but I think that with passage of time, the test can be passed positively and the world will see that this works well. So I'm optimistic as far as the Iran agreement is concerned. I'm aware that there continues to be a degree of uncertainty in the region. But that, I think, is temporary. I think that will gradually diminish with appropriate political follow-up. Of course, I didn't mention terrorism because I think terrorism is an obvious problem. It has many faces and many different manifestations and has to be addressed in different ways. Now the UN, as you know, has a whole set of instruments in that regard, including a very detailed system for the prevention of financing of terrorism. This is a fairly recent instrument adopted in December last year. The international community is moving toward more effective instruments for the prevention of terrorism, so I didn't list it among the most important threats.

CAIRO REVIEW: *You've been very active in your political career on the issue of economic inequality. How do you see that as a global security issue?*

DANILO TÜRK: It is a serious question, one which does not produce an immediate security threat. You cannot say that, because people are poor, and unequal, that directly creates a security problem. There is no direct causal link. But of course in those places where poverty is leading to prolonged sense of injustice, where poverty is combined not only with lack of means but also with a lack of justice, that then creates dangers. Social disintegration, which happens as a result of such situations, can be very dangerous. Of course, the world has different areas where the levels of social

integration or disintegration are different. So the security effects are not the same everywhere where one sees the levels of inequality. In some areas the levels of inequality have been retained for a long time, they have been marginally diminished but they have remained relatively stable. In other places, exclusion has produced serious security threats, as we have seen. So it's not automatic. I would not say that the income inequalities create an automatic threat to international peace and security.