Brussels Forum

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Brussels Forum Talk/Professor Simon Anholt

Unidentified Woman: Ladies and gentlemen, please welcome presidential advisor and founder of the Good Country Index, Professor Simon Anholt.

Professor Simon Anholt: Well, this was a bad day for me to come down with a terrible cold. And, I've taken some very strange Belgian anti-phlegm medicine, anti-phlegmish, possibly. And so if I start speaking more nonsense than usual or collapse, please forgive me. But I'll do my best to stay alive for the next 20 minutes.

I've been following the sessions, and it would be difficult not to conclude that we live in the age of what David Stephens calls the long crisis. It's just one damn thing after another.

And I don't think there's any reason to suppose that this is going to end any time soon, because the reason why there are so many crises, and they multiply, is because of globalization. Globalization has simply made the problems more active, more effective, more connected, faster. The little, tiny problems become great big problems, and the big problems meld together with the little problems, and what we end up with is continuous, permanent, crisis. Sometimes it looks as if this force of multiplication is beginning to overwhelm us because we haven't yet been so

good at harnessing the forces of globalization to find the global solutions, and consequently the problems are globalizing much faster than our ability to tackle them.

That, it seems to me, if you'll forgive the rather naïve analysis, is fundamentally the problem that we're looking at today. We need to figure out how to do a globalization of solutions, and a really important part of that, of course, is about cooperation and collaboration because one of the consequences of this globalization of problems is that almost by definition, every one of those global challenges is now way beyond the reach of any individual nation to resolve. There are almost no local problems left.

It doesn't take much imagination to see the global dimension of almost any problem, any challenge you can think of, and so cooperation and collaboration become absolutely necessary and absolutely fundamental.

And here's the question: How good are we at collaboration, how good are we at cooperation? And the answer is not good enough, plainly. We have, of course, our instruments of global governance. We have our fora, we have the United Nations, bless its heart, but most of these institutions were created in the days when problems looked very different, and globalization was not nearly so far advanced.

Don’t get me wrong, I’m not about to give a spiel on reform of the multilateral institutions because I, like many of you, have wasted many a happy hour talking about that one. I don’t think global governance is the problem; I think nations are the problem. I’ll tell you why: Every single one of those problems or challenges that we are lucky enough to be facing in this generation, whether it’s climate change or human rights or terrorism or economic catastrophe or pandemics or narco-trafficking, all of them were caused by the same phenomenon. It’s called homo sapiens. They were all caused by people, people currently running at about seven billion, heading for eight.

In order to resolve those problems, almost by definition it needs to be the same force that created them in order to do it. Eight billion caused the problems. The only instrument that we’ve got that’s powerful enough to resolve them is the same eight billion. We did it; we’ve got to undo it.

But of course seven billion or eight billion is an enormous number, very, very hard, impossible to marshal, to organize. You need to break that gigantic, unimaginable number down to a much smaller one, one that you can imagine, one that you can work with. You need to divide up the seven billion into usable portions so that you can marshal their response to the challenges that face us today.

Luckily somebody thought of that a few hundred years ago. It’s called the nation-state. The problem is that the nation-state isn’t playing this particular game.

It isn't playing the cooperation and collaboration game nearly as much as it should. In fact, the game that nation-states are playing today, and we've seen it very, very clearly throughout all of the conversations and discussions that have taken place today and yesterday, the nation-state is still playing, fundamentally, a Westphalian game. It's still playing by the rules of 200, 300, perhaps 400 years ago, in other words competition. Luckily, thank heavens, more and more often these days the competition tends to be commercial rather than territorial, although of course there are some exceptions that we've been speaking about.

That medicine is sure working. But still, the model is the same. The model is foreigners, those creatures with different passports that live outside our boundaries, can only be two things. They are either enemies to be liquidated or potential customers to be ripped off. And that's about as far as it goes. It's trade, or it's competition.

The idea that those other 7 billion, the remainder of the 7 billion who happen to hold a different piece of paper in their pocket, might just be our brothers and sisters, might just inhabit the same planet as us, might just be threatened by the same catastrophes and be equally responsible for having those catastrophes, doesn't seem to pass through our heads nearly often enough.

And so that, in a nutshell, it seems to me is the problem. We've got 21st-century problems, but we've got 17th-century nations trying to, or rather most of

the time not trying, to resolve them. So nations have got to change. We've still got them for the time being. People often say to me, ah, yes, but you don't have to worry about nations much longer, Simon, because it's going to be cities, we're returning to the medieval city-state. And there's some truth in that.

Of course it's very exciting. We can see every day cities becoming more and more active, more and more agile, more and more effective diplomatic actors in their own right, but that's still a long way off, and I'm a practical man, and I'd like to see some change pretty soon.

So for the time being I think we have to work with the nation-state. What's wrong? Well, what's wrong is the mandate that we give to our governments. We give them a very simple, very traditional mandate, the same one we've always given them. When we elect them, or when we don't elect them, but we allow them to persist in ruling us, what we say to them is you've got to do two things. You've got to look after our interests, us your population, and you've got to look after our slice of territory, our nation. A nation, I don't need to remind an audience like this, is imaginary. You don't have to spend very long in an airplane looking out of the window before you notice the striking fact that there are no thick, black lines drawn on the Earth's surface.

That's the mandate we give them. It's a single mandate: look after your people; look after our slice of territory. And this is driving us to destruction

because it's always done at somebody else's expense, invariably. What we need is we need to institute a dual mandate--I apologize, the term has been used before, but it seems to be the best way of explaining it--a dual mandate that says henceforth, all politicians are not just national politicians and indeed not just politicians, all leaders, all people who are responsible for the marshalling of more than three or four people must understand that they have a dual mandate, and the dual mandate says that they are responsible not only for their own citizens but for every man, woman and child on the planet, all 7 billion.

And they're responsible not just for their own territory but for every square centimeter of the Earth's surface from the atmosphere above it.

Now typically the reaction I get when I suggest this to politicians is you're out of your mind. I have enough difficulty looking after my own citizens and their conflicting demands without having to worry about nearly 8 billion other people. Well of course I should probably specify I don't mean that these two groups should be accorded equal priority. I'm not suggesting that the prime minister of a country needs to give just as much priority to everybody on Earth as to his or her own population.

No, I'm not saying that, but what I'm saying is it should very soon, very speedily, if we're going to survive and progress, become a fact of culture that one cannot discuss or make any policy or plan regarding more than 10 other people

without considering its impact on the remainder of the Earth's population and the people outside your own territory and the remainder of the Earth's surface. We have to do that.

Now we're learning already, because luckily, perhaps an odd word to use in the context, we have climate change. And climate change has already begun to teach us this way of thinking. If you were to step in on a town council meeting in any town in Belgium at this particular moment, pretty much whatever they're discussing, even if it's something very, very local indeed, like changing the light bulbs in the local streetlight, somebody or other will bring in the question of climate change.

In other words, they'll be exercising a kind of primitive dual mandate. They'll be thinking to themselves we shouldn't just be thinking about how bright our streets are, we should also be thinking about the Earth's climate. So we're already learning.

But my argument is that there's much, much more global stuff going on than just climate change. Everything is global, and the global consequences of everything we do needs to be considered. I guess what I'm talking about is a culture change, and one of the reasons why I feel fairly confident about this project is because culture change is relatively easy. It is possible to introduce new ideas,

and they can catch on. If they're good, and they're appropriate, and the capture the zeitgeist effectively enough, they can catch on very quickly.

Think about sexism or racism, to -isms which, 10, 15, 20 years ago, in even very civilized countries, were commonly found. So you could go into a town council meeting, even in Belgium, 15 years ago, where they were discussing some matter of local policy, and you would catch the local politicians being accidentally, perhaps even deliberately, sexist or racist, and nobody even noticed. Perhaps they laughed.

Today, if you do that, you lose your job. Perhaps you even go to prison. That's happened very, very quickly. I would like to see the same thing happen with another -ism, nationalism. I would like us to get to the stage where it becomes absolutely unpardonable for any decision-maker, any leader, to make any reference to our people at the expense of anybody else's people. I would want that person not only to lose his or her job but possibly to go to prison.

Now it sounds romantic and liberal in the extreme, and you may well say, well, it would be lovely, wouldn't it? But how are you going to make that happen? Well, I think it's possible, and I'll tell you how. First of all, there's some data that seems to suggest that there's a private way and a private way of performing this task of encouraging politicians and other leaders to change the way they behave. When I say other leaders, of course I include the corporate sector. Corporations

have been doing this for quite a long time. They're very far ahead of the public sector.

Corporations discovered, or invented, corporate social responsibility quite a long time ago, and they realized that the impact of the corporation extends way beyond the employees or even the customers of the corporation. They discovered that the corporation has a footprint in society. It is responsible for every man, woman and child on the planet. It's responsible for every square inch of the Earth's surface and the atmosphere above it. They discovered that 20, 25 years ago.

Now a lot of people, when you talk about corporate social responsibility, they make a sour face, and when they do that, I always say to them why the sour face, and they say oh, they don't really mean it. What the hell do I care whether they really mean it or not? The older I get, the more presumptuous it seems to me to be to question people's motivations for doing things. At least they're bloody doing it. And I get so sick of so-called activists who criticize Nike, for example, for trying to prevent children working in sweatshops in Burma. And I say why are you criticizing them? Surely it's a good thing to stop children working in sweatshops in Burma. And they, oh, but they don't really mean it. Have you asked the children whether they care about whether Nike mean it or not?

I mean, the simple fact of the matter is it doesn't matter whether they mean it or not because there's a funny little loophole in human nature that I've observed

over and over and over again. Let's suppose you do something like that, and you really don't mean it. Let's just suppose that you're doing it just in order to improve your share price or for PR, because you want to look better, and you want to win more customers. Well, the funny thing that I've seen happen over and over and over again is that when people do these things for entirely self-interested, entirely self-cynical, self-serving, cynical reasons, when it works, and it often does work, sadly, and that corporation starts to feel the admiration of the public, and it begins to warm its cold heart in front of that admiration, suddenly maintaining and increasing and conserving that good reputation becomes the most important thing in the world, and they will go to almost any lengths to keep it, even to the extent of becoming genuinely good if that's what it costs. So I think that funny little loophole in human nature may be something that saves us all.

But to go back to the point, what we need to do is we need to institute this form of what you might call governmental social responsibility because it's true, because it's demanded just as much as corporate social responsibility. And why wouldn't it be? The same kids in Canada who don't want to buy Nike or Reebok shoes because they think there's a political problem with the way they're made, will not go on holiday to Country X because they don't like the government of Country X's stance on gay rights. It's the same people processing the same ethical and moral views and changing their behavior in consequence.

A phrase I've often used over the past few years is that there's one superpower left on the planet, and that's international public opinion. And in all of our different ways, we're all trying to do diplomacy with that superpower. When we talk about nationalism and the intransigence of governments negotiating on matters, the Asian discussion just before the break, what we all really know, the dark secret that we don't want to admit, is that actually in closed rooms, most grown-up leaders fully understand that they shouldn't be fussing over things that happened 70 or 80 years ago. They know they need to get over that. They know they need to be wise enough to forget these points.

But the reason they don't, and the reason they keep fighting for them is because of the people out there, the people who keep in power. They can't be seen to be giving up on something that the people care about. We all know that that's what goes on.

And so the problem has got to be resolved through a pincer action. What has to be dealing with the leaders, and what has to also be dealing with international public opinion?

So, why does governmental social responsibility work just as much for national behavior as for corporate behavior? Well, the data said it does. For reasons which I won't go into now or we'll be here all afternoon, back in 2005, I started doing a very large survey that measured people's opinions about countries.

Things like--a fairly interesting thing to want to know, what do people think about countries. Not what do they know, but what do they believe, because in the end, it's their beliefs that drive their behavior. I don't know what goes on in most other countries. There are just too many of them. Over 200. How many people know anything about 200 countries? Well, in this room, of course.

But in most places, nobody knows anything about more than two or three. And so reality curiously takes second place to perception. Those billions of people hold the fate of nations in their hands. Because they're the ones who are deciding which country to go on holiday at and spending billions in that country. They're the ones who decide where to invest. They're the ones that decide which products to buy, which people to hire, which country to trust, which country to believe in.

So, perceptions in the age of globalization paradoxically have becomes more significant than reality. So I thought it would be a good thing to measure them, back in 2005. And I started doing a big global poll that just asked a number of people in a number of countries, all kinds of detailed questions about their perceptions of 50 different countries. And before I knew where I was, I seemed to have acquired big data. Because if you've got a 50 question questionnaire that you're sending out to 38,000 people, four times a year, and asking those questions about 50 countries, well, I'm no good at math, but it seems that by 2014, I

collected 243 billion data points, tracking what ordinary people thought about ordinary countries.

And what it turns out is rather surprising. Well, what it tells you about what people think about other countries is endlessly fascinating. But the problem was I never had enough time to look at it properly.

So, in 2011, I decided I'd take two years off and dive into this gigantic database, and try and ask it one simple question, which seemed to me to be very important for understanding prosperity, if nothing else.

Why do people prefer country X more than country Y?

We can sort of understand why they might prefer the Maldives to I don't know where. I won't name a country that compared to the Maldives seems ugly, because that would be horrid. But you get what I mean.

What are the drivers of preference for a country, because make no mistake, that preference multiplied by 7 or 8 billion means, as I said before, that the fate of nations lies in the hands of 7 or 8 billion people.

What the database returned to me after a year or so study, was that there are basically five drivers. There are five reasons why people prefer one country--or the idea of one country more than another. I call it the MARSS Model. It's, if you're going to do a model, it's got to spell something. I spent weeks trying to figure out words that began with letters that would spell a word.

I ended up with MARSS. But it's not very good, because it's MARSS with two Ss. MARSS.

M is for morality. Is the country good or is it bad?

A is for aesthetics. Is the country beautiful or is it ugly?

R is for relevance. Does the country have an impact on my life, my world, or does it not?

The first S is Professor Joseph Nye's hard power, strength. Does it have a big army? Does it have a big territory? A big population? Big land area?

And the last S is sophistication. Is it a modern country where they have Smartphones or are they still plowing the fields with oxen?

And in one way or another, in the minds of ordinary people, when they're considering other countries, those, although they don't realize it, are the drivers.

Now, the first thing you may notice about those drivers is they sound a bit childish, don't they? Morality. Is it a good country or a bad country? What does that mean?

Well, international public opinion is a child. Take it from me. I've measured it. I did a very complicated experiment once to try to estimate the mental age of the human race. And I discovered that it averages out at about eight. Seven or eight.

I know that's not politically correct, but the numbers kind of speak for themselves. What can you do about it? So, individually, we're all very clever.

Collectively, our mental age just goes down, and down, and down, and down. Seven or eight.

I can't talk for very much longer. But what I want to do is race is the conclusion.

Of those five drivers, it turns out that by an extraordinarily wide margin, the most significant one of all is M. Morality. People care far more about whether another country is good, than whether it's ugly and beautiful, or beautiful, whether it's rich or poor, whether it's modern or old-fashioned. They care what that country contributes to the rest of the world.

That's what they care about. Those are the generations we're dealing with today. They care about that more than anything else.

And the governments that spend millions of dollars of their taxpayers' money on idiot propaganda, saying look how wonderful we are, make absolutely no impact whatsoever, because by definition, everybody out there has got a perfectly good country of their own, they're not in the market for a new one. They don't care how successful you are.

What they care about is whether you contribute to the world that they live in or not.

Are you a good country as opposed to a selfish country? Not are a good country as opposed to a bad country, because that's a conversation that never finishes.

And moral relativeness, the cultural relativists, have a field day with me when I go down that route.

But very simply, and very practically, what do you contribute to the world, and to the planet?

So, last year, I thought, time for another index. And I created something called the Good Country Index. This one is not perceptions. This one is reality. It measures using existing databases, exactly what each country on earth contributes to the world, and to the rest of humanity. Bizarrely, a calculation which has never been performed before. Nobody ever thought to ask what does a country give to the rest of the world? Seems to me to be the most important question of all in the age in which we live. Every single survey out there treats every single country as if it were a little private island inhabiting its own little private solar system. And that's just not the way it works anymore.

So there, I fear I have to finish. But, I would like to just tell you about what I'm going to do with this idea. And to do something a little unconventional. To ask for your help. Because I need it.

In November, I launched something called the Good Country Party. Now, I called it a party, even though technically speaking it's not a party. It's not a party because it can't stand for election, it's not a party because it doesn't exist in any individual nation state. I've had it with nation states. This party exists in the spaces between nation states. It's a party for the approximately 10 percent of the world's population, 700 million people, that's my interim target for membership, who care more about global issues than domestic ones. Who think that climate change is a little bit more important than the overgrown schoolboys in parliament squabbling about the National Health Service or whatever the fixation happens to be in your own country.

The people have started to join. Because they want to live in a good country. And they're trying to raise their voices to their politicians and say to them, "it's not enough for me to live in a rich country. It's not enough for me to live in a stable, prosperous country. I want to live in a good country. I want to be able to hold up my head when I walk around the world and have people say to me, 'I like you because you come from a good country.'" That is the tenor of public opinion at the moment almost literally worldwide. And politicians need to start paying attention. Because that old westphalian view is increasingly looking more and more out of date, and more and more old fashioned. From the point of view of the people that really matter. The voters. And the populations.

So this is not romantic liberalism. This is pure practical politics. If you want to stay in power, you're going to have to figure out how to be good.

I've run out of things to say. Have we got time for some questions?

Unidentified Man: Could you just--what those top five countries that--

Professor Simon Anholt: Is this Q&A?

Unidentified Man: Yes.

Professor Simon Anholt: Okay. Top five countries in the good country index.

Man: You said you did the index--

Professor Simon Anholt: Right.

Man: --(inaudible).

Professor Simon Anholt: Anybody can see the good country index. This is where to repeat the URL. It's www dot good dot country. We don't have to have dot com anymore. It's a wonderful thing. Good dot country. And what you can do is you can look at the index there and you can also see where the data comes from. It's very incomplete. It's a beater thing. The available data is very limited. But basically, the surprising fact is that the goodest country, and I say goodest not best, best is a different matter. The goodest country on earth, relative to the size of its economy, that's how we normalize the data, is Ireland.

And that's quite surprising because in 2010 when most of the data was last collected, that was the point at which Ireland's government was at its highest level. So it's rather a beautiful story, that in the depths of its pain, Ireland of all countries managed to remember its obligations to the rest of humanity, more than any other country on the planet.

Have we got time for another question or two?

Man: Oh, sure, yeah.

Professor Simon Anholt: (Inaudible) lady here.

Woman: So the party that you're creating, what is this party going to do then?

Professor Simon Anholt: What is the party going to do? Do you know what? I've decided not to decide.

Woman: Okay.

Professor Simon Anholt: This is a kind of Kama Sutra thing. It would be the most delightful thing for me to sit down and write a manifesto of what we're going to do and how we're going to improve the world. But I've decided to deny myself that pleasure for the simple, let me tell you about the 700 million people. I turned, as I often do, to the world values survey. Wonderful piece of work. You can use it to find out all kinds of things.

And I took all the questions out of that survey that measure for a naturally cosmopolitan astute. People who care about the world. People who can imagine the whole of humanity, which is by no means everybody.

And it turns out there are questions in there that say things like would you rather live next to a homosexual or a mass murderer? And there are people who select the second.

And what--do a calculation on the back of an envelope it turns out that roughly 10 percent of humanity is naturally, intrinsically, cosmopolitan. They see the world the same way as I do. They go to bed at night worrying about climate change much more than about local issues. They find it harder and harder to vote in domestic elections. They find the trivia of national politics more and more and more remote from their own interests. Younger--the younger you go, the stronger the effect becomes.

So that 10 percent, what I want to do is gather them together in this space so we can decide what we're going to do. I don't decide for them. I just want to convene them. Because I think that would make a really interesting party. And by the way, that's why I call it a party, even though technically it can't stand for election, because a party is also a nice place where you stand around with your friend drinking.

And that's partly what we're going to do. But I don't want to write the manifesto and invite them in and encourage them to pursue it, because I think that would be the wrong thing to do. But you can guess the kinds of things we're going to be doing.

We're going to be politely, gently productively holding governments to account, and offering them ideas about how they can be more international in their thinking. And one of the things that I found in my day job as a policy advisor is that even very, very domestic policy issues are always better resolved if you look at them in the international context. This is not a conundrum. This is not a paradox. Thinking globally and thinking locally at the same time. it makes better domestic policy if you think internationally.

And so that's what we need to help governments to do. We've never told them to do it before, and we need to start. Oh, God, now it all starts.

The lady from Chatham House, if I'm not mistaken.

Unidentified Woman: That's a little scary (inaudible) I have two questions here actually. On the country index--the mic's not on?

Professor Simon Anholt: Can you shout?

Unidentified Woman: I can shout.

Professor Simon Anholt: Yeah.

Unidentified Woman: On the country index--try again?

Professor Simon Anholt: No. The good country index--

Woman: On the good country index, what is the country that is most surprisingly high, and what is the country that's most surprisingly low? And then my second question is, your party, I mean, effectively, I wasn't--it sounded like a creation of regional and global institutions, an effort to do in some respect, what it is that you're talking about. How is this going to be more effective?

Professor Simon Anholt: Thank you so much for--did everybody hear the question? Okay, it doesn't matter, because I'll--the answer will reveal the question.

Thank you so much, because I swore to myself as I came on stage, there was one thing I wouldn't forget to mention, and I forgot. And it was the European Union.

For an Englishman, I am indeed an Englishman, I'm very unusual in that I frequently describe the European Union as the noble-ish experiment in human history. And I mean that most sincerely. In execution, of course, that's troublesome and difficult. And it doesn't always match up to the promise.

But in conception and intention, this is the noblest experiment in human history. The fact that a number of sovereign states have had the wisdom and the maturity to give up some of their precious sovereignty, which, let's be honest, is the best trick politicians have. They slave all through their lives just to be able to

wield that instrument for a few years in order to achieve the greater good of humanity.

And one of the reasons why the European Union is much maligned these days is because it's forgotten that that's what it's for. It's to show that multilateralism works. It's to show that countries can work together, and they can collaborate, and cooperate more, and compete only where it makes sense to compete. Not all the whole damn time.

And I think the European Union is a shining light in an otherwise bleak picture. There are one or two other regional organizations that are trying, but they don't get anywhere close compared to the EU.

So let's not let people talk down the EU. Please. Because this is the best thing that we've ever done as a species. Pretty much.

Your first question about the surprising results. To me, I hesitate even to mention this in this all gust group. But the most astonishing result of all was the fact that in the peace and security category, the number one country was Egypt. Right. Now, bear with me. There's a reason for this.

Because what the Good Country Index is measuring for better or for worse is purely what a country does outside its own borders. It completely ignores what goes on domestically. Not because I think that domestic behavior is unimportant. Of course. It's just that you can find that data in so many other places. I just

wanted to measure that thing that hadn't been measured, which is what do they do outside their borders. And for all kinds of reasons, in 2010, which is when the data was collected, Egypt did less harm outside its own borders relative to the size of its economy than any other country on earth. It was so busy doing harm to its own citizens, frankly, that it didn't--but there you go. And it's not a mistake. It's just a fact.

And this is a landscape which is very, very unfamiliar to people. And you look at it and you say, I don't recognize this. The only recognizable thing about it was the Scandinavian countries and the European countries coming at the top as they always do in every index. And it was tactless of me to release this survey on Independence Day, with America coming 21st. I got a lot of angry letters from young Americans basically saying to me, if you queer, Commie, European bastards aren't grateful to us for saving you from the Japanese--a chapter of history I was not previously familiar with--and the Communists and the fascists, then we're not going to do it again. Every American is brought up to believe that America is the greatest contributor to humanity in history, bar none. And when they come 21st, which actually is a pretty good result considering the size of the economy, it feels like blasphemy. That's kind of interesting, isn't it? So that was surprising to Americans but not to me.

For the Scandinavians, coming top is not surprising at all because of course the Scandinavians have even more cooperation and collaboration in their blood, in their DNA, than the average European nation.

Kenya managed to get into the top 30, which is a really good result because it shows that this is not about money. It is not about how much money you have to spend on aid, even though that's one of the indicators that's included there. It's more about a mindset. Lots more surprising stuff there but I'll be shot if I mention it all.

One more question. The gentleman here at the back. That's you, sir.

Unidentified Man: Thank you very much. You mentioned Egypt and the United States just now in your answer and I have a question relating to this. When you say that this is based on the activity of a country outside its own borders, to what extent is this a real contribution to a multilateral order or just the fact that one country leaves the others alone?

Professor Simon Anholt: Good question and one of 836,000 good questions that one can ask about this study. It's a bit of everything. To be honest with you, whenever you do a survey that's composed of existing data, as I'm sure you're aware, you start with a wish list of all of the things you'd like to be able to measure. And what you end up with is a reality list of the data that's available. And it's actually surprising how few really good studies are out there that measure all or

most countries. Most of them are done by the United Nations because of the resources that are required to do that reasonably well. And so it's a mixture. Some of them are positive. Some of them are negative. So for example, you lose points if you export weapons. Because I think that's kind of bad. You also lose points if you kill people. And I don't distinguish between killing good guys and killing bad guys. As far as I'm concerned, killing--call me old fashioned, I think killing people is kind of wrong. So you lose a point if you kill somebody, whether it's Taliban or Westerner, I don't care. You lose a point. So it's very, very, very approximate.

And one of the things--this may sound as if I'm retreating from the study, and that's because I am--the thing that I really, really don't want to do ever is to have too much of a discussion about how you measure this stuff. Because it has a tendency to distract the conversation from the important thing, which is what are we going to do about the stuff that it's trying to measure? And what I always end up saying to people when they ask questions about the Index is, look, the world's problems are not going to be--the answers to the world's problems are not going to be found in this index or in any other index. But they may well be found in the discussions that this index provokes. And that's the purpose. It is designed to encourage people to look at the world in a slightly unfamiliar way. And we can argue all day about whether the measurements are correct or incorrect. I stand by them. But the really interesting question is, what are we going to do about it?

And I just want to finish because we do have to close now. Thank you so much for listening. I just want to finish on that--on reiterating what I said before. If you think that this sounds like a good idea or at least a harmless one, any suggestions you may have about how we can make this happen, because you're all very powerful and influential people. And I see some faces that suggest to me that maybe you don't find this offensive. Let me know because I need your help. Thank you very much indeed.

Unknown Moderator: Shouldn't we do this again? Okay. We'll organize something next year. So thank you again, Professor Anholt, for this terrifically exciting first Brussels Forum Talk. Secondly, I need to remind you that if you're leaving this evening, please leave your loaner devices at the desk. And finally, as you all know, we are going to breakout dinners, 25 of them, a record.