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President Wolfensohn - Briefings Books for Presidents Meetings - Briefing Material
Interview - Ms Nora Boustany - The Washington Post - April 18, 1997

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A. CLASSIFICATION

☐ Meeting Material
☐ Trips
☐ Speeches

☐ Annual Meetings
☐ Corporate Management
☐ Communications with Staff

☐ Phone Logs
☐ Calendar
☐ Press Clippings/Photos

☐ JDW Transcripts
☐ Social Events
☒ Other

B. SUBJECT: INTERVIEW: MS. NORA BOUSTANY, WASHINGTON POST
(B) (N)

VENUE: E1227 (OFFICE)

CONTACT: MERRELL @ 39516 // BOUSTANY @ 334-7474

IN ATTENDANCE: JDW, BOUSTANY, KLAS OR MARK

(B) EXTVP // DUE: WED. APRIL 9

NOTE: JDW AGREED W/ BOUSTANY THAT HE WOULD DO THIS // ITEM
MOVED FROM 4/14 DUE TO JDW'S TRAVEL

NOTES: MS. BOUSTANY WRITES "DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES" - A COLUMN
OF NEWSBITS ON DIPLOMATS AND HEADS OF STATE, AND GOINGS ON IN
D.C.

EXC: CA // ALI (3/9) (3/30)

Brief Includes:

- Memo to JDW from Mark Malloch Brown, April 10, 1997, "Your Interview
with Nora Boustany of the Washington Post, from 10-10:30, Friday, April 18 in
your office"

- Nora Boustany's C.V. and articles

DATE: 04/18/97

C. VPU

Corporate

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☐ IFC
☐ Inspection Panel
☐ Kennedy Center
☐ MIGA

D. EXTERNAL PARTNER

☐ IMF
☐ UN
☐ MDB/Other IO
☐ NGO
☐ Private Sector

☐ Part I
☐ Part II
☐ Other

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

DATE: April 10, 1997

TO: Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, EXC

FROM: Mark Malloch Brown, EXTVP

James Wolfensohn *for MMB*

EXTENSION: 85914

SUBJECT: **Your interview with Nora Boustany of *The Washington Post*, from 10-10:30, Friday, April 18 in your office**

Nora Boustany, *Washington Post* Staff Writer responsible for *Diplomatic Dispatches*, would like to interview you concerning your travels as Bank president and your encounters with world leaders. She may also want to know generally of the changes you have catalyzed at the Bank -- everything from moving more staff into the field to our recent work on the Strategic Compact.

"Dispatches" appears in the *Post* on Wednesdays and Fridays and is a compilation of newbits and commentary on diplomats, heads of state and the international scene.

Nora, who says she interviewed you concerning the Kennedy Center during her stint with the Style Section of the *Post* from 1995 to 1996, has a keen interest in efforts to maintain political and economic stability in the Middle East. She served as a Middle East war correspondent for the *Post* for more than 10 years, and before that was a reporter for the *Financial Times* and United Press International.

Nora's c.v. is attached, along with four examples of "Dispatches," including the October 2 commentary she wrote on the World Bank.

I will accompany Nora to your office and would like to sit in on the interview if you are amenable.

✓

cc: Mmes. A. Tsatsakis, J. Holden, C. Anstey, Mr. H Assaad (EXC); Mr. K. Bergman (EXTME); Ms. J. Yamine (EXTRO)

Attachments



Record Removal Notice

File Title President Wolfensohn - Briefing Books for Presidents Meetings - Meeting Materials - Ms Nora Boustany - The Washington Post - April 18, 1997		Barcode No. 30487959		
Document Date April 8, 1997	Document Type CV / Resumé			
Correspondents / Participants				
Subject / Title CV - Nora Boustany				
Exception(s) Personal Information				
Additional Comments		The item(s) identified above has/have been removed in accordance with The World Bank Policy on Access to Information or other disclosure policies of the World Bank Group. <table border="1"><tr><td>Withdrawn by Diego Hernández</td><td>Date June 9, 2025</td></tr></table>	Withdrawn by Diego Hernández	Date June 9, 2025
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World Developers by the Limousine-Full

By Nora Boustany

Washington Post Foreign Service

This is a quiz. If you don't have the answer to all the questions, you're behind the times.

Who masterminds the most sophisticated invasion of aliens landing on Potomac banks?

Who is the third-largest employer in Washington?

Who has the ability to help out in Gaza, the West Bank and Bosnia without introducing more guns?

Who does not take sides in world conflicts but helps manage global economic stability?

OK. If you still don't know, here is a clue: Who causes limousine gridlock in Washington once a year?

Why, it is the World Bank, of course, and its sidelick, the International Monetary Fund, which this week are holding their annual meeting here—at a cost of \$11 million.

"Twenty-three years of secrecy and of hiding behind our walls have made us invisible," said Mark Malloch Brown, the World Bank's vice president for external affairs. But the World Bank now has a new president steering it in new directions, and it is assuming a more public profile.

Sprinkled with the world's finance ministers, bankers and mousse-slicked money managers, the ballroom of the Sheraton-Washington Hotel this week looked like anything but a congregation of revolutionaries. Men in expensive suits picking at the sumptuous buffet and cascading cheese-and-bread arrangements are just the trappings of the annual meetings of the World Bank and IMF.

So that no one misses the point about change after his initial 16 months in office, World Bank President James D. Wolfensohn characterized his imprint on the bank as momentous. He was referring to his radical simplification of the approval process for international development projects, reducing five steps to two and changing the job emphasis of staff experts from issuing approvals to working on execution and results. "That to me is a revolution," he said.

Seven vice presidents have left in the past year, some taking early retirement, as Wolfensohn, a former Olympic fencer and concert cellist, took charge of the world's economic whale leading the smaller fish. His rebellion includes pinning names of planners and staffers to projects to be better able to impose accountability. "Jim is not a natural bureaucrat," said Maurice F. Strong, his special adviser. "He knows how to work with bureaucracy but is determined not to be overtaken by it."

Wolfensohn is trying to achieve two things in a changing post-Cold War world: repositioning the bank to focus on private sector investment in developing countries (\$170 billion last year) and reaching out to nongovernmental organizations, whose inclusion on World Bank projects often contributes to grass-roots success. "If the bank does not change radically, it won't be here in 10 years," said Strong, a Canadian, as he explained how the Australian-born Wolfensohn is trying to change the

culture of the bank to one of partnership with the world.

Wolfensohn has launched cost-cutting measures but is also demanding that his board of directors "be flexible" with the administrative budget and increase it if necessary to allow country directors to move out to the field, another board member said.

"There have been some rocky moments with the board; Jim is very forthright," Strong said. Institutionally, he added, "change is disruptive, but the real evidence that things are changing is this turbulence."

The World Bank's U.S. executive director, Jan Piercy, said Wolfensohn has made a strong case for spending on information technology to update the bank's operations, but "it is a matter of ethics that maximum resources go to poverty reduction and sustainable development." Piercy said that if country directors or staffers move out to other countries "on a large scale, maybe we can give up one of the buildings in Washington."

In a speech yesterday, Wolfensohn said he is deeply committed to improving life for the "poor and disadvantaged" people he met on his travels through 40 countries last year.

The Washington Post

DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES

3 Ounces of Food a Day

By Nora Boustany
Washington Post Foreign Service

When you think you have seen the worst—downsizing, potholed roads, a deficient public school system and armies of homeless—just remember to be thankful for all the rest. The street lights of North Korea's capital city, Pyongyang, don't go on after dark. Nor do they in Ransan, Unpa and Pyongsang, counties in the southern part of the country. There is no fuel for heating in schools, homes or government buildings. But worst of all, the country is on the edge of famine, according to the findings of a five-member team from the United Nations' World Food Program.

The group of U.N. researchers and nutritionists, who are just back from there, saw emaciated adults and malnourished children "clearly at a very advanced stage of starvation" evident from "an orange tint in their hair, very thin legs, almost no muscle tone, no elasticity to their skin," according to **Michael Ross**, a director of the World Food Program who spoke of the findings here yesterday. In the northern part of the country, conditions are worse, he said. There has been a significant increase in the number of people hospitalized for intestinal bleeding from bark they strip from trees to block their hunger. The State Department has estimates of tens of thousands of deaths. "We have no evidence of that, but it would not surprise us," Ross said.

Ross, who spent three days in the southern part of North Korea with Executive Director **Catherine Bertini**, who was an assistant secretary of agriculture under President **George Bush**, said people are down to food rations of 3.2 ounces a day, mainly rice, pickled wild roots and leaves. Projections forecast that the supply will hit rock bottom by June, if not sooner. Most families said they had not eaten meat since August 1995.

"When the food finally runs out, it will be very devastating. We are convinced on the basis of our research and our experience that famine will come. And when it comes, it will strike very quickly throughout the population," Ross warned in a telephone interview. "The safety net has not been torn, but it has been lowered inch by inch. We decided after our visit to increase our appeal to 200,000 tons from 100,000 tons of food."

Ross said he watched thousands of people clearing silt and debris with their bare hands from flood-ravaged farmland. "We saw a lot of damaged infrastructure, washed-away bridges and dams. A lot of people are engaged in land reclamation, picking rocks and stones by hand without picks or shovels. Half of the laborers wear straw baskets on their backs and pick up with one hand, and like human wheelbarrows, they carry the rocks to the edge of the field," Ross said. There is no mechanized equipment because of the fuel shortage, he added. About 1.1 million farmers and their families and 630,000 children under 5 are most

directly affected by the floods, because their share of the crops, unlike the portion given to the state for distribution, has been eliminated, Ross explained.

North Korea has always been a food-deficient country that relies in large measure on imports from the former Soviet Union and China. There is a shortage of medicines and a marked increase in famine-associated diseases such as typhoid, said Ross, a former foreign correspondent for the Los Angeles Times. "I am glad I live in Washington, with all its problems. I thought I had seen everything, but I think I just found the worst one of all," he said of North Korea.

Guns for Humanitarians?

■ **Emma Bonino**, the European Union's commissioner for humanitarian affairs, is more militant than ever. Are guns necessary to relieve the suffering of refugees in southern Europe and central Africa? "There is no way in the actual instability that we can deliver humanitarian aid without protection," said Bonino, 49, during a lunch with journalists Wednesday.

Her concern in Albania is weapons looted from government armories during the turmoil of recent weeks. "Everyone has a gun except the humanitarians," she lamented. Food supplies were looted, so "now people have food at home, but the food chain has completely broken down."

In Africa, Bonino estimated that half a million refugees from Zaire and Rwanda are wandering helplessly. "I don't think the humanitarian community has the right to be judge and get rid of a problem through mass starvation," she added.

Better Days in Bulgaria

■ The prime minister of Bulgaria, **Stefan Sofianski**, said there is now bread and fuel in Bulgarian stores after critical shortages blamed on corruption and the export of the country's wheat reserves. He told Washington Post editors last week he plans to liberalize the economy, relax export laws and boost funding for infrastructure to combat the shortages. Officials who provided wheat export licenses to friends in the former Communist Party will be prosecuted, he added. Bulgaria is awaiting final approval of a \$300 million loan from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. "People are still hungry, but we have overcome the crisis," he added.

This item appeared on page A14 of the the April 2, 1997 issue of the

The Washington Post

DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES

Under the Cherry Trees

By Nora Boustany
Washington Post Foreign Service

Now that Washingtonians have finished *hanami*, Japanese for "the viewing of flowers under the tree," a seasonal distraction imported from Japan, it is time to file those tax returns. But it was nice while it lasted. The Japanese ambassador here, **Kunihiko Saito**, kicked off the Cherry Blossom Festival at a celebration by the Tidal Basin Easter Sunday, saying: "Hanami is just another excuse for the Japanese to have sake and to party under the trees." After 12 harpists strummed "Sakura," Japan's cherry tree tune, 100-year-old stone lanterns were lighted and gospel music rose over the Mall, nobody doubted that a gesture to help beautify the Potomac 85 years ago has flowered into a common custom.

"Do you think any other two countries share that sort of event?" asked festival director **Toshitsugu Uesawa**. The seasonal changes of the cherry tree are symbols of the passages of love and life in ancient Japanese poetry, he explained, adding: "Though trees bloom with their own energy, life is very short."

A New Iranian Era?

■ Is Iran entering the post-fundamentalist era? Almost 20 years after the revolution led by Ayatollah **Ruhollah Khomeini**, one of its ideologues has come here to air his evolving views. Philosopher and writer **Abdel Karim Soroosh**, one of the early "thinkers" of the revolution and now one of the advocates for modernizing the interpretation of the Koran, gave a series of lectures in Washington last week.

In a presentation at American University on Thursday, Soroosh said a new model is needed. "As we know it, the language of religion is the language of obligation," he said of Islam. But human rights activists, he explained, talk about rights, demands and entitlements. To communicate, "we need a paradigm shift . . . a shift that makes a synthesis from obligations to rights." He argued that in general, people tend to talk much more about freedom and rights than about justice. "Rather, we are obsessed with liberties," he said.

Soroosh publishes *Kiyan* in Tehran, a journal of philosophy, sociology and politics, a platform for enlightened views that are tolerated by the religious government. In the early '80s, he was on a committee in charge of purging academic institutions by expelling certain university professors. Now he is connected to those few elements in the government who favor contacts with the West, and he is pushing for a revision of Islam and its adaptation to modern ways.

Radical religious elements in Iran are opposed to him because he is emerging as a Luther of Islam who would like to reduce the monopoly of one group, the clerics, and give the prerogative of interpretation to the people. He proposes that religious leaders should not hold political positions or political titles or be tied by temporal interests such as salaries, because it would compromise them. He has a following among intellectuals, although he is a product of the regime. During a discussion that followed his lecture at American University, Soroosh would not

commit himself to an absolute separation of church and state.

Remembering Rabin's Legacy

■ In lectures here to promote her book "Rabin: Our Life, His Legacy," **Leah Rabin**, widow of Israel's slain prime minister **Yitzhak Rabin**, stressed that the Middle East peace process was set up in stages to be tested by both Palestinians and Israelis, to see how they interact with each other. She dismissed proposals by Israel's present leaders to leap to final-status talks before allowing the process to be tested in phases. She did not condone the violence ravaging Israel and Palestinian towns but said Israel's actions provoked the unrest. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat "did not change his policy," she told Yedioth Aharonoth's correspondent here, "we changed ours."

In answering a listener on the **Diane Rehm** show Monday, Rabin said all religions would be respected in Jerusalem, but it should remain the city of the Jewish people. "This is our eternal city . . . and has remained the symbol of [our] national aspirations," she added. "Muslims pray to Mecca, we pray to Jerusalem. This is a symbol in our national life."

Rabin said tennis was the one thing she and her husband really loved doing together, and that was their weekly date, every Saturday morning. After the period of mourning, she said yesterday at a National Press Club luncheon, she went to visit her husband's grave. Someone had left a tennis racket and two cans of tennis balls. Rabin said it was hard to start again, but she has resumed the sport.

Worried About Hong Kong

■ **Martin Lee**, the head of Hong Kong's Democratic Party, the territory's largest and most popular, told Washington Post editors yesterday that the forecast is "bad" for the rule of law after the British colony is transferred to Chinese rule on July 1.

Businessmen are satisfied, he said, but there is unrealistic speculation on real estate. The Chinese are eager not to lose face, and should the stock index drop they will dump foreign exchange to bring it up, he predicted. Lee said a Chinese official told one of his colleagues: "Don't you worry, because we have set aside millions of dollars."

The Chinese mean well, Lee said, but he added that they will be interfering in a free-market economy in a country where success depends on the respect of liberties.

This item appeared on page A18 of the the April 4, 1997 issue of the

The Washington Post

DIPLOMATIC DISPATCHES

Standing by Jordan

By Nora Boustany
Washington Post Foreign Service

Secretary of State **Madeleine K. Albright** knew exactly where to aim the first pitch at Camden Yards, but formulating Middle East policy seems to be a whole different ballgame. Following talks this week between Jordan's King **Hussein** and U.S. officials on dangers haunting the Middle East, "nothing is ready, they are feeling their way towards an initiative, but they are taking it very seriously," said new Jordanian Foreign Minister **Faez Tarawneh**. The former ambassador to Washington was sworn in Monday at King Hussein's River Road residence here. The Jordanian monarch told Albright and President **Clinton** that, given the climate of obstruction in the region, "there is nothing that can be called pressure anymore," on either the Israeli or the Palestinian side. He urged his hosts to launch an "even-handed" venture to defuse the crisis, Tarawneh said.

In an interview, Prime Minister **Abdel Salam Majali** said Jordan has "no problem with beginning final-status talks" on pending issues in the Israeli-Palestinian peace accord, "provided the steps spelled out in the Oslo accords for autonomy proceed" at the same time. "The snag is that what may be discussed [as final-status issues] may halt the implementation of Palestinian self-rule. This is very dangerous, and we may just be heading for another dilemma," he cautioned. Majali said Washington promised to assist Jordan economically since its expected "peace dividend" never materialized. "The Americans

have agreed to stand by Jordan in alleviating its economic problems," Majali said. Majali basked in his sunny hotel room at the Four Seasons yesterday, savoring the scent of 200 red and yellow roses, a welcome gesture from the Saudi ambassador, Prince **Bandar bin Sultan**. Hussein and Majali dined at Bandar's house Tuesday night, further proof that Saudi-Jordanian ties are warm again following a six-year chill over the Persian Gulf War.

Visitor From Lisbon

■ Having lunch and a tete-a-tete with President Clinton yesterday was Portuguese Prime Minister **Antonio Guterres**. He will be meeting with Albright and Defense Secretary **William S. Cohen** to discuss NATO and U.S. coordination with Europe on how to best discourage a climate of irrationality and extremism in North Africa and the Middle East. Guterres told Washington Post editors and reporters at Blair House yesterday he will push hard to put self-determination for the people of East Timor on the agenda of his talks here and will work to improve Indonesia's human rights record in the former Portuguese colony. During a recent meeting with Indonesian President **Suharto** in Bangkok, Guterres said he was willing to disagree with him on self-determination for the East Timorese but wants to make progress on other issues such as releasing political prisoners and opening interest sections in Jakarta and Lisbon.

Swedish Envoys to Switch

■ In a recasting of major players on the chessboard of Swedish diplomacy, Stockholm is moving

Ambassador **Henrik Liljegren** from Washington by the end of the summer and sending here **Rolf Ekeus**, the executive director of the U.N. special commission supervising compliance of the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

Liljegren, who has served here for 4½ years, has championed forging a new relationship with Washington, said State Department spokesman **Nicholas Burns**, adding: "Under his leadership Sweden and the U.S. worked together to support the independence of the Baltic countries and to negotiate the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia and Latvia." Liljegren proved to be a master tactician when he arranged with **Hillary Rodham Clinton's** deputy chief of staff, **Melanne Verveer**, to get his former prime minister, **Carl Bildt**, to attend a White House tea party for Nobel laureates, choreographing a scene that sparked a friendship with the president.

After a one-year "sabbatical stint" in an 18th-century palace that serves as Sweden's consulate in Istanbul, where his Turkish wife, Nil, was born, Liljegren will become his country's ambassador to Ankara. The Liljegrens have had their eyes on Ankara as a final posting. It has been a tradition for Stockholm to take into consideration the personal wishes of its Washington ambassador for his next assignment. Sweden's ambassador to the United Nations, **Peter Osvold**, whose wife is Irish, will become ambassador to Dublin, to make room for political appointee **Hans Dalgren** as his successor.

Liljegren and his wife are one of three ambassadorial couples

here—in addition to the French and the British—to make Washington's A-list, published last September. They have entertained an average of 20,000 people a year at their 3900 Nebraska Ave. NW residence and pioneered the now annual black-tie banquet for Nobel laureates from the United States on their way to Stockholm. Swedish publications such as *Svenske Dagbladet* and *Se & Hor* have paid tribute to Liljegren's acumen as a diplomat and to the couple's dynamic term here as "the best thing that happened to Sweden" in Washington. They also have sponsored and helped raise funds for 21 charities and cultural institutions, nationally and locally.

"They were tireless. As a couple, they really put Sweden on the map," Burns concluded.

E. COMMENTS:

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