SAVING THE WORLD

KATI MARTON IN CONVERSATION WITH SAMANTHA POWER

November 16, 2006

South Court Auditorium

New York Public Library

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PAUL HOLDENGRÄBER: Ladies and gentleman, my name is Paul Holdengräber, and I'm the Director of Public Programs here at the New York Public Library, now known as LIVE from the New York Public Library. It used to be called PEP, Public Education Programs, but I always thought that sounded more like something you would take if you had stomach ailments. **(laughter)** In any event, I very much encourage you to join the LIVE mailing list. We have nine events happening this Saturday, everything from "Gluttony" with Mario Batali to "Lust" with myself. **(laughter)** And I will be interviewing Laura Kipnis and Esther Perel. Esther Perel wrote a book with a wonderful title, called *Mating in Captivity,* and next week, we will have Thomas Cahill and Margaret Atwood. After that, we will have an event with Daniel Mendelsohn, as well as many more events next year. I will be interviewing Werner Herzog. We will have Günter Grass, so join the club. Come particularly on the fourteenth of February of next year, where, to celebrate Valentine's Day, we will have R. Crumb and Aline Crumb celebrating that day in a program called "Dirty Laundry." **(laughter)**

In any event, tonight we have a very serious subject at hand. It's a conversation between Samantha Power and a wonderful, wonderful writer, Kati Marton, who wrote a book that I highly recommend to

you, called *The Great Escape: Nine Jews Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*, and the subject tonight is really, in a very humble way, of course, changing the world. It will be a conversation about exile, terror, and hope—how, in today's world, can we still make a difference? There was a moment in time in Budapest when nine individuals—they all happen to have been Hungarian—changed the world on their way to America. It's a world I know a little bit about. I know more about the Viennese world where my parents came from, the world of Stefan Zweig, and the world of yesterday. Kati Marton and Samantha Power will really be addressing both that era and bring it up to the present.

As you well know, Samantha Power is the author of a most amazing work, for which she received the Pulitzer Prize—I believe she was the youngest Pulitzer Prize ever—*A Problem from Hell: America and the Age of Genocide*. She also happens to have worked last year for Barack Obama, she may tell us something about that, as well. In any event, the conversation tonight will last more or less as long as a psychoanalytical session **(laughter)** and after that you will have about twenty minutes to ask questions. I stress questions rather than comments, and questions, in my view, can always be asked in about fifty-two to fifty-four seconds, depending. So it's a great pleasure to have Kati Marton here with Samantha Power. Thank you very much.

(applause)

SAMANTHA POWER: It's a huge honor for me to be up here with Kati. I received this book in galley. I was asked if I would be interested in blurbing it, because they had a problem. It was all men, and they were all about forty years older than me, and there was some desire to make this book, you know, on its cover, anyway, to seem relevant to today. And then I opened the book, and it's about these *extraordinary* characters. Men, as it happens. No, no, really no women among them, although you see the great women behind the great men.

KATI MARTON: And a woman wrote it, so—

SAMANTHA POWER: I'm *getting* to that, I'm getting to the Kati part. **(laughter)** But what it is, also, is and what really struck me, is it's your journey back to your country, to your homeland, a place that you left under very arduous circumstances. You're a Jew who fled repression and are trying to change

the world, and you've chosen a very interesting set of Trojan horses in a way to do your bidding for you. You found these characters, who, well, as you put it in the—in quoting a number of the people, they lived under the impression that if they didn't innovate, they would die. They had suffered such terror and such repression that their, that the creativity almost seemed mandatory for them, I mean, many thought that they had to create in order to stay in America. But what was it like—I mean, what was the discovery, for you, like of these people who were your country people? And what is it that unites these very, very disparate—I mean, we're talking scientists, artists, filmmakers, writers, the writer Arthur Koestler—what did you find in them that speaks to your immigrant experience?

KATI MARTON: Well, first of all, let me say that among the many instructions that Paul gave us was, one, not to flatter each other, so we're not supposed to be too chummy up here, we're supposed to be rather provocative. And I'm having a hard time not saying a few flattering words about Samantha which come from the heart. Samantha happens to be one of the women in the world—one of the people in the world—I most admire, and I do believe that she is a transforming person who really has changed the way we look at the world through her take on genocide. Anyway, more on that later, I just had to get that out immediately, because I was thrilled when she loved the book, and, in fact, she played a very active role in the *marketing* of this book. This was not an obvious book—I'm happy to tell you that it's now in its second printing after only three weeks out. **(applause)** But Samantha had a big role in that in the following dramatic way. The day it was to go to print, and I was on jury duty but I had smuggled in my BlackBerry, and I get a flood of text messages from Samantha saying, "You have got to change the subtitle. This book," which the subtitle at that point was *The Great Escape: Nine Hungarians Who Fled Hitler and Changed the World*, and she said—she said in her desperate texts, she said, "If you keep that subtitle, I will pass right by that pile at Barnes and Noble—not for me, thank you."

SAMANTHA POWER: And I'm not even Jewish. But I knew that Jews read books.

(laughter)

KATI MARTON: I mean, isn't she brilliant? She knew that.

(laughter)

SAMANTHA POWER: It takes a Harvard education to figure that one out, yeah.

KATI MARTON: So I literally had to body-block the printers at Simon and Schuster, to their annoyance, but I think it was the right call. We changed it in the last minute to "Nine Jews." Indeed, they were Hungarians, and there's a tenth figure in the book in addition to the nine, and that is the city of Budapest, the incubator of these remarkable souls, and I know our questions are supposed to be short, but yours was a little bit over fifty seconds, I was timing it, so I'm going to try to deal with this enormous question, which involves my own personal involvement with this story, and, indeed, though it isn't my family's story, I wrote it with a passion that I think most people bring to their own stories because I felt that I knew these characters. They predeceased my arrival. The only one of the nine that I actually knew personally was Edward Teller, who, if anything, discouraged me from the process, because he was such a dark and pessimistic soul, but the others, the others all were of my parents' generation, and I felt that I knew them because they were so much like my parents, and, in effect, I was writing this book as an attempt to get close to that city of Budapest, which I never knew because I was born into a very gray, Stalinist, postwar Budapest, where my wildest dream as a kid was to live in a house without any bullet holes in it, because there were no such houses in Budapest. But I kept hearing about this Camelot that had briefly risen on the Danube, roughly between 1880 and the outbreak of World War I, which rang the curtain down on this remarkable period. And I wanted to (a) find out what was in the water in Budapest that gave the world so many brilliant and rather, shall I say, screwed-up people because they, upon deeper examination, they all turned out to be extraordinarily insecure, driven, pessimistic, all the qualities that it seems to take to be transforming figures, because, let's face it, people who are happy with their lot in life, people who are already where they want to be, are *not* the ones who transform the world.

And these nine characters, who started life in a very calm and prosperous voyage, the Budapest of 1900, had that world literally pulled out from under them by the—by what happened in Versailles when the victorious Allies decided that this great and powerful empire, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was going to be punished for losing the war, and so Hungary suddenly was reduced from a world power to a little stump of a country, a little landlocked country, two-thirds of its population and land given to its neighbors. And these Jews, who then were at the very top of the Budapest establishment in all the

professions, because they *were* the Budapest middle class—in fact a Hungarian poet, non-Jewish, once said, “Budapest is a city built by the Jews for the rest of us,” and indeed, that was true, and these men were part of that. But, anyway, so they had that world pulled out from under them. They never recovered from the shock of having had that moment, that moment when it seemed they could go as far as their talent would carry them—for the first time in Europe, Jews could do that—and then that world was over just as suddenly. And though they carried their brilliance, and their—and, as they crossed the European continent on the boil, assimilated *every* artistic and scientific current, and there were many, God knows, and brought them to our shores, they *never* recovered from that shock, and that made very interesting character studies.

SAMANTHA POWER: I have on my fridge in Winthrop a *New Yorker* cartoon, which is a little girl in bed talking to her mother, who’s come into the room, and the girl is in bed, and she’s got her—I think I’m remembering it right—she’s got her arms folded and she’s really pissed off with her mother, and the caption is, “Thanks for the perfect childhood. Now I’ll never be a writer.”

(laughter)

KATI MARTON: It’s always the mother’s fault, isn’t it?

SAMANTHA POWER: At least in the *New Yorker*, but I wanted to read it because of course, you and I, but we’ve already shared this sort of offline, but both of our books, before Kati was even working on this book, and before I read this book, my favorite all-time line in any movie was—came from *The Third Man*—and some of you, I’m sure, know this great quote by heart, but it appears in Kati’s book and I just wanted to talk about it. “In Italy, for thirty years, under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder, and bloodshed. They produced Michelangelo, Leonardo, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland, they had brotherly love, five hundred years of democracy, and they produced the cuckoo clock.” **(laughter)** It’s the greatest line in the history of moviemaking.

KATI MARTON: And it kind of sums up this book, in a way. It certainly sums up the author of that line, Alexander Korda, Sir Alexander Korda, who *was*, in a way, the Harry Lime character who speaks the—

SAMANTHA POWER: But all of them have this in common, this suffering, and then they come and they land wherever they land, and they have that insider/outsider perspective. You know, I asked in my original question, sort of was it the vulnerability that made them almost pathological creators, or people who couldn't stay still because they didn't want to live—

KATI MARTON: I think the insecurity.

SAMANTHA POWER: —they didn't want to live with their demons? But what this suggests, of course, is that God forbid, you'd have five hundred years of peace and democracy, you'd only produce the cuckoo clock—I mean, that can't be the message of these lives, or is it?

KATI MARTON: Well, I think that to be—to produce great things and to effect change, you not only need motivation, which—insecurity is a great motivator, isn't it?—but you also need opportunity and you need an open environment for that. You need a place that *welcomes* fresh thinking, fresh ideas, and where not every artist is meant to serve the state. Why did these nine leave Budapest when they did? And they all left at roughly the same time in the Twenties, and, ironically, they then decamped to Berlin, because Berlin in the Twenties—this was Weimar Germany—Berlin in the Twenties was *the* most open, experimental city, and so they felt very much at home there. And that's where they—they, you know, picked up the great revolution in science under Einstein—that's where the photographers—anyway, I don't want to jump too far ahead of the story, but insecurity is not enough. You need also opportunity, and for Jews, the opportunity had not been there until this period when suddenly they were needed to forge this new city on the Danube, which had been this provincial outpost before but suddenly needed that human capital. And so for a while, it was a merger of needs. The Hungarians needed the Jews. The Jews needed the Hungarians. And the Jews mistook that for *real* assimilation.

My parents, who didn't tell me that we were of Jewish background, once I made that discovery, and I was already thirty years old, and I made that discovery really by chance—I was then working for ABC News, and I was in the course of an interview on the subject of Raoul Wallenberg, and the woman I was interviewing said, "Well, of course, Wallenberg was too late to save your grandparents," and that was the first inkling I had that that my grandparents had not died, as I had been told, under the Siege of

Budapest, when so many did die, but had perished, as it turned out, in Auschwitz, and when I confronted—because I was very young and very self-righteous and judgmental toward my parents—when I confronted them with "How could you—how could you withhold such an essential piece of my identity from me?" My father said, "You will never understand how close we came to being fully assimilated. We were *this* close." And of course "*this* close" is not good enough, as it turned out.

SAMANTHA POWER: It was a lot—I mean, the parts that resonate the most for me are the parts also about when they've landed. I mean, I love the city, and I love the idea of Budapest as the tenth character in the book. But it's extraordinary, as a journalist and someone who's always loved the work of Robert Capa. You know, I knew Robert Capa's work to look at, and, you know, could have picked him out in a, you know, in a lineup, but I had no idea what he had actually gone through in *this* country. I mean, here is the greatest—perhaps the greatest antifascist photographer of our time, hoping that we in America won't soon need to be supplying antifascist photographers of our own time. But, I mean an incredible sort of a visionary, in a way, a *patriot* for everything this country was standing for and as soon as the Second World War breaks out, he can't even travel in the greater New York area without a permit from the government because he happened to be Hungarian. I mean, you see what we're going through today, aspects of it anyway. The sort of—I guess, here are these guys who are these *engines*, or these invigorators of our democracy, and yet they also, in these moments of crisis, become emblems of just how fragile it is at home when we get scared.

KATI MARTON: I mean, an even more egregious example of how quickly *this* country can turn paranoid is the fact that the man who actually can be—can without exaggeration be said to have gotten the Manhattan Project started—the Manhattan Project which meant that we beat Hitler to the bomb—Leo Szilard, he was *banned* from Los Alamos, because Leslie Groves, the military head—Oppenheimer obviously was the head of the science aspect of Los Alamos, Groves the military—felt that Szilard could not be trusted, and what that really meant was that he was too Jewish for Leslie Groves, and also too Hungarian. And therefore an FBI agent was sent to follow Szilard around Washington, and the agent came back with a wonderfully amusing report, which said that "Yes, indeed, Szilard does present a threat, but not to the country, to himself, because he has liverwurst sandwiches three times a day." **(laughter)** This was literally in the FBI report, but without any humor from the FBI. I mean, you know, Szilard was deemed to be a security threat because he came across as too Jewish.

The other—there are four scientists among the nine. The other one, John von Neumann, who was every bit as Jewish as Leo Szilard but, because he presented himself as an extremely polished, cosmopolitan European, Groves trusted completely, and so much so that von Neumann was asked to submit a list of targets for bombing. And here's an illustration of just how, beneath this debonair surface, just how *wounded* these spirits were, all of them, how dark they were: von Neumann submitted the city of Kyoto, the sacred city, sacred and all-wood city of Kyoto, along with Hiroshima, for targeting by the atom bomb. I mean, what kind of pessimism does *that* reveal? I mean, Capa came across as also the most debonair, a champion Lothario, wonderfully talented with women as well as with photography, the man who Ingrid Bergman wanted to marry, as it happens. But he never married, he never had children, I don't think he thought the world a fit place to bring children into. So, most definitely, they were all marked by that, by that early experience.

I really want to—because this is a *conversation*, you don't get to ask all the questions. You have a character in your book about genocide, *A Problem from Hell*, which, for anybody who hasn't read it, I recommend it. When I, for some bizarre reason I spent a year working in the UN Secretariat, I had ten copies of Samantha's book on my bookshelf, and every time some high UN official strayed into my office, I handed them a copy of this book. Doesn't seem to have done much good.

SAMANTHA POWER: I was going to say. **(laughter)** What a testament to my influence on the earth. Yes.

KATI MARTON: But the figure I'm referring to, of course, is Rafael Lemkin, who basically invented the word "genocide." And why was that so important?

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, I think what Lemkin has, and it just comes down to what I think your guys have as well, it's this—and it's what I think we're missing in this country today. But it's a gritty realism, but that is grounded in the world as it *is* and not the world as we *wish* it is.

KATI MARTON: Now, Samantha, for those who don't know about him—

SAMANTHA POWER: No, I'll come to it. So Lemkin is a guy who grows up in Eastern Poland, pogroms left and right, and he feels under threat, like I think a lot of your characters do. He's Jewish. But he becomes—when other kids in his neighborhood are reading comic books, he's reading about historical cases of mass slaughter. It's just his *thing*. He's weird. Lemkin is weird and obsessive, again, like a lot of—

KATI MARTON: Yes, that's one of the qualities that they all have in common. Obsessive.

SAMANTHA POWER: —like a lot of geniuses, I mean, completely obsessive, and becomes truly obsessed with what the Turks have done with the Armenians in 1915, and sees the pogroms, believes Jews are very vulnerable in Europe, goes to a group of European lawyers in the interwar period, and says, "We've got to ban this, prohibit, get states—somehow capture the imagination of statesmen prospectively, instead of after the fact so we're just breeding some future generation of Lemkins who are just going to be reading about these cases in books," and they said, "Oh, Lemkin, what are you talking about? This crime that you describe, it takes place too seldom to legislate," they said, and this was in '33. He went back to Warsaw, where he'd been a public prosecutor, and he was *fired* because he was known to be pushing Jewish issues, you know, in international legal settings, and the word that he had used in the '30s to describe this crime, which was effectively the destruction of ethnic national religious groups, and then the destruction of the cultural appendages, as well, was a separate crime, but the destruction of the groups themselves physically was "barbarity," and the destruction of the culture, of the libraries, and the language, and so on, was "vandalism."

And here was—and this is this sort of naiveté that it takes almost to be a creator, or the kind of capacity for surprise that you have to retain. But Lemkin, despite having read all these historical cases, had been laughed out of this law conference, goes back to Poland, Hitler invades in '39, Lemkin goes door to door, tries to get his parents and his cousins and his friends to come with him, and says, "Hitler is coming. Hitler is coming. We know what it means. Like, we've all—we know what *Mein Kampf* says, we *know* what this man's ideology is, we know what he intends to do to Jewry." "Lemkin, I'm a baker. I bake bread. The Germans will come, I will give them bread, what have I ever done to them?" This sort of "just world" theory, you know, that you, you know, bad things only happen to people who have done bad things, or have sort of elicited the thing, but he, he told himself, this is the naiveté, that if he'd only

had the right word in the ’30s, it would have been different. He would have been able to galvanize the imagination of these statesmen, and sort of pluck, you know, the sensibility that he needed to, to get them to act prospectively, so his notebooks are filled with these efforts, you know, again like your guys with relation to the Manhattan Project, or *Casablanca*, or whatever, but to try to find a word—and again, it’s predicated on this crazy conceit, that it was just the failure of imagination and not the failure of will, because imagination and will are so linked, and he didn’t—he refused to sort of accept that.

But what, I think, again, puts him in the company of your people is he never—from the point—his parents are killed, all of his cousins are killed, I mean, anyone he’s ever known in Poland is killed, and in his notebooks, anyway, he comes up with this word, finally, that he thinks *does* capture this crime atop the hierarchy of the horrible, which is the word “genocide,” and then he comes to the United States as a refugee, again like your people, and he goes door to door, and he gets this word into the dictionaries. The OED initially wouldn’t take it, but he got it into Webster’s, into Larousse, and then he, you know, wrote the Genocide Convention—

KATI MARTON: Meanwhile, he’s driving everybody nuts at the UN.

SAMANTHA POWER: He’s a nutter, he’s obsessive, and he totally lacks—I mean, look, he’s also a *survivor*, I mean, he’s the kind of people—you go to refugee camps today, and, you know, you can imagine. I mean, *imagine* if everything that we care about is taken away from us, and then we tell people and either they don’t believe us, which is usually the first way that they greet us, because they haven’t had the same experience, they haven’t been reading the same history, they believe in a just world theory where bad things only happen to people who have done bad things, and then somebody comes and they actually—and Lemkin just tried to be the spokesperson for—what was amazing about him was that he was so *pro*spective himself, so enlightened, he harnessed his suffering, again like your people, and wanted it to be a tool for future victims of genocide.

KATI MARTON: This is a quality—this capacity to imagine the unimaginable is yet another quality that, for example, that all of mine and Lemkin, as well. Arthur Koestler, who is the lone author in this group, like Samantha, wrote a book that transformed the way we look at the world, *Darkness at Noon*, and he came here in the early ’40s, having barely escaped the Nazis, and, before that, the Soviets

because he made a journey through the Soviet Union, which was the origin of *Darkness at Noon*. But, at any rate, when he arrived here, this country was in a state of absolute *denial*. Now there's a word we've been hearing in more contemporary times. And Koestler became one of these Chicken Little characters running around saying, "The sky is falling! The sky is falling!" and everybody told him to shut up and, you know, go away, which is the same experience that Szilard had, trying to rouse people to—you know, America lives in a bubble, and, you know, we're blessed by geography, with a ocean on either side, but these guys, these guys played a—did us an *enormous* service in being sort of the first alarm bell about the avalanche that was coming, at a time when America really wasn't focused on that.

SAMANTHA POWER: But look today—I mean, one of the advantages of having taken—I mean having, again a divided government, as of January, is that the messengers that exist in our own society, you know, actually stand slightly less of a chance of being shot, I mean, proverbially shot. I mean, if you look at the NASA scientists, you know, and the absolute pillorying of them for, and the one man in particular, but for naming global warming, you know, in government documents. When you look at—I mean, the worst example, I think, over the course of last year of this phenomenon of the Cassandra being shot was when, many of you remember, when Dana Priest of the *Washington Post* published—I think she won the Pulitzer for this, in fact—but published this on the front page of the *Washington Post*—I'll never forget it, I was in Washington, but it was the photograph of the black sites. Which were these sites—we know about Guantánamo, we know about these carriers that exist offshore, where people are being held and presumably, for a long time, anyway, tortured, but in this instance, here was an image of just a like, almost, it looked like a building built out of a sand dune in the middle of Afghanistan, and there were no roads to it, and it was the front page of the *Washington Post* below the fold, and it was her story showing that there were those sites that existed, somewhere in Eastern Europe, perhaps even in Hungary, we don't yet know, and one or more in Afghanistan, which *nobody* knew about, I mean, sort of like the National—the NSA, the National Surveillance Agency, or whatever in this country, like, you know, No Such Agency, you can't even know it exists—NSA, No Such Agency—and these black sites, too.

And so there I was in Washington, trying to do my alleged service to this country, trying to work within the government—or trying to, you know, I was so frustrated by the lack of accountability and oversight by the Congress, thought I'd go and work in Congress, and so here's a moment. I mean, the way it used

to work is the press would do its job occasionally and then somebody in the Congress would say, "Oh my God," like, "Shocked! Shocked!" and they would go with this and then you'd have hearings, and sure enough, Henry Hyde, goes up in the Rotunda on Capitol Hill, and holds up Dana Priest's article, and says, "We absolutely must have hearings. We must investigate Dana Priest," and the leakers, and the leakers and the people who are challenging—

KATI MARTON: Yes, yes, that's always the first instinct.

SAMANTHA POWER: Absolutely. And we have lived, really in the wake of 9/11, I mean, just as Capa couldn't travel, you know, without a permit, but people, you know, and it's been a gradual, you know, loosening of the bounds, and a gradual expansion of speech, but I mean, the free-est speech we've had in our country in the last three or four years, or the most critical scrutiny of governmental policy, I think because of this shoot-the-messenger phenomenon that you've shown, but is Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert, I mean, that is the most subversive, but truthful. I mean, they talk about fake news, it does such a disservice, because what is Jon Stewart? What is funniest about Jon Stewart? It's not the like, made-up. It's C-SPAN is the funniest, and without his culling of the sort of farce of the checks and balances, I don't think we'd even be as aware, and, you know, despite the talk of the Colbert bump, I don't think they necessarily, you know, have the constituency, unfortunately, among centrist voters to really make the difference, but it's truth, and it—because our truth-tellers, I think—

KATI MARTON: Not truthiness.

SAMANTHA POWER: It's truthiness, it's the truth bump. But our truth-tellers, you know, it's a very similar phenomenon, it's a very disturbing thing to read this book and to be reminded also, of today, the Cassandras or the Chicken Littles and how marginalized they've been.

KATI MARTON: But it's interesting. I think Jon Stewart has had tremendous impact on *straight* news coverage. The day that President Bush was in high dudgeon that he'd been called to task for—when he claimed that, "I haven't been saying 'Stay the Course,' *that's* not our policy," that evening, a la using Stewart's editing techniques, the evening newscasts had the wit to run a series of "Stay the Course, Stay the Course, Stay the Course," you know, back to back, which is pure Jon Stewart technique, so they're

learning. But, Samantha, if we could return to genocide, and Lemkin, and the fact that the UN now has enshrined this concept of "genocide," presumably so that *never again* will the world sit with its arms folded, and yet, to bring it up to the present, we seem to be inching toward—if not already in the middle of—a genocide in Darfur. Why is it so difficult to get, to get the UN to mobilize? Why, if we could stop Milosevic's genocide in Kosovo, without too much difficulty, why aren't we stopping it in Darfur?

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, I think one of the mistakes Democrats are making, and even colleagues of mine in the Darfur movement to some degree, although we're sort of stuck with the democracy we have and not the democracy we wish we had.

KATI MARTON: That sounds too Rumsfeldian for me.

SAMANTHA POWER: I'm *always* accused of being so Rumsfeldian. **(laughter)** I've got to stop—

KATI MARTON: I can see why.

SAMANTHA POWER: I've got to stop the Rumsfeldian, Strangelovian tendencies. But no, the, I mean, the reality is, for all the talk of the American hyperpower, which of course you don't hear much about anymore, but American power in the twentieth century, I mean, in this world was defined by our economy and by our military, of having a military budget that of the next thirty powers combined, and a GDP that dwarfed that of China and India combined, etcetera, and power now is best gauged by influence, and that *comes* from hard power, and Iraq has eroded our economic stability with our deficit spending and so on, but it's of course eroded our military standing profoundly. I mean, we're so overstretched that the odds of the United States being the do-er on Darfur are, of course, nonexistent.

KATI MARTON: But we always have a good reason not to do anything.

SAMANTHA POWER: But we can come to genocide in particular. But I mean, because I think the influence that the United States wields around the world, we have to adjust, advocates have to adjust, people who *care* about Darfur have to adjust, because it's not just about money and guns and technological supremacy anymore, it's about *legitimacy*, is going to dictate our influence, and it's about

perceptions of *competence*. And it's not just Iraq that has eroded perceptions of competence—it's *Katrina*. We're *not* the country that put the man on the moon, so when we go to your question about genocide and about Darfur, we have the most incredible moment afoot in this country of young people and evangelicals and Jewish groups—I mean, Jewish groups have an *incredible* commitment to this issue—I mean, acting on the lesson of the twentieth century, which is that no government will ever tend to genocide naturally, or easily, it just doesn't rank on its own. There's always a thousand reasons. I mean, today the reason for Bush would be bin Laden lived in Sudan. Bush would *love* to cooperate with Sudan full-on, he'd love to be a part of extracting the oil there that China now has full dibs on—China and France get to compete over—*all* of our national interests cut in favor of *warming* to this government at least if national interests are measured in the short term, but this movement has made it impossible—as manifested in Congressional pressure and legislation—has made it impossible for Bush to do that. And yet we've got a President who's all dressed up with no place to go.

You have to put Darfur in the context of—you know, what did we want in North Korea? We wanted no nuclear tests. Whoops! Got a nuclear test. What do we want from Iran? No enrichment. Whoops! Enrichment. What do we want in Iraq? Something stable so we can get the hell out. Can't get that. What did we want in UN reform? I mean, the Bush administration actually had the most progressive package for how the UN should be strengthened—as you know better than I do—on the management side, on the Human Rights Council side, etcetera, we have no leverage. Or at least we have so much less leverage than we used to.

KATI MARTON: But what about the rest of the world?

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, that's what I want to know. All the Jews left and now the rest of the world doesn't do anything. I don't know.

(laughter)

KATI MARTON: So it's our fault.

SAMANTHA POWER: Yeah.

KATI MARTON: There we go again, scapegoating.

SAMANTHA POWER: There is a serious anemia. And also what we have in this country, again what's manifested here, is our citizens actually have the *gall* to think that they can gather on the Mall and make Bush do something about Darfur, and that's a *weird* idea. They don't have that in Europe, that idea, as far as I can tell, I haven't seen it.

KATI MARTON: So what good is having this wonderful word, "genocide," and a UN that is paralyzed to act? I mean—this isn't the first time. We had Rwanda, we had Bosnia, we had—

SAMANTHA POWER: This is symptomatic, it's all symptomatic of—okay, so the UN, your husband said this best, we have to mention Kati's husband, Richard Holbrooke, *only* for this reason, because I quote him all the time even when you're not around, and that is, and I mean I love it and I wish I'd come up with it because I might now have to pretend that I *did* come up with it because it's so good and I am writing a book about the UN. And that is, "The UN is a building. Blaming the UN qua UN for Rwanda is like blaming Madison Square Garden when the Knicks play badly."

KATI MARTON: Yeah, that's a pretty good line. **(laughter)**

SAMANTHA POWER: But it's so important—and it's not to take anything away—I mean, the UN *is* to blame because the UN is the *world*. It's 192 countries, each of whom have domestic politics that will or will not be influenced around human life. I mean, I'm not in a Lemkin phase right now, because I feel like human rights are being abused across the world. I'm very focused on Darfur, but I'm as focused that we're—that Dick Cheney thinks waterboarding is a no-brainer. That is as disturbing. And when Bush talks about endorsing waterboarding in one breath and denouncing genocide in Darfur in another, it's beyond, like, the traditional hypocrisy of statesmanship. It makes people think that something else is going on in the Darfur thing. That it *can't* be about Darfur—it has to be about oil or whacking an Arab government or something conspiratorial. Because the disconnect now between what our domestic movement has managed to produce that comes out of the government on human rights à la carte, morality à la carte, and then sort of the thicker way that we're fighting the never-ending war.

KATI MARTON: Let's—since we're going to get extremely depressed if we go back to Cheney and waterboarding. Let's talk about a—yet another transforming figure, the one that you are currently—well, actually, you're involved with two transforming figures, but let's talk about the one that you are writing a book about who was indeed one of the UN's great and heroic figures. The UN occasionally does throw up such a man, and such a man was Sérgio Vieira de Mello, the great Brazilian diplomat who was killed in the Baghdad bombing of the UN mission and who Samantha is writing a book about. First of all, why? Why are you writing about Sérgio?

SAMANTHA POWER: Partly, actually, because of getting those questions of, "Okay, we know the US on genocide prevention, let's say, or human rights policy, is probably not going to be the lead actor. We know Europe is out for the count ,and you know, we're doing social democratic things at home and we're giving great development funds for things but not actually contributing troops or police or anything to civilian protection, so what about the UN?" I mean, just hearing that question so often, just, God, we need to open up what the UN is and what it *can* be in order to reform the part that is reformable within the UN. I mean, I mean there is a group of people who carry blue passports and do answer to that flag rather than to their own, but really to expose . . . the Knicks.

KATI MARTON: And by the way they tend not to be in the Secretariat, they are almost always in the field, which is where the UN does its best work, and Sérgio was—tell us about Sérgio, why you think that we need to know so much more about Sérgio.

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, he's so—he is born in Brazil, again very similar, his dad was in the Brazilian foreign ministry, he spent most of his life, as a result, abroad and then his dad gets excommunicated when the military regime takes over in Brazil.

KATI MARTON: So, an outsider.

SAMANTHA POWER: An outsider. So Sérgio basically becomes a refugee himself. He'd been a diplomat, then a refugee, they can sometimes look alike for diplomats' children, I guess. But he's bouncing around, and he joins the UN at twenty-one, and he's in it for thirty-four years, mainly in war

zones. So he's accreting a familiarity with now—what today is called evil, but with the bad guys, with terror of all kinds, with human rights abusers, and with the people who need help. And he's making a lot of mistakes along the way, but he's something that I don't think we've ever really had, which is what we desperately need at present, which is a *face* for international institutions and international law. We've always had, you know, right-wing demagogues denouncing the UN as an infringement, you know, from McCarthy and Bricker onward, infringement on our sovereignty, a lot of the people who took aim at some of your guys, took aim at Oppenheimer. Here's Oppenheimer, who gives us the Manhattan Project, for what that's worth, but I mean if anybody had contributed to ending World War II in the way that it was ended, it was Robert Oppenheimer, and then in McCarthy's era gets his security clearance taken away because he wants to do—

KATI MARTON: By the way, because of one of my guys—Edward—

SAMANTHA POWER: Because of Edward Teller.

KATI MARTON: Not my favorite subplot in the book, but—

SAMANTHA POWER: But an incredibly important one.

KATI MARTON: Edward Teller, basically, in a treacherous move, testified against Oppenheimer, with whom he'd been at war at Los Alamos—

SAMANTHA POWER: And jealous of his—

KATI MARTON: Yeah, it was definitely that.

SAMANTHA POWER: But in that moment, no, but I mention Oppenheimer because it's a classic American moment. I mean, here he invents, or is responsible for spearheading the invention of, this weapon that is used to end the war, and then within—what is it?—six or seven years, McCarthy is ascendant, his desire to do arms control, and to actually—I mean, it was naïve in some ways, because his antifascism did make him initially more of a believer that you could actually negotiate with the Soviet

Union, but at a certain point he tipped against that, but still wanted these weapons controlled. And what control—which is how people see the UN—has always meant to Americans is an infringement on sovereignty, on our ability to protect ourselves or to do what we want when we want it, which is something we as citizens don't like, either, and we sort of—in a way we are the macrofication or the anthropomorphication of our citizen John Wayne, you know, emblem, and so we've always had this right-wing tendency to caricature the UN, I think, *as* a global government that is interested in taking away our rights and so on. We've had for the last ten to fifteen years, and this *includes* the Democratic Party, very much, under Clinton. We've had Democrats who have been mute, at best—

KATI MARTON: Well, it was under Democrat watch that Rwanda happened.

SAMANTHA POWER: But, that's, I mean, that's dealing with the conflict, but I mean, even just take the notion of international law. I mean it's Democrats who wouldn't do the International Criminal Court, and who wouldn't do Kyoto, and so when the Republicans took over and they were interested in destroying these things, there was no edifice, there was no constituency, I mean, other than like a few World Federalists in church basements, you know, who were willing to stand up for these things. I mean, now, it's changing, and Gore and others are changing it, but my point is, like, here is a moment where all the threats that we're facing in this country, really, the really meaningful ones, are transnational threats that we *know* we can't do alone. Either because we've proven that we're just bad at things lately—we're not the country that put the man on the moon—or because the threats cross borders, like global warming, avian flu, terrorism, of course—

KATI MARTON: AIDS.

SAMANTHA POWER: HIV, you name it. And at just that moment, it's the perfect moment, then, to say, "Okay, we don't have great confidence in our government anymore at doing these things right. The threats are bigger than us. Let's turn to international institutions," and there's no constituency for them.

KATI MARTON: So enter the white knight.

SAMANTHA POWER: So enter Sérgio, enter the white knight.

KATI MARTON: And by the way I have to say he was the *most* handsome man in the UN. **(laughter)** I remember when he would pass through our office, all the women would just go, "Oh, my God." He *was* a rock star. So that's—

SAMANTHA POWER: He really was. I mean, we call him. Vanessa, my editor is here, and we call him, and he was known, at the time, when he was alive, as a cross between Bobby Kennedy and James Bond. **(laughter)** I mean—

KATI MARTON: With a little bit of George Clooney in there.

(laughter)

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, he's the image of George Clooney. But, the way that we're going to get buy-in for international institutions is first of all, they *do* have to be fixed. It's the scandals—the right has an awful lot to point to, in terms of Oil-for-Food and peacekeeping scandals, and so on, so we have to clean up—*they* have to clean up what's clean-up-able within it. But there has to be within the 192 states, or at least the democracies within them, a constituency built for this institution. We have to—instead of sending in effect our worst to the UN to work and our best—like Richard Holbrooke, and others, you know, are necessarily going to be working for the US government.

KATI MARTON: He isn't even here. He can't hear all these flatteries.

SAMANTHA POWER: But I mean really creative—people who at least are rolling up their sleeves, and I mean, it sounds crazy to say this, that this is a rare breed in government, but an empiricist. And we kind of have people who are realists and who are looking at sort of effects-based diplomacy. But sending, you know, creating a magnet for the UN, so where the best, the most, you know, ingenious—

KATI MARTON: So that was Sérgio.

SAMANTHA POWER: But now Sérgio, because he was killed, along with twenty-three others in the UN's 9/11, in August of 2003, now Sérgio has to serve another purpose, which is to give that organization and these principles a face, and to get into politics and make that face sort of enter politics.

KATI MARTON: How much of what Sérgio achieved, and perhaps not everybody here followed his career as closely as you and I—how much of that was ego-driven? I ask that because ego plays such an *enormous* role in—I tend to think of it as a *positive*, because people without ego don't really achieve much.

SAMANTHA POWER: It's tricky, it's like debates about Obama, today, you know, it's—

KATI MARTON: That was the other—

SAMANTHA POWER: Great man. Great man in my life.

KATI MARTON: —transforming event that Samantha is currently involved with. I mean, as a—

(laughter)

SAMANTHA POWER: Well.

KATI MARTON: I mean, thank God she is, because—

SAMANTHA POWER: No, but, I mention it only because when you *do* encounter—you know, I wouldn't say Sérgio's a genius, I mean, he has a Ph.D. in philosophy, and he's definitely the *best* the UN has ever, has ever, you know, put out there, and he would have been the next Secretary General.

KATI MARTON: What was Kofi's line always about if only I had twenty-five Sérgios, we could make this thing work.

SAMANTHA POWER: The world would be—you know, and it's the void as per when Bobby Kennedy was killed, the void is very, very similar, as you gather, I'm sure, on the international stage. But Obama and Sérgio, similarly, when, and I think Oppenheimer and some of these others, at a certain point it's very hard to distinguish ego and—or ambition, let's say instead of ego—*ambition* and *efficiency*. In other words, if you're Oppenheimer, and you kind of look around the room, and you're the guy who's going to figure out the Manhattan Project, you know, you're elevating yourself, you're pushing yourself, you're jockeying. When Sérgio was, in the end, positioning himself to become a special representative to run East Timor or Kosovo in the end himself actually avoiding, trying to avoid being sent to Iraq. I mean, he really didn't want that at all.

KATI MARTON: It was going to be his last mission.

SAMANTHA POWER: It was going to be his last field mission, but I think that was a testament to his, actually, and I think this is the way ego and ambition *should* work. I mean, I think Richard Holbrooke should be Secretary of State. But not because I know him, I just think it would be really good for our country to have somebody who's actually really solicitous of other people's opinions and knows how to make *peace*. I mean there actually aren't that many people on earth—

KATI MARTON: These are handy things to know.

SAMANTHA POWER: A few of those skills, you know, sort of come in handy. But Sérgio, the testament to it being efficiency and not ambition was *not* wanting to go to Iraq. In other words, if it was ambition—at that time, there'd never been attacks on civilian targets up to the point of his deployment, and indeed for the three months that he was there prior to the—it was the first-ever suicide attack in Iraq, was the one that killed these twenty-three on August nineteenth. But he just didn't want to go because he didn't think the Americans were going to listen to the UN. And so he could have been Mr. Big, but he would have known that Mr. Big wouldn't actually be able to *do* anything for the people of Iraq. And I think, you know, the ego of the repellant kind is the kind where it really *is* all about self-promotion apart from ends, you know.

KATI MARTON: But I think that if ego is married to a higher cause—

SAMANTHA POWER: That's what I'm saying, though. Yeah. But people lose track, I'm told. Let's, why don't we—

KATI MARTON: I wanted to ask you one more thing, because we—you just barely mentioned Barack Obama, and I think that there's tremendous interest in learning—would you characterize Obama as potentially a transforming—an agent for transformation?

SAMANTHA POWER: Totally.

KATI MARTON: You would.

SAMANTHA POWER: I mean, you just—I have in my life not met somebody who combines this *rigor*—I mean, I had to *work* for the guy—like, you don't say, you don't get away with what you get away with with—I mean, I don't get away with Obama with things that I get away with with my Harvard colleagues who are incredibly, you know—I mean, they want to seem much smarter than you, so—

KATI MARTON: Can you give us an example of what you didn't—

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, just, on the, I'll use Darfur as an example, since I think there are a number of people here who care a lot about Darfur. You know, there was a lot of effort to get Obama out on the no-fly zone, which is one of these sort of tools in the toolbox that should have been deployed—without speaking out of turn about other members of the Senate. But, you know, well, speaking out of turn about other members of the Senate, Joe Biden—

KATI MARTON: What the heck.

SAMANTHA POWER: Joe Biden, you know, an op-ed, a grand op-ed about, you know, "Just set up a no-fly zone, it's no problem, you know, if the Sudanese strafe Darfurian civilians, just, you know, shoot a few planes out of the sky. That's what we did in Bosnia." Obama calls me up, and he's like, "You

know, am I *wrong* in thinking that if we shoot Sudanese planes out of the sky that the jihadis will come to Sudan, and that that might actually be more harmful for the people of Darfur than not? Who are the other"—and then he's immediately, but he's constructive—you know, so it's, "Who are the others? What other countries have, you know, just sufficient standing, where it's not going to be seen as an act of war against Islam? Are these the planes, can you find out, does Turkey have the AWACs to patrol the skies? Can they be enlisted? Can we *use* this as a lever with European Union membership?" I mean, this is a guy who's supposed not to have foreign policy expertise. I mean, I don't know if it sounds sophisticated to you, but as somebody in the Darfur movement, I mean, these are not questions that are being asked. So to *combine* that with the ability to light up a room and make people believe in America again? Because I know people are not only scared, but they, *we*, have lost faith.

KATI MARTON: I have to tell you that I just came in from an eleven-city book tour, and everywhere I went, Obama had either just been—

SAMANTHA POWER: Poor you.

KATI MARTON: —or was expected. And it is unlike anything I have ever seen.

SAMANTHA POWER: Yeah, it's magic.

KATI MARTON: The power of the—people line up overnight to get tickets to bookstore events. It's—I've never seen anything like it. In part, I think it's a measure of our hunger for hope.

SAMANTHA POWER: Definitely. Desperation, I think they call it.

KATI MARTON: But what about this sense that this man has been in the Senate for two years and before that he was a state senator? Can we entrust our fate into the hands of such limited experience, no matter how–

SAMANTHA POWER: Magic he is.

KATI MARTON: —brilliant and *clearly* charismatic. I mean, I don't know the answer to that, and of course it has been said that four more years in the Senate and we'll just have another Joe Biden. **(laughter)** So, I mean, not to single out Joe Biden. He's a great guy. Joe Biden's a great guy, but I'm using that as sort of a prototype for somebody who, you know, sounds off on a lot of subjects and casts a lot of votes, but, at the end of the day, do we have any sense for what these people stand for? And right now I think there's clarity about what Obama stands for.

SAMANTHA POWER: You think so?

KATI MARTON: I do. Well, I mean, if—

SAMANTHA POWER: No, no, no, I'm asking you because I work with him, so there's more clarity, so I have *significant* clarity, but I'm not sure people have the impression necessarily.

KATI MARTON: Well, maybe listening to you I've gained that.

(laughter)

SAMANTHA POWER: But look. The question in a lot of these domains, and it's certainly going to be true if we ever do resurrect human rights, because one of the babies that have been thrown out with the neocon Bushian bathwater **(laughter)** is democratization, is human rights, is humanitarian intervention. I mean, humanitarian intervention, all the progress that was made in the Nineties with this domestic movement and people's recognition that they had to hold their government accountable for *not* doing anything about genocide. I mean, if the Vietnam syndrome was killed by the—was finally vanquished by the Persian Gulf War, and the if the Somalia syndrome was vanquished by the interventions in the Balkans, this Iraq syndrome is going to be with us for—I mean, I think it's the greatest strategic blunder in the history of American foreign policy.

KATI MARTON: Bar none.

SAMANTHA POWER: I don't think it's "since Vietnam." And so when will the United States actually feel—I mean, now we have Gates and we're going back to realism and dealing with dictators and not minding how governments treat their own people, and, I mean, this may seem like *sensibleness*, but that's only because it's compared to Rumsfeld. You know, these kinds of deals with the devils are very sensible if it's measured in the short term, but the "compared to what?" question then, because Gates, again, seems great compared to what?

KATI MARTON: Yeah, huge, he seems like a statesman. That's how far we've come.

SAMANTHA POWER: I know, a grown-up, at last! Exactly, maybe he will somehow right the somehow, at least do something to the ship that's lilting, but I think with Obama, it's—we'll look at the field of candidates, if in fact he runs, and I think he'll decide in the next few weeks, probably over Thanksgiving, and his wife will have a huge amount to do with it.

KATI MARTON: Yes, and I understand that she is *extremely* hesitant.

SAMANTHA POWER: Very hesitant. They have five- and eight-year old girls. They'll wake up and they'll be fifteen and eighteen you know the next time they—

KATI MARTON: They see their father.

SAMANTHA POWER: I mean, even then, has Chelsea's life ever really, you know been—you know, you're just making a decision, but his life is so crazy right now, as he once said to me, you know, "You know, I've got all of the disadvantages of being president and none of the advantages of actually being able to help anybody." You know, that's when he was in the minority. I mean, that job was, there's no point in being in the minority.

KATI MARTON: Well, that comment would lead me to believe that he's going to run.

SAMANTHA POWER: Well, no, I mean, look, he's definitely considering it, but I mean, I think the personal costs to his family, which he cares a great deal about and his two much younger daughters than Chelsea.

KATI MARTON: And plus let's not forget he's an African American—well, actually, he's an African.

SAMANTHA POWER: Yeah, he's African.

KATI MARTON: His father is Kenyan, I mean this is quite a—

SAMANTHA POWER: But imagine internationally the symbolic value. I mean, first of all, he lived in Indonesia for five years. He knows Islam, I mean, he's of it in a way that Hillary—that's the compared to what? Is that the other candidates—are we more comfortable with the foreign policy credentials of any of the field that has stepped forward, and, if not, then Obama belongs there. But imagine just to have an African—as you say—slash American, Kenyan American, black man, who speaks Bahasa and Swahili, bit of Swahili, a lot of Bahasa Indonesian, with a name like "Osama," now actually with a first name like "Borat," which I don't know what that buys him, but making that General Assembly address to the United Nations, and who opposed the war in Iraq. With that standing. Middle name Hussein, whoops.

(laughter)

KATI MARTON: Is that right? His middle name is Hussein?

SAMANTHA POWER: I hate to tell you.

KATI MARTON: That could be the deal-breaker.

(laughter)

SAMANTHA POWER: Let's get these guys into the chat.

Q: Thank you so much for coming to the Library. Sudan has basically said that they really don't want the UN there. And they've called instead for the AU to help out and to be kind of the leader in any type of resolution of this problem. So what are your thoughts on the AU? And do you think that there's hope in the AU?

SAMANTHA POWER: Well the AU already has a force in Darfur.

KATI MARTON: The African Union.

SAMANTHA POWER: The African Union has a force of six thousand troops and about two thousand unarmed monitors and civilians and so on. Darfur, as many of you know, is the size of France or Texas. Who knew, France and Texas are the same size? And so, of that seven thousand, at any given time, a third are doing paperwork, a third are sleeping or eating, and a third are patrolling, so you're talking basically about two thousand patrolling troops at any one time for a region the size of France. Unsurprisingly, then, given that, and given the mandate, and the quality of some of the troops—some of them are phenomenal, like those from Rwanda are really top-notch soldiers, and because many of them were genocide survivors, are really taking *seriously* the protection mandate. But there are just really too few to make a meaningful difference. Where the AU has been present, they've deterred attacks. It's just like, I mean, during the Rwandan genocide, in other, even in Congo today, in places where the issues aren't genocide, but there's a huge amount of ethnic or religious violence, where foreigners are present, there tends to be, you know, a deterrent effect.

The problem with the Sudanese government is not just that they're blocking—well, it's not just that they're (a) committing genocide, (b) blocking the deployment of the UN force it's that, of course, the reason they're blocking the deployment of the UN force, which is the bigger force of 23,000, because it would then free up the Secretary General, the new Secretary General, to go to countries outside Africa to look for troops. But the reason they don't want that number of troops is they don't want to be watched, to do what they're doing. So it's a symptom of their continued posture toward the people of Darfur. You know, there *is* a rebel movement in Darfur that's not making life very easy, because, you know, the Sudanese government does *believe* that these rebels, you know, won't go away unless they're crushed,

and the Sudanese government—the one thing we know from the last twenty-five years is they make no distinctions between people of the same ethnic group to the rebels, you know, basically no combatant/noncombatant distinction. So, the big—I mean, just to make it constructive—what has to happen now which is that United States, which has been at the forefront on this issue, the Bush administration has been the lead actor on the earth on Darfur. But that hasn't done Darfur again a huge number of favors in international settings where our standing is low. The Bush administration *has* to be part of it, because we're funding most of what's going on there, including the AU and all the feeding of the 2.5–3 million people who are dependant on international aid, but we need a broader kind of contact group of the kind that was created for the Balkans, you know, back in the Nineties, you know, of stakeholders in Darfur, and that could actually mean, you know, countries that are pro-Sudan so far, like Egypt or China—

KATI MARTON: Who have been *disgracefully* silent on the subject—the Arab countries have been—

SAMANTHA POWER: Terrible, but if you had again, in other words, if the Bush administration weren't just *rhetorically* out in front, but if this were its true conviction? And, in fairness, if at the senior level, they weren't dealing with North Korea, Iran, Iraq, you know, Lebanon, you know, there is an awful lot on this team's foreign-policy plate. And I mention that not because it excuses how *certain* officials are treating the problem—namely, lethargically—but rather it explains why, you know, you don't get cabinet-level officials tending to this in the kind of way that you really kind of need to cut through the red tape, and to get the Egyptian foreign minister, the Chinese foreign minister. You need—this has to be dealt with at a high level, because Sudan just knows that if they just wait us out, we'll blink first. Or if they stare us down, we'll blink first. *Because* it's this movement that has caused the Bush administration to care, rather than "strategic interests" as traditionally defined. It's thin, you know, the system doesn't lie in the end. It shows. The commitment shows. It shows in the rank of the person Bush appointed as an envoy, you know, Andrew Natsios. Fine, the former head of USAID, but not Colin Powell, or not somebody who would actually have standing internationally. So what the United States needs to do is situate itself within a contact group of actors who have access, who have resources, and who need to be peeled away from Sudan, so Sudan feels isolated, and has no choice but to admit this larger force.

It may have to not be called an UN force. But the important thing about the UN is the numbers. It's troops outside Africa, they can be Muslim troops, they can be Turkish troops or Pakistani troops, but I mean serious soldiers, and, crucially, the funding stream, and the Democrats in Congress actually may be able to help on this, because what's been happening is—partly because of the cost of Iraq, again, everything is Iraq, Iraq, Iraq—but the AU bills have been paid kind of week-to-week almost. I mean, every month, or every three months there's a crisis of AU funding because there isn't any reliable funding stream, whereas when you have a peacekeeping mission, it comes out of UN assessments, which every country pays a predicted share of, and so that is a much more reliable—so if we can get what the UN force was giving us, namely steady funding and greater numbers from countries outside Africa, then, you know, we're making progress, but to do that, we have to *broaden* this conversation, the United States have to be one actor among several. Unfortunately, that's the state of our power now.

Q: Thank you. I was going to protest on behalf of all the cuckoo clocks, **(laughter)** but Sir Alexander Korda cannot respond, so I'd like to ask Kati Marton a question. I came to the United States in 1960, and on the program *Face The Nation*, I saw Teller and Szilard, and those people, who were friends for decades and worked together, lived together, couldn't disagree more on every topic that was questioned—asked them. My question is, were they putting on a show, or was it a *real* difference?

KATI MARTON: That's a wonderful question. The difference between Teller and Szilard was *absolutely* genuine, and I try in *The Great Escape* to analyze why that was since they came from the same pond, how it was that one of them was Dr. Strangelove, Edward Teller, who gave us not only the hydrogen bomb but persuaded Ronald Reagan to arm the heavens with Star Wars, and the other, Leo Szilard, who, though he was responsible for the most important letter of the twentieth century, the letter that Albert Einstein signed and got the Manhattan Project going, spent the rest of his life trying to control nuclear weapons, so why was it? And I do go into some detail on that difference, philosophical difference. Szilard was a great idealist, Teller was a great pessimist. The difference also was that there was a ten-year difference between their births, so Teller experienced anti-Semitism much earlier than Szilard, who largely escaped that, and so that's—anti-Semitism shaped and unfortunately *twisted* Teller's character and personality. But the remarkable thing was that, despite these enormous differences, the two of them stayed friends, though Szilard tried to literally body-block Teller's

treacherous testimony against Oppenheimer, he was his true friend to the very end, so these Hungarians formed a very tight network, they looked after each other.

Q: Exactly what happened after the First World War that occurred in Budapest to force Jews to leave, not Gentiles? What happened—was the same thing happening in Vienna? What was it after the First World War that did this to these creative citizens?

KATI MARTON: Very good question. Hungary, unfortunately, was the first country in Europe to pass anti-Jewish legislation in 1920, limiting to 5 percent Jewish enrollment in higher education, well ahead of Germany, so the writing was on the wall. These men, with their uncanny ability to see around the corners, started decamping at that point. And because they were so brilliant, they had options, first in Berlin, and then when Hitler came in in '33, they kept moving, until they landed *here* and we were the beneficiaries of that. Hitler tried to wipe out the Jews, but in fact he succeeded in wiping out German creativity. I don't know that it will ever recover from that.

Q: Fifty seconds, Miss Power. Two questions I'd like you to think about and one I'd like an answer to now. The first is I really wish you would do a column, because the country needs your public voice on a regular basis.

KATI MARTON: I agree. **(applause)** Hear hear.

Q: The last thing you need is more work, but you're a unique voice in the United States, and a column would be a nice thing to look forward to. The second is I really want to know how you feel about Alex Rodriquez's failure to propel the Yankees into the World Series. I know that's a sore point with you, but the real question is that I've done time on the Internet looking for an answer to the question, "Why hasn't anything been done about Darfur?" And the only sites that I found that gave me a simple answer were the ones that said because of the Chinese and French oil interests that you mentioned. Why do you think that's wrong?

SAMANTHA POWER: I don't think it's wrong, I do have to say, unfortunately, a word about the New York Yankees. Because I think there's actually a great parallel. And even though I'm going to offend

three-quarters of the people here who are I'm sure by virtue of living here have no choice but to root for the evil empire, despite being against evil everywhere else. **(hissing)** But if you look at the—there is a very interesting parallel between American foreign policy and the payroll and the supremacy, I know it's not a good week, as a Red Sox fan, to talk about the Yankee payroll— **(laughter)**

KATI MARTON: Really not.

SAMANTHA POWER: But the 220-million-dollar payroll, and that is it's very much like American foreign policy, in that we did rely on our economic might, on our hard power, and we forgot that you still have to hit the cutoff man. It is very, very similar. I actually think the New York Yankee—you know, the last six years of the—and the last six years of American foreign policy. Someday, if I had a column, I think that's the only place probably I'd be able to write about it. I don't think there's a book in it yet.

But, I mean, beyond what I've said, I mean the other, look, countries don't do anti-genocide work naturally. It's just—what are countries about? What are states for? They look out for the interests, at best, of their own citizens. I mean, in most countries, they look out for the interests of the elites. In dictatorships, you know, just Mugabe and his, you know, closest cronies. So, you know, we have to remember that we're trying to sort of tinker with a pretty, you know, we've had it now from Westphalia onward, states that have been pretty attentive to the same sets of self-interested considerations for quite some time. So the surprise, in some ways, is not that no state on the earth wants to get involved in Darfur to stop genocide. The surprise is that hundreds of thousands of Americans think that their country, in spite of Iraq, should. And unfortunately with the European countries that we've mentioned, as I've said, and I think this is getting even *more* the case, now that Brussels is sort of giving everybody an alibi, as a sort of larger European story takes hold, but you don't have that same kind of American credulity that you can have an effect on your government's foreign policy, or maybe you have more apathy, I don't know.

But I don't, I mean, even in Ireland, my family members are incredibly engaged around the world, but it doesn't dawn on them that they can affect their government's, you know, the government's stance on Darfur. That's just not, it's not sort of the logic. So then we have these 192 states, *one* of which is under

great pressure domestically to do something about Darfur, but doesn't have the troops. I think that if it sent the troops would likely cause jihadis to follow. If you suddenly brought—you know, people say, bring the troops home from Iraq, send them to Darfur, I don't think that's—I mean, at this point until, and I don't want to be cowed by terrorists and all that, but we have to be serious, then. If we're willing to withstand the kind of terrorist influx, it would require such a sizeable troop presence, because we can't do best-case planning like the military did for Iraq, I mean, you'd really have to *do* it, and there I think the constituency would melt away, in the wake of Iraq, in this country, so we would do it half-assed, and that's worse for the people of Darfur than not doing it at all. But the other countries *have* to be reached, and China is *really* a worry. I mean, you know, the UN Security Council, as much as people bitch about the UN now, it has these five permanent veto-holders, and as Gareth Evans, the former Australian foreign minister says, those five veto-holders, you know—which are France, Britain, the United States, the former Soviet Union, Russia, rather, and China—as Gareth says, "it's two nineteenth-century powers, two twentieth-century powers, and one twenty-first-century power."

KATI MARTON: And they're never going to give up that power. It's their last hold on world control.

SAMANTHA POWER: So, actually getting intervention through China, which wants no one looking inward at *its* business, is going to be a clog on the horizon of doing things quote "legally" through the UN for a very long time and these are the kinds of things, again, when we get our own house a little cleaner, and become a player and part of a global conversation, we need to enlist more people to this view, so we change the rules, so that the UN *can* remain relevant, because it's not going to be if you don't.

KATI MARTON: The thought just hit me that not only am I a refugee but so are you! Samantha is Irish-born.

SAMANTHA POWER: An immigrant. I wouldn't—

KATI MARTON: Maybe you weren't fleeing the Great Famine, **(laughter)** but you know, I'm trying to find a unifying theme here, and I think that being outsiders is definitely, you know, I hope this country is still that country that gives the likes of us the opportunity, you know, starting with nothing,

you know, I came here with my parents with four suitcases, and one of those suitcases held only photo albums.

SAMANTHA POWER: No, but that is what's scary when the walls are being built and the *rhetoric* that is picking up steam. I mean, even among some of the Democrats who won, one of the ways they won was to say, "Keep out. Keep out." You know, and when you do read your book and you remember that so much of America's greatness *is* built on immigrant infusion of talent and ingenuity, but *also* that America's greatness is based on *principle.* And when we lose the principle and lose the immigrants at once, that is not an America that I'm going to like that much.

KATI MARTON: No. Well, shall we take one more question? Paul, is that all right? Yeah, okay. And then we do have—both Samantha's and my books are ready for you to snap up. So. Yes, you, the gentleman in the blue helmet.

(laughter)

Q: First of all, thank you guys so much for being here today. What I wanted to know specifically is, I suppose as one of the few representatives of "the youth" here and also an activist on behalf of Darfur, as part of the movement.

KATI MARTON: Well, I'd like to take exception to that on Samantha's behalf. **(laughter)**

Q: Okay, I'm sorry. I'd like to know. Samantha Power, you know, we look to you for guidance on issues of genocide and what you said tonight has certainly, as many other commentators, Alex De Waal and Jan Egeland included, have complicated, have complicated the situation for us, and in the movement we're desperately, you know, craving leadership, and I think, to echo what the man back there asked about you writing a column. We need from *you*, we need your guidance as to what we should be agitating on behalf. And I very much appreciate what you've told us tonight, I'd just really like, I know it's not simple, but some kind of message that we should be sending, whether it's AU Plus, whether it's peace settlements, peace agreements between, you know, various parties, something of the like. Thank you.

SAMANTHA POWER: And I mean, I'm sorry also, to have been—in finishing this Sérgio book, which is due in three months, my editor's here glaring at me wondering why the panel's going on so long because I should be home. But I was *consoled* in reading Kati's book, because I was feeling sorry for myself, just the intensity of the final push. I'm coming to your question, believe me, in a second, but I was consoled by, or I feel really pathetic feeling sorry for myself, because when you read about Arthur Koestler in 1939, not only did he have his *editor* on his case, looking for the manuscript of *Darkness at Noon*, but he had the *Nazis* on his case. And so reading Kati's book, I was like, "All right, Power, you know, you're fine. Everything's fine. It's just a deadline. You know, it's just a book."

But I say that because it's really hard—I just have felt, I would like nothing more than to have written *A Problem from Hell*, and *be* the genocide person who is you know forever talking to people behind the scenes and figuring out what's doable and even bringing people together, and sometimes I just feel like, "God, I mean, why?" You know, if you want anything done, you almost have to do it yourself, because I get—the Canadian foreign minister calls me up, and says, "Well, what should I do?" It can't *possibly* be this difficult to figure out what can be done. And this gets to the earlier thing about the Europeans. Because of the US security umbrella for sixty years, you know, Canada included, but the NATO you know kind of cushion that countries had, the muscle of self-reliance and creativity in other countries at a state level has really grown weak for lack of use. And there's like a self-esteem issue. Now that the United States is a little bit off-limits, or tainted, or whatever, no one's stepping up to do the 911, either to lead you, you know, within a country elsewhere or here, or to, God forbid, lead the world. And if it were—if Mbeki were leading in Darfur, there would be a lot of traction there in places that Bush won't have much success.

But to be very specific. The Democrats have now taken both houses of Congress. For all that I've said about the Bush administration losing influence and having its hands full, it's still not, as I said, not doing everything it can do, by any means. We don't have anywhere near the money that needs to be appropriated for the peacekeeping forces onto the horizon. I mean, right now have got the AU. We've got to work with again the army we have and not the army we wish we had. Working with that, and then pressuring the Bush administration to do à la carte additional deployments. Now that could be reinforcing—we need to, as you say, AU Plus, move from the seven thousand to the fourteen thousand.

Which is where we should have been heading anyway. In any event, even if we get the UN force, those seven to fourteen thousand are going to be the backbone in the new force. Countries are hardly going to be falling over themselves to come and contribute to this force, as you know, so getting that funding stream locked in with the new Democratic Congress.

And do you know, that, for all the activism, to my knowledge anyone in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, not only have there been no hearings on detention policies or on torture in the body responsible for accountability in this country and nor am I terribly optimistic that there will be in the first trimester of the Democrats' life in running—in now finally having the gavel. But I don't think on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee there's ever been a Darfur hearing. Now hearings are silly and they have nothing to do with saving lives in the short term, but what tends to happen, as you know, having probably watched it up close with Richard, but is that people have to scramble to come up with things to say and to show progress in order to save face in front of a very critical senatorial body. So one of the first hearings, as the new, you know, Congress takes over in January has to be a Darfur hearing and getting that on the schedule now forces people into some sort of holiday scrambling. But it's *money* and then it's getting Andre Natsios and the others to go country by country and line up troop contributors and peel away Sudan's allies so it feels isolated in the same way that Indonesia, back in 1999, finally was made to feel so isolated that it had no choice but to invite the UN in, having taken a position—I mean, that's the best analogue, having taken a position very similar to that Sudan has taken. You know, which is "no UN," and then, I mean, we peeled away the Asiana allies, we peeled away China, Indonesia was so alone, that it had no choice.