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THE WHITE HOUSE

PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH

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Remarks by Condoleezza Rice Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs at the National Press Club Newsmaker Luncheon

National Press Club
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This is a great opportunity for us to get better acquainted in a comparatively civilized setting, outside the rush of everyday news events and crises that sometimes throw us together in unpredictable venues talking about things we never expected to be talking about when we woke up in the morning.

When the President came into office, he and the White House exhorted the press and public not to rush to any sweeping judgments and evaluations after some arbitrary time period, such as the first 100 days.

Today, as we approach the six month mark, that logic still holds -- especially when it comes to foreign policy and national security. Foreign policy simply cannot be judged by today's headlines that chalk up victories and defeats like so many box scores in the sports section. That said, I'll accept the proposition that the All-Star break is as good a time as any to start making some observations on how we are doing.

Turning the tables, let me begin by offering a couple of observations on how what we are doing has been covered.

First, I have noticed that there has been a tenor of surprise to much of the coverage of the Administration's foreign policy, especially early on. I think it was the surprise of seeing the President so quickly setting forth some new directions. But I confess to having been myself surprised by this sense of surprise. Every new direction that George W. Bush has set forth as President follows and flows naturally from what George W. Bush the candidate said during the campaign.

Almost a year a half ago, candidate Bush stated that the great goal of America's foreign policy must be to 'turn this time of American influence into generations of democratic peace.' He emphasized that to achieve this goal, America must be engaged with the world and we must set clear priorities. He said that his priorities included working closely with our friends and allies in Europe and Asia; promoting a fully democratic, free trading Western Hemisphere as a centerpiece of our foreign policy; defending our interests in the Persian Gulf; advancing peace in the Middle East; dealing with new threats, including weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them; and building a world that trades in freedom.

Half a year into his term, I'd like to submit to you that the President has made a good start -- both on the great goal he has set forth and on his specific priorities. Those priorities are certainly a pretty accurate reflection of how he has prioritized his own time and energies in the foreign policy arena.

This leads me to my second observation, which is not about the headlines that have been written, but about the ones that haven't. When I was growing up, MAD magazine used to run a feature called 'scenes we'd like to see.' I think every policy maker plays a game of 'headlines I'd like to see.'

I won't be so indulgent as to play that game today, but with you as my captive audience, I would like to turn your attention to a few areas where I think there are stories that have not been written.

I'll confess at the outset that I should know better. In college, I worked as a news editor at the Denver University Clarion. It only took a semester for me to realize that it was not my calling. But in a triumph of hope over experience, I'm going to try anyway.

A good place to start is Europe -- where the President visited last month and where he's headed next week.

A backdrop to the President's two trips has been a focus -- in the conversations and coverage -- on an alleged 'values gap' between America and Europe, centered around the death penalty, gun control, biotechnology, and climate change.

Less noticed is the fact that the President's first trip cut through a lot of that conversation by focusing the Atlantic community on a larger picture.

In his Warsaw speech, the President set forth a clear, ambitious vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace -- and all that entails: a NATO -- and an EU -- that embraces all of Europe's democracies that want to join and are ready to contribute.

He did not shy away from any of the issues driving the so-called 'values gap,' but he refocused the discussion on the values that unite us, rather than those that divide us. He emphasized that those who have benefited most from freedom's triumph, have an obligation to help others who are seeking their way along that path -- from the Baltics to the Balkans and beyond. And he talked honestly about missile defense and NATO expansion.

One day later, he held a warm, positive, but very frank meeting with Russia's President Putin, demonstrating that his vision is compatible with a constructive relationship with Russia. That in itself is a story.

The President looks forward to continuing all of these conversations -- both with our allies and with President Putin -- on his upcoming trip.

He will also continue something else he started on the last trip -- doing away with years of mixed signals and ambivalent body language from Washington to make clear that the United States welcomes the European Union's efforts to forge a European security identity.

The President made clear that we welcome this emerging identity so long as it is NATO-compatible and NATO-friendly. We are prepared to welcome the EU as a foreign policy actor if it is prepared to take on real responsibilities.

And we are demonstrating that we mean what we say in the Balkans. In March, when violence erupted in

Macedonia, there was alarm that the Administration was not engaged and not, for example, appointing a special envoy. Then in April, when Secretary of State Powell traveled to the region, he was asked why he had gone when there wasn't an actual war going on. Did this signal an unprecedented level of engagement? First we are too late; then we are too soon. But I think the real story is that the Balkans in general is one of the first proving grounds for this new paradigm of NATO/EU cooperation.

The fact is that the President has focused a lot of attention on the Balkans, meeting with Yugoslav President Kostunica, Macedonian President Trajkovski, and Albanian Prime Minister Meta. He visited Slovenia and will go to Kosovo at the end of this upcoming trip.

With each of these leaders, and with our European allies, the President has stressed that America is committed to helping this region become fully part of a Europe whole, free, and at peace. He has also stressed that the only way to make this vision real is for the United States, NATO, and the EU to proceed as full partners. That means that the United States will not always grab the headlines. But it does not mean that we are reducing our commitment to the ultimate goal.

The President will return to the theme of global partnership with our European allies at Genoa. A prime focus of the G-7/G-8 summit in Genoa will be global poverty alleviation. The President will come to Genoa prepared to put forward real, substantive proposals on how the world's most industrialized nations can meet this challenge.

In his Warsaw speech the President said that Europe's House of Freedom needs to look out to global challenges beyond the geographic boundaries of the continent.

He said that the better world we seek includes not just a free and open Europe, but a free and open Latin America, a free and open Asia, and a free and open Africa. Indeed, the President's focus on Africa in the first six months of his Administration is another good example of the headline and the story that has not been written.

Perhaps no region of the world holds such a dramatically different place in our foreign policy thinking than it did just a few years ago. When I first served at the National Security Council from 1989 to 1991, African countries made the headlines too often for the wrong reasons. And too often Africa was just seen through the prism of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry.

Today, there are many African countries making headlines for the right reasons; because their people and their leaders are making the hard choices to open their economies and open their political systems.

President Bush has met with seven African Presidents during his first six months in office, including Nigerian President Obasanjo and South Africa's Mbeki -- leaders of Sub-Saharan Africa's regional powerhouses -- as well as three of Africa's most promising reformers, Presidents Kufor of Ghana, Wade of Senegal, and Konare of Mali.

Secretary Powell traveled to Africa and made the earliest, most extensive visit to the region by any U.S. Secretary of State in history.

He also met here in Washington with the president's of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This level of engagement is unprecedented so early in an Administration. It reflects the President's strong commitment to the continent's future.

We do not minimize the challenges facing Africa today. They are many: everything from terrorism to war and disease. But there is much to be hopeful about.

African leaders with vision are opening their economies -- a step that requires real courage because it often hurts entrenched interests and causes short-term economic pain -- and sometimes even rioting in the streets. And it flies in the face of the statist ideologies of the independence generation.

African leaders with vision are also opening their political systems and promoting respect for human rights. The majority of African countries now have elected governments in place. And, like the Summit of the Americas process, the Organization of African Unity has stated that no head of state who comes to power by undemocratic means will be allowed to participate in OAU decision-making.

Thirty-five countries now meet the eligibility standards set by the African Growth and Opportunity Act passed by the Congress a year ago last May. This Act dramatically increases access to U.S. markets for countries that demonstrate continual progress toward an open, market-based economy and an open, pluralistic political system. These are clearly powerful incentives.

Since 1999, Nigeria, for the first time in 15 years, has had three active political parties and an elected civilian government. The press is open and the investment climate is improving.

As recently as 1998, Lesotho was fending off an armed mutiny and rising violence and instability. Today, it is estimated that just four new projects stemming from AGOA will generate \$122 million in new investments -- which is more than four times the official development assistance from all sources in 1999.

And in Senegal and Ghana, longtime incumbent parties recently lost elections and the transitions to the new presidents were both seamless and uneventful.

Put all these pieces together and what we see is that in many places important barriers are crumbling -- barriers that historically have prevented Africans, individually and collectively, from realizing the fruits of their hard labor and blocked them from sharing an expanding world economy.

The President is determined to foster this process. That is why he made the United States the first to contribute to the new global fund to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TB being sponsored by Secretary General Annan, the G-8, and others. The United States already provides nearly 50 percent of all international HIV/AIDS funding. This new measure will build on that record.

The President will also ensure that the United States remains a leader on responsible debt relief and reform of the multilateral development banks.

The President has been and will continue to be a forceful advocate for peace, religious freedom, and justice in Sudan.

Before I conclude, let me turn to one other story -- one that has been written and written about, but where -- I submit -- the writing has been about the trees not the forest.

There have been a lot of stories about missile defense. There have not been a lot of stories about the paradigm shift going on about how leaders and strategic thinkers are looking at the doctrines of strategic deterrence that were born in the Cold War. And there has been little written at all about how much this speaks to a change in

the fundamental nature of the relationship between Russia and the U.S.

For much of my career, I was a Soviet specialist. More particularly, I was drawn to the hard core material -- the Soviet military and General Staff; nuclear weapons and warheads; nuclear war and how to prevent it. I was one of the High Priestesses of Arms Control -- a true believer.

Like so many others, I eagerly anticipated those breathtaking moments of summitry where the centerpiece was always the signing of the latest arms control treaty; the toast; the handshake; and, with Brezhnev, the bear hug. For those precious few minutes the world found comfort in seeing the superpowers affirm their peaceful intent. And the scientists would set the clock back a few minutes further away from midnight.

Deep down we knew that arms control was a poor substitute for a real shared agenda based on common aspirations. But it was the best way anyone could think of for regulating the balance of terror.

But along the way to the next summit something happened. History happened. 1989.

So, while many of us were debating the implications of MIRVs on SS-18s and Peacekeepers like so many angels dancing on a warhead, the forces of history were making the old paradigm obsolete.

To be sure, the Cold War arms control regimes we built up for over four decades were useful for their time. Those elements that are worth preserving today, we will keep. And those arms control ideas or treaties that respond to today's reality and build tomorrow's security, we will advance and support.

But as the President has made clear, we must deal with today's world and today's threats, including weapons of mass destruction and missiles in the hands of states that would blackmail us from coming to the aid of friends and allies.

We need to protect against today's threats through a comprehensive strategy that includes strengthened nonproliferation and counter-proliferation measures, as well as a new concept of deterrence that includes defenses and a smaller nuclear arsenal. And we need to recognize that just as peace is not the absence of war, stability is not a balance of terror.

This is a big shift to wrap one's mind around. But we cannot cling to the old order -- like medieval scholars clinging to a Ptolemaic system even after the Copernican revolution. We must recognize that the strategic world we grew up in has been turned upside down. It's not that everything we believed was wrong, it's that the world has fundamentally changed and that much that used to be true just doesn't apply anymore.

And the President has made real headway in bringing others around to his way of thinking. At the NATO meeting in June, there was a new receptivity to the idea of defenses -- from some quarters you might not expect. Vaclav Havel, for one, spoke strongly and movingly of the need for a defensive Alliance -- NATO -- to be open to defense against new threats.

And in their meeting in Slovenia, President Bush and President Putin initiated a conversation about building a strategic framework that is ?post-Cold War? in substance, not just rhetoric. And across the board, our continuing conversations with other friends and allies in Europe and Asia -- and with the U.S. Congress -- are proving to be substantive, respectful, and educational.

There's real movement here in the terms of the debate, and in the day-to-day reporting on Pentagon plans, and

palace intrigue. I think it has received less notice than it deserves.

For my part, I have enjoyed our conversation here today. Or rather, I am about to. Because conversation means two people talking and so far there's been only one, me. I'm going to stop now. And I greatly look forward to your questions.

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