

Remarks by
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“Act II for U.S. Foreign Policy”

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Thank you very much. And thank you all for coming. As ever, it is great to be back in familiar surroundings with so many old friends, and to participate once again in the Conference on World Affairs.

I was last here exactly two years ago. In a stormy and troubled session together, we discussed the then two-week-old U.S. military campaign in Iraq. That was a tumultuous time for the Conference on World Affairs, and for all of us. Our country and the world were divided. Recriminations were running high. And we all had a sense that something even more profound than a war was occurring – that a critical moment in history had been reached.

In remarks to this Conference at that time, I suggested that the war in Iraq had far-reaching implications, stretching well beyond the safe return of our troops and the restoration of peace. At stake, it seemed to me, were:

- The stability of the greater Middle East;
- The integrity of the world's international system, and the capacity of the international community to deal with weapons of mass destruction, terrorism and new threats to common security; and,
- The role and purposes of the United States in the world inextricably wound up with the enormous political gamble taken by President Bush.
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Two years later, some of those questions remain unanswered. It now appears that the war in Iraq was an opening act for an even more profound main event, on which the curtain is only now going up.

The reviews of the opening act are decidedly mixed. On the positive side of the ledger, we can mark the following:

Clearly, our troops deserve our gratitude and admiration for the remarkable job that they have done in undertaking an extremely difficult and frustrating campaign. In a most challenging political, religious, insurgent and weather environment and hamstrung by appallingly poor planning in the Pentagon, our troops have performed magnificently.

Saddam Hussein and his brutal regime are gone and the Iraqi people and the world are better off for it.

The perceived threat of Iraqi WMD has dissipated. The IAEA and UN weapons inspectors had it right - Iraq indeed had dismantled the vast majority of its WMD capabilities after the first Gulf War.

The recent elections in Iraq were a major achievement, designed in large part by the United Nations, executed by the U.S. and the interim authorities, and supported at great personal risk by eight million Iraqi citizens.

More broadly, the President and his Administration deserve great credit for pulling off very difficult elections in Afghanistan and Iraq, and we may be seeing echoes of the impulse to democracy and reform elsewhere in the Middle East.

These are all real accomplishments. Whether they were worth the lives, treasure and political capital already expended are probably questions for another day.

Today, I hope we can focus on where we go from here – what are some of the big ideas and major trends that should shape a world in which we might feel safer, more stable, and more secure?

In these first days of the second Administration, I think that the central issue which we discussed two years ago remains today:

Do we believe that we can essentially “go it alone” as the hyper-power of the world – act and others will follow?

Or do we wish to continue in the long American tradition of nurturing alliances, sharing responsibilities, and leading with a firm diplomacy backed by strong military and economic resolve.

Though the choices that I lay out are somewhat oversimplified, and the United States should always start from the perspective of its own national interest, nonetheless I do not think that we can move forward with our full potential unless we recognize that America’s interest lies in leading the world in the cause of peace and prosperity.

Every day, we learn more about how trade and commerce link our economies; how travel and telecommunications link our cultures; and how the environment and global health are tied to the future, we leave to our children and grandchildren.

The bipolar world that defined a generation, created bipartisan consensus in our foreign policy and guided the network of alliances and international institutions is a thing of the past. Instead, we live in an age of what the UN Secretary-General has called “problems without passports”:

- Genocide
- Climate change
- Arms trafficking
- Narcotics
- Environmental destruction
- Human rights abuses

In this interdependent world, unilateralism and American exceptionalism are not policies that over time will make us stronger, more prosperous or secure. Of increasing concern is the evaporation of the enormous reservoir of global good will toward the United States – long cultivated through two world wars and complemented by visionary, principled (and I hasten to add, bipartisan) leadership in the peacetime that followed.

This is the backdrop for Act II of the Bush Administration.

Will Act II be characterized by American exceptionalism, under which the Administration in its first term reject the ABM treaty, the Test Ban Treaty, the Kyoto Protocol, the Landmines Treaty, the Biological Weapons Protocol, the Small Arms agreement, the International Criminal Court, the G-8 plan for Clean Energy, and a number of other international initiatives?

Or will we see the kinder, gentler, more cooperative approach articulated by President Bush in his first major foreign policy speech after the election, when he told an audience in Nova Scotia that: “the first great commitment is to defend our security and spread freedom by building effective multinational and multilateral institutions and supporting effective multilateral action.” This statement was reinforced by the impressive diplomacy displayed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice during her carefully orchestrated trip to Europe, where she made it clear that strong, transatlantic bonds are key to our country’s future success. “A global agenda requires a global partnership,” she advised. “So, let us multiply our common effort.”

Are the provocative nominations of John Bolton as U.S. Ambassador to the UN and Paul Wolfowitz as President of the World Bank counterproductive for global cooperation, as some have perceived it?

Or, hopefully, do these appointments represent a bold initiative to strengthen the structures of multilateral cooperation for the 21st century? Has President Bush chosen to send strong-willed individuals, to help persuade his fellow conservatives that the United Nations and the World Bank are indispensable to our interests, while bringing the President’s own voice to these important institutions?

Some have paralleled Bolton’s appointment with Nixon’s trip to China, and Wolfowitz to McNamara’s choice to head the World Bank.

Commenting recently on how the U.S. should engage, Tony Blair – certainly our strongest ally in almost everything – had this good advice for President Bush:

“If America wants the rest of the world to be part of the agenda it has set, it must be part of their agenda, too. It can do so, secure in the knowledge that what people want is not for America to concede, but to engage...so there is common ground as to interdependence.”

As the President opens Act II, he and his new team face a huge agenda. I suspect that he will be increasingly engaged in a range of thorny and critical issues, even beyond his ambitious plan for transforming the Middle East:

- How will he handle the nuclear threat of North Korea and Iran?
- Can his commitment to Democracy help to reverse dangerous trends in Russia – the other global nuclear power?
- Will U.S. policy be able to do more than simply accommodate China’s rapidly growing influence? And,
- How can we staunch the bleeding of our economy and our enormous trade deficit?

These are issues that require persistent management, dogged diplomacy, and visible leadership – and the measures of success might simply be that things didn’t get any worse, but maybe calmed down and stabilized.

The President, however, has three other challenges, which can be more than managed – which are opportunities for significant change and advancement. These are:

- Energy
- Global poverty, and
- International cooperation.

For each of these major issues, the President has great opportunities – a little political capital, some investment by the United States, and a concerted strategy could yield very great results for the United States and for the world:

- Changes in energy policy provide very significant opportunities for transforming much of our economy while helping to stabilize the severe issue of climate change.
- Global poverty can be reduced significantly, the right thing to do by itself, and clearly in our self-interest, and,
- The U.S. has a chance to lead the transformation of the international system, from a post World War II architecture to a modern 21st century set of agreements and institutions.

Let me take a few minutes to briefly discuss each of these three historic challenges and opportunities; here the United States can do more than manage the crisis – it can lead the world toward huge and needed change. But only if the President decides to lead.

First, energy. As our troops battle in the oil-rich Middle East, as the evidence and threat of climate change becomes clearer, and as oil prices look like they will move right through the \$50-\$60/BBL range, it should be clearer and clearer that we have to alter our own and the world’s energy future. Nothing, it seems to me, has the potential to remake our global future more than getting energy policy right.

Energy is inextricably linked to global security; a handful of countries in the most unstable region of the world control most of the globe’s reserves of oil. The United

States imports far more than 50 percent of its oil, Europe 80 percent and Japan 100 percent. China has become an aggressive buyer, stretching reserves and driving up prices, and India is not far behind. The reality of Persian Gulf oil underlies much of the world's geopolitics and is one of the central driving forces in U.S. security policy.

Dependence on foreign oil also is critical to our economic future. No other freely traded commodity holds the potential to cripple the global economy. We learned that painful lesson once with the oil embargos of the 1970s, but our dependence has only grown, and a major terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia, or political upheaval in the Gulf, could throw the world's economy into chaos overnight.

And even if we could live with the tremendous economic risk of continued dependence on oil, our environment cannot. I have been working on the issue of global climate change for more than 20 years, and this question has evolved from "interesting" to "a problem" to today, when the risk of climate change dwarfs all others, and the crisis is here. The evidence is pouring in – the melting of the Arctic, sea level rise, altered weather patterns, and spreading deserts. Global climate change is not an issue of the future, it is happening now and the longer we delay our response, the more profound, the more costly, the more disruptive the damage will be.

Climate is essentially about carbon, dumped into the atmosphere, and now reaching very dangerous, heat trapping concentrations. Thus the greenhouse effect, and thus the new reality – climate is energy, energy is climate, and we have to act fast.

Now what I find particularly intriguing about energy, security and climate – they are all wound up together – is that we can actually do something about it that can be very positive – a real opportunity to transform our economy and the world's:

Through new biotechnologies alone, we can cut our petroleum dependence by 25% in 25 years.

Couple bio-fuels with today's fuel switching and today's hybrid cars, and we can soon have the equivalent of 300 MPG autos.

This is not futuristic – it is here today. Brazil runs its economy on bio-fuels. You can go downstairs and buy a Prius or a Honda hybrid.

Imagine the opportunity – we no longer have to wring our hands about oil and climate and all the rest, but we can be growing jobs for our auto industry and helping our farmers.

The list of opportunities goes on:

We remember the blackout of two summers ago – nearly half of our country went dark. Since then we have done nothing to safeguard the grid – but the opportunity to move from the equivalent of a telephone switchboard grid to a fully modern digital grid means tens of thousands of jobs, super-dependable electric power, and much greater efficiency.

Energy reaches across the country and around the globe – a transformation here means good economics, better security, less carbon – again, this is an opportunity waiting to be realized, and must be part of our global policy.

Closely related is persistent global poverty, a second opportunity for transformational American leadership. It seems to me that we have to commit ourselves to taking on the pervasive and utterly unacceptable scale of global poverty and the growing gap between rich and poor. It is not moral, it is not wise and it is not sustainable to countenance a world in which about half of all people live on less than \$2 dollars a day.

The United States is nowhere close to being a leader today in the effort to best global poverty. We rank last among donor nations in terms of the percentage of gross national product we provide in aid. Against the agreed international standard of .7% of GNP dedicated to international assistance, the United States provides barely .1%.

Here again the opportunity is very great indeed. For example, in preparatory meetings for this summer's meeting of the G-8 industrialized countries, Great Britain (the host) has proposed bold initiatives to rekindle global development efforts, which have retrenched in the aftermath of the Cold War, as the much anticipated peace dividend failed to materialize. All of the other major European countries, Japan and Russia agreed to plan to reduce the debt of the most poor countries; sell the International Monetary Fund's vast gold reserves so that the fund's loans to poor countries can be cancelled; and double foreign assistance to \$100 billion a year. Everyone has agreed – except the United States.

\$100 billion is a lot of money – how would that be spent? Over the last five years, the world has come together in agreement on a broad blueprint for development, called the Millennium Development Goals, or the MDGs. Proposed by the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan in 2000 and adopted by the international community, the MDGs have now been detailed with very specific, achievable goals for nutrition, basic education, empowerment of women, infant and maternal mortality, and global health.

Related is access to energy, as the two billion people living on less than \$2 a day have absolutely no chance for change without access to electricity. And, as the world rushed to increase capacity, the opportunity for diverse, cleaner and more efficient sources grows – and these are special opportunities for American industry.

This week, the Senate will hold confirmation hearings for John Bolton, President Bush's controversial nominee as U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations. These hearings present an opportunity for the Administration to present its policy and perspective on the UN:

- How does the UN contribute to U.S. national interests?
- What reforms does the U.S. support to modernize and strengthen the UN?
- How can the UN become an even more important forum for international cooperation?

The thrust of Senate question will surely revolve around the understanding among most Senators that the UN is indispensable, both to the world and to the U.S.:

- UN Peacekeepers are asked to undertake complicated assignments in some of the most troubled areas of the world, missions we want done but certainly won't send U.S. troops to do.
- The UN sets norms for and establishes the framework for elections around the world. For example, little understood is the central role played by the UN in both the Afghan and Iraqi elections.
- The UN's public health agencies form a powerful network around the world, working with national governments on SARS, measles, polio and malaria, and organizing the global response to the terrible AIDS pandemic.
- And, maybe most important, the UN creates the political and physical space where difficult problems can be resolved in ways short of war.

The agenda and responsibilities which the UN has been asked to undertake are nearly overwhelming, that threadbare, under-resourced institution is straining under the load. It has stumbled, made mistakes, and at times neglected to act – and there are many in the United States who now sense weakness, and are aggressively organized to go after the UN.

To them and their allies, I would ask one simple question: who benefits if you weaken the UN?

- Starving children? The UN feeds tens of thousands of undernourished youngsters every day.
- Abused women? The UN has led the world in developing standards and policies for empowering women.
- Disease and sickness? The record of the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and UNAIDS speak for themselves, and are broadly applauded around the world.

Maybe there is some short-term political gain that the shrill critics see for themselves – but I don't see anything else.

Instead, we should be working – and working hard – to strengthen the UN. Two weeks ago, the Secretary-General put before the international community a bold, interlocking agenda for advancing development, security and human rights.

The Secretary-General's plan calls for global agreements on terrorism and nuclear proliferation; a new, stronger structure for upholding human rights, including in circumstances of genocide, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity; a strengthened Security Council and a compact for global development predicated on good governance in poor countries and generous support by the rich. Not least, the Secretary-General's plan calls for sweeping changes at the UN itself – to streamline its operations, open them up to public scrutiny and strengthen oversight capabilities.

The details are arcane, the ambition immense. But, the underlying reality of UN reform and strengthening is crystal clear. I hope the Bush Administration gets behind these efforts – for with U.S. support it can succeed. Without the U.S., it will probably fail, and the UN will be weakened.

As Tony Blair reminded us, we cannot exclusively push our point of view; we must listen to the views of others. If we are not prepared for the give and take of negotiation and cooperation, then this bold plan for establishment of a common agenda and a renewed institutional framework for the 21st century will not succeed.

All of these issues –how we approach the world, address the issue of energy, engage in the fight against global poverty and nurture the institutions of international cooperation – these are of great opportunity. They can bring us together, as we are brought together here at this World Affairs Conference. And, it is exceedingly important that we get this right.

What individual citizens say and do will make a great deal of difference. Will we be silent, and leave the playing field to others? Will we allow the only fair and balanced view to come from an ideological few?

I hope not. The going is rough right now, but that should call us to pull up our socks again. Because the promise and opportunity for change are so palpable, and so exciting.

Welcome again to the fray, thank you for coming, and I look forward to your comments and questions.