

The White House
President George W. Bush

For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
August 7, 2003

Dr. Condoleezza Rice Discusses Foreign Policy

Remarks by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice at 28th Annual Convention of the National Association of Black Journalists

DR. RICE: It is a great honor for me to be before this distinguished group. By advancing opportunity for black journalists you are advancing the values of freedom itself. Your work helps ensure that our democracy has a broad perspective and a firm moral standing.

It has been almost two years since the September 11th attacks -- and it is worth taking a moment to reflect and report on the strategy that America has pursued in responding to that awful day.

No less than December 7th, 1941, September 11th, 2001 forever changed the lives of every American and the strategic perspective of the United States. That day produced an acute sense of our vulnerability to attacks hatched in distant lands, that come without warning, bringing tragedy to our shores.

In response, we resolved to take the fight to the terrorists themselves; to use all instruments of our national power to root out terror networks; and to hold accountable states that harbor terrorists.

But we also resolved that as we fight to make the world safer, we must work to make it better. We realized that to win the War on Terror, we must win a war of ideas by appealing to the hopes of decent people everywhere . . . helping to give them the chance for a better life and a brighter future . . . and reason to reject the false and destructive comforts of bitterness, grievance, and hate.

This resolve to work for a world that is both safer and better is captured by the President's National Security Strategy, issued almost one year ago. The strategy calls on America to use our position of unparalleled strength and influence to create a balance of power that favors freedom -- to create, in the President's words, the "conditions in which all nations and all societies can chose for themselves the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty."

We have made good progress in implementing its core principles.

Al Qaida has been deprived of its chief sanctuary. Nearly two-thirds of its senior leaders, operational managers, and key facilitators have been captured or killed, and the rest are on the run -- permanently.

He is working with Congress to fund his proposal to increase United States development assistance by 50 percent -- with new funds going to countries that govern justly, invest in the health and education of their people, and encourage economic liberty.

The President has also made clear that fighting the scourge of HIV/AIDS is both a moral duty and a strategic priority. He has announced -- and Congress has approved -- a \$15 billion dollar commitment to fight AIDS abroad over the next five years, focusing on 14 countries in Africa and the Caribbean.

This security strategy is historic in its boldness. It is driven by a vision of freedom and a commitment to human dignity that is truly global, extending to every continent.

Yet there is one vital region of the world where all the challenges of our time come together, perhaps in their most difficult forms.

The Middle East is a region of tremendous potential. It is the birthplace and spiritual home of three of the world's great faiths . . . and an ancient center of learning and tolerance, and progress. It is filled with talented, resourceful people who -- when blessed with greater political and economic freedom and better, more modern education -- can fully join in the progress of our times.

And yet, today the Middle East -- a region of 22 countries, with a combined population of 300 million -- has a combined GDP less than that of Spain. It is a region suffering from what leading Arab intellectuals call a political and economic "freedom deficit". And it is a region where hopelessness provides a fertile ground for ideologies that convince promising youths to aspire not to a university education, a career, or a family, but to blowing themselves up -- taking as many innocent lives with them as possible. These ingredients are a recipe for great instability and pose a direct threat to America's security.

Only nine days after September 11th, the President made clear that the War on Terrorism could not be won on defense. Homeland security is a vital challenge of our time, and we can and must do everything we can to "harden" targets within the United States -- airports, seaports, power plants, government buildings -- anything terrorists are likely to set their sights on.

But if we in the United States are not going to change who we are -- if we are to preserve the nature of our open society -- there is only so much of this "hardening" we can do. We must also address the source of the problem.

We have to go on the offense. Rooting the Taliban out of Afghanistan was the first battle because they had provided the home base and primary sanctuary for al Qaida. Everyday across the globe unparalleled law enforcement and intelligence cooperation efforts are underway, successfully breaking up and disrupting terrorist networks. Today, the United States and many other nations are helping Afghans rebuild their country, and form a representative government, with democratic institutions that protect the rights of their citizens and help them build a more hopeful future -- and so that Afghanistan is never again a haven for terrorism.

Confronting Saddam Hussein's Iraq was also essential. Let us be very clear about why we went to war with Saddam Hussein. Saddam Hussein's regime posed a threat to the security of the United States and the world. This was a regime that pursued, had used and possessed weapons of mass destruction. He had links to terror, twice invaded other nations; defied the international community and

seventeen UN resolutions for twelve years and gave every indication that he would never disarm and never comply with the just demands of the world. That threat could not be allowed to remain unaddressed.

Now that Saddam's regime is gone, the people of Iraq are more free, and people everywhere need no longer fear his weapons, his aggression, and his cruelty. The war on terror will be greatly served by the removal of this source of instability in the world's most volatile region. And Saddam's removal provides a new opportunity for a different kind of Middle East.

But if that different future for the Middle East is to be realized, we and our allies must make a generational commitment to helping the people of the Middle East transform their region.

This has been the President's clear and consistent message.

As he said in his first State of the Union speech, "America will take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror."

Seven months later, in laying out the case to confront Saddam at United Nations, he said: "Liberty for the Iraqi people is a great moral cause, and a great strategic goal. The people of Iraq deserve it; the security of all nations requires it. Free societies do not intimidate through cruelty and conquest, and open societies do not threaten the world with mass murder. . . ."

And, three weeks before the onset of war, the President stated unequivocally: "The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder. They encourage the peaceful pursuit of a better life. And there are hopeful signs of a desire for freedom in the Middle East."

Those signs are multiplying. Consider, for instance, the recent progress towards peace for Israelis and Palestinians.

At the Red Sea Summits in June, Israelis, Palestinians, and neighboring Arab states united behind the vision the President has set forth -- a vision for two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Israeli leaders increasingly understand that it is in Israel's interest for Palestinians to govern themselves, in a state that is viable, peaceful, democratic, and committed to fighting terror. Israel has to fulfill its responsibilities to help that peaceful state emerge. A new Palestinian leadership is emerging that understands -- and says, in Arabic and English -- that terror is not a means to Palestinian statehood, but rather the greatest obstacle to statehood. And the President's vision and diplomacy have focused all parties on the crucial issue of what kind of Palestinian state we are seeking to establish. The President believes that Palestinians, like people everywhere, deserve democratic institutions, with honest leaders who truly serve the interests of their people. He is urging everyone interested in furthering the cause of peace to support Palestinian leaders committed to the path of reform because he understands that there will be no peace for either side until there is freedom for both sides. The President has made clear that all parties must carry-out their responsibilities and act

as partners if a lasting peace is to be found.

In many ways, the opportunity before us today is similar to that we faced in the wake of World War II.

The horrific suffering and catastrophic costs of two European wars in less than thirty years convinced the United States to work in partnership with Europeans to make another war in Europe unthinkable . . . by helping to build a free, democratic, prosperous, and tolerant Europe.

American policy makers set out to create new institutions, such as NATO, to help realize this vision. We supported European efforts to promote economic integration -- efforts that eventually evolved into the European Union. We promoted democratic values at every opportunity. And, perhaps most importantly, we made a generational commitment to creating a democratic Germany -- which became a linchpin of a democratic Europe.

The historical analogy is important. Like the transformation of Europe, the transformation of the Middle East will require a commitment of many years. I do not mean that we will need to maintain a military presence in Iraq as was the case in Europe. I do mean that America and our friends and allies must engage broadly throughout the region, across many fronts, including diplomatic, economic, and cultural. And -- as in Europe -- our efforts must work in full partnership with the peoples of the region who share our commitment to human freedom and who see it in their own self-interest to defend that commitment.

And we must have the patience and perseverance to see it through. There is an understandable tendency to look back on America's experience in post-War Germany and see only the successes. But the road we traveled was very difficult. 1945 through 1947 were especially challenging. The Marshall Plan was actually a response to the failed efforts to rebuild Germany in late '45 and early '46. SS officers -- called "werewolves" -- attacked coalition forces and engaged in sabotage, much like today's Baathist and Fedayeen remnants.

In Iraq, much progress has already been made. Tomorrow marks the 100th day since President Bush announced the end of major combat operations. The road is hard. Remnants of the regime and other extremists are attacking progress -- just as they did today with the bombing of the Jordanian Embassy. And coalition soldiers continue to face mortal dangers and continue to sacrifice for our future peace and security. Step by step, normal life in Iraq is being reborn, as basic services are restored -- in some cases beyond pre-war levels -- transportation networks are rebuilt, and the economy is revived . Banks are opening throughout the country and a new currency -- without Saddam Hussein's picture -- is being prepared. A country in which, only months ago, dissent was punishable by death, now sees more than 150 newspapers competing in a new marketplace of ideas.

Most promising of all Governing Council, in which all of Iraq's major tribal, ethnic and religious groups are represented, has been formed. As it works closely with the Coalition Provisional Authority, it also serves as a first step toward Iraqi self-government . . . and toward a democratic Iraq which can become a linchpin of a very different Middle East in which the ideologies of hate will not flourish.

But Democracy is not easy. Our own histories should remind us that the union of democratic principle

and practice is always a work in progress. When the Founding Fathers said "We the People," they did not mean us. Our ancestors were considered three-fifths of a person. America has made great strides to overcome its birth defects -- but the struggle has been long and the cost has been high.

Like many of you, I grew up around the home-grown terrorism of the 1960s. I remember the bombing of the church in Birmingham in 1963, because one of the little girls that died was a friend of mine. Forty years removed from the tragedy I can honestly say that Denise McNair and the others did not die in vain. They -- and all who suffered and struggled for civil rights -- helped reintroduce this nation to its founding ideals. And because of their sacrifice we are a better nation -- and a better example to a world where difference is still too often taken as a license to kill.

Knowing what we know about the difficulties of our own history, let us always be humble in singing freedom's praises. But let our voice not waver in speaking out on the side of people seeking freedom. And let us never indulge the condescending voices who allege that some people are not interested in freedom or aren't ready for freedom's responsibilities. That view was wrong in 1963 in Birmingham and it is wrong in 2003 in Baghdad.

The desire for freedom transcends race, religion and culture -- as countries as diverse as Germany, Indonesia, Japan, the Philippines, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, and Turkey have proved.

The people of the Middle East are not exempt from this desire. We have an opportunity -- and an obligation -- to help them turn desire into reality. That is the security challenge -- and moral mission -- of our time.

Thank you.

###

Return to this article at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/08/text/20030807-1.html>

[Print this document](#)