



Issues

- Education
- Iraq
- National Security
- Economic Security
- Homeland Security
- More Issues
- En Español

News

- Current News
- Press Briefings
- Proclamations
- Executive Orders
- Radio

News by Date

- February 2004
- January 2004
- December 2003
- November 2003
- October 2003
- September 2003
- August 2003
- July 2003
- June 2003
- May 2003
- April 2003
- March 2003
- February 2003
- January 2003
- December 2002
- November 2002
- October 2002
- September 2002
- August 2002
- July 2002
- June 2002
- May 2002
- April 2002
- March 2002
- February 2002
- January 2002
- December 2001
- November 2001
- October 2001
- September 2001
- August 2001
- July 2001
- June 2001
- May 2001
- April 2001
- March 2001
- February 2001
- January 2001

[Home > News & Policies](#)

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The National Security Advisor Delivers Remarks at The McConnell Center for Political Leadership

University of Louisville
Louisville, Kentucky
March 8, 2004

DR. RICE: Thank you very much. Thank you. Well, thank you very much for the invitation to be here at this wonderful facility, and to be here for this lecture. I'm really delighted that my good friend Senator Mitch McConnell invited me -- to do this lecture. I've been looking to get here for a long time. I didn't know that I was going to get do this in a football stadium, which makes it even better. And, Coach Petrino, after you join the Big East, I'm going to come back here and see you win a football game. I look forward to it. (Applause.)

Senator McConnell, Dr. Ramsey, Dr. Willihnganz -- who we share something in common. I was a provost, too. I know you have work to do, so if you need to leave, it's okay. (Laughter.) Dean Atlas, Professor Ziegler, my colleague from Hoover at one time; Mr. Charles Porter, and members of the board of trustees; Dr. Gary Gregg, director of the McConnell Center, faculty, students and distinguished guests, thank you very much for being here with me to discuss with you this foreign policy -- the foreign policy challenges of our time -- and these are challenging times.

We live in an age of terror, in which ruthless enemies seek to destroy not only our nation and not only to destroy all free nations but to destroy freedom as a way of life. Yet we live also in an age of great opportunities to increase cooperation among the world's greatest powers and to spread the benefits of democracy and tolerance and freedom throughout the world. The defense of freedom has never been more necessary and the opportunity for freedom's triumph has never been greater.

In these challenging times, America is fortunate enough to have President Bush serving, and I am proud to serve him. The foreign policy of the United States is a bold new vision that draws inspiration from the ideas that have guided American foreign policy at its best: That democracies must never lack the will or the means to meet and defeat freedom's enemies, that America's power and purpose must be used to defend freedom, and that the spread of democracy -- and only the spread of democracy -- leads to lasting peace.

The vision of our foreign policy stands on three pillars. First, America will defend the peace by opposing and preventing violence by terrorists and outlaw regimes. Second, we will preserve the peace by fostering an era of good relations among the world's great powers. And third, we will extend the peace by extending the benefits of freedom and prosperity to people for whom those promises are not yet met.

The very day of September 11th -- as smoke was still rising from the Pentagon, and the rubble of the Twin Towers, and, of course, in that field in Pennsylvania -- I can remember well that President Bush told his advisors that the United States faced a new kind of war, and that the strategy of our government would be to take the fight directly to the terrorists. That night, he announced to the world that the United States would make no distinction between terrorists and the states that harbor them. He promised that America's word would be credible. And he has proven true to that word.

Since that day, more than two-thirds of al Qaeda's known leadership has been captured or killed. The rest are on the run -- permanently. And we are working with governments around the world to bring justice to al Qaeda associates -- from Jemya Islamiya, in Indonesia; to Abu Sayyef, in the Philippines; to Ansar al-Islam, in Iraq. Under President Bush's leadership, the United States and our allies have ended terror regimes in

Appointments

- [Nominations](#)
- [Application](#)

Photos



- [Photo Essays](#)

Federal Facts

- [Federal Statistics](#)

West Wing

- [History](#)

Afghanistan and in Iraq. And all regimes around the world are on notice -- supporting terror is not a viable strategy for the long term.

And, of course, we must face our worst nightmare: The possibility of sudden, secret attack by chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear weapons and the coming together of the terrorist threat with weapons of mass destruction. September 11th made very clear our enemies' goals and provided painful experience of how far they are willing to go to carry out those goals. We cannot afford to allow the spread of weapons of mass destruction to continue. For so many years, the world pretended that important treaties like the Non-Proliferation Treaty were intact. For many years, the world refused to insist that all nations live up to the many resolutions that the international community had passed. For many years, the world marked time while the proliferation threat gathered.

The United States is now confronting that threat, the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction with aggressive new policies that are already yielding results. The decision to hold the Iraqi regime accountable after 12 years of defiance restored the credibility of the international community and increased the security of the United States and of all free nations.

The former Iraqi regime was not only a state sponsor of terror. It was also, for many years, one of the world's premier weapons of mass destruction-producing states. For 12 years, Iraq's former dictator defied the international community, refusing to disarm, or to account for his illegal weapons and programs. We know he had both because he had used chemical weapons against Iran and against his own people. Because, long after those attacks, he admitted to having stocks and programs to UN inspectors. The world gave Saddam one last chance to disarm. He did not and now he is out of power.

The President's strong policies are leading other regimes to turn from the path of seeking weapons of mass murder. Diplomacy succeeded in Libya -- in part, because no one can doubt the resolve and purpose of the United States and our allies. The President's policy gives regimes a clear choice -- they can choose to pursue dangerous weapons at great peril, or they can renounce such weapons and begin the process of rejoining the international community.

Libya's leader made the right choice and other regimes should follow his example. We are working with the international community to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. And -- with our four partners in East Asia -- we are insisting that North Korea completely, verifiably, and irreversibly dismantle its nuclear programs.

As we advance this broad non-proliferation agenda, we recognize that determined proliferators cannot always be stopped by diplomacy. But they can be stopped. Through the President's Proliferation Security Initiative, the United States and a growing number of global partners are searching ships carrying suspect cargo, and -- where necessary -- seizing dangerous materials. Last month, the President also announced new proposals to close a loophole that undermines the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty, to strengthen anti-proliferation laws and norms and to tighten enforcement. We must strengthen the world's ability to keep dangerous weapons out of the hands of dangerous regimes.

We now know, however, that there are two paths to weapons of mass destruction -- secretive and dangerous states that pursue them, and shadowy private networks and individuals who also traffic in these materials, motivated by greed or fanaticism or both. And often these paths come together. The world recently learned the name of A.Q. Khan, the father of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program. For years, Khan and his associates sold nuclear technology and know-how to some of the world's most dangerous regimes, like North Korea and Iran. Working with intelligence officials from the United Kingdom and other nations, we unraveled the Khan network and are putting an end to its criminal behavior. Together, the civilized nations of the world will bring justice to those who traffic in deadly weapons. We will shut down their labs. We will seize their materials. We will freeze their assets. We will put them out of business.

All of these efforts and many others require the close cooperation of many nations. And across a range of issues, we are seeing exactly that. I will not deny that there is a great deal of loud chatter out there. But this noise is obscuring one of the most important, striking facts of our time: The world's great powers have never had better relations with one another than they do today. And there has never been a lower likelihood of great power conflict -- with all that that entails -- since the birth of the interstate system in the 17th Century.

In Europe, the threat of another catastrophic, continental war -- omnipresent throughout most of the last century -- has all but disappeared. The vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace -- the dream of centuries -- is closer to reality than at any other time in history. NATO and European Union enlargement are erasing the last lines of the Cold War and advancing freedom to all in Europe. In fact, the Central and East European countries, once members of the Warsaw Pact, have taken up their duties in the defense of freedom in Afghanistan and in Iraq. In Russia, we see that the path to democracy is uneven and that that nation's success is not yet assured. Yet, we are working closer than ever with Russia to solve common problems.

For many years, it was thought that it was not possible to have good relations with all of Asia's powers. It was thought that good relations with China -- had to come at the expense of good relations with our ally Japan, that good relations with India came at the expense of good relations with Pakistan. The President has changed all that, and our Asian alliances have never been stronger. Forces from Australia, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines have made important contributions in Iraq and in Afghanistan. And we are building a candid, cooperative, and constructive relationship with China that embraces our common interests but still recognizes our considerable differences over values.

We are working with the nations of Africa and Latin America to promote prosperity, fight disease. The Millennium Challenge Account is revolutionizing the way America provides aid to developing countries by linking new assistance to good governance, investment in people, and economic freedom. The Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief -- a five-year, \$15-billion initiative -- will help prevent 7 million new infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, and provide care for 10 million more people affected by the disease. The President's leadership in forging peace in Africa has brought hope to Liberians, and Congolese, and Sudanese for the first time in many decades. In our own neighborhood, President Bush has re-energized negotiations on the Free Trade of the Americas agreement, and completed Free Trade Agreements with Chile and five Central American democracies.

We've had an ambitious agenda over the last seven years, but as we have moved forward with this ambitious agenda, we have never lost sight of a central truth: Lasting peace and long-term security are only possible through the advance of prosperity, and liberty, and human dignity. The War on Terror -- like the Cold War -- is as much a conflict of visions as a struggle of armed force. The terrorists offer suicide, and death, and pseudo-religious tyranny. America and our allies seek to advance the cause of liberty and defend the dignity of every person. We seek, in President Bush's words, "the advance of freedom, and the peace that freedom brings."

That means, above all, addressing what leading Arab intellectuals call the "freedom deficit." The stakes could not be higher in the Middle East. If the Middle East is to leave behind stagnation, and tyranny, and violence for export, then freedom must flourish in every corner of that region.

That is why the United States is pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. Freedom must be freely chosen, and we will seek to work with those in the Middle East who believe in the values, and habits, and institutions of liberty. We will work with those who desire to see the rule of law, freedom of the press, religious liberty, limits on the power of the state, and economic opportunity for all thrive in their own nations. And we will encourage the full participation of women. Today is International Women's Day -- a day to reflect on past achievements and on the challenges ahead. In the Middle East alone, recent years have seen much progress. Women and girls can now go to school in Afghanistan. In Iraq, women are overcoming decades of oppression and are participating in the rebuilding of their nation. There were women today on the dais when the Iraqis signed their transitional, administrative law. Morocco has a diverse new parliament, and King Mohammed has urged it to extend the rights of women. Yet more has to be done. The President has said, as well, that, "no society can succeed and prosper while denying basic rights and opportunities to the women of their country."

Iraq and Afghanistan are vanguards of this effort to spread democracy and tolerance and freedom throughout the greater Middle East. Fifty million people have been liberated from two of the world's most brutal and dangerous regimes of our time -- 50 million people. With the help of over 60 nations, the Iraqi and Afghan people are now struggling to build democracies, under difficult conditions, on the rocky soil of the Middle East.

In January, Afghanistan approved a new and progressive constitution. And later this year, the Afghan people, after decades of civil war, will hold national elections. Every day Iraqis take more responsibility for their nation's security -- from guarding facilities, to policing their streets, to rebuilding the infrastructure that Saddam Hussein neglected for decades. The Iraqi people are making daily progress toward democracy. We are working with the Iraqis and with the United Nations to prepare for a transition to full sovereignty. And today, members of Iraq's Governing Council signed that new transitional administrative law, an historic document that protects the rights of all Iraqis and moves the country toward a democratic future.

In Iraq, the work of building democracy is opposed by hold-outs among former regime oppressors and by foreign terrorists. The men and women in uniform of the coalition face threats and danger every day to make us more secure. The killers that they face seek to advance their ideology of murder by halting all progress toward democracy and toward a better future. They are trying to shake the will of our country and of our friends. They are killing innocent Iraqis. They are sowing a reign of terror. But we and the people of Iraq will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins because America and her forces will stay the course until the job is done.

The world is watching. The failure of democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan would condemn millions to misery and embolden terrorists around the world. The defeat of terror and the success of freedom in those nations will serve the interests of our nation, because free nations do not sponsor terror, and they do not breed the ideologies of murder. Success will serve our ideals as free and democratic governments in Iraq and Afghanistan inspire hope and encourage reform throughout the greater Middle East. We cannot falter, and we will not fail.

The work of building democracy in these nations is hard, and success will require the work of a generation. We Americans know that the building of democracy is hard. When the Founding Fathers said, we the people, they didn't mean me. My ancestors were three-fifths of a man. But slowly, brick by brick, we have built a multi-ethnic democracy that works. Americans know that it has been worth the labor and worth the price.

Winning the Cold War was not easy -- it took 50 years -- but the free world's alliance of strength and conviction prevailed, because we never abandoned our values or our responsibilities. As in the Cold War, progress may at times seem halting and uneven. Times of the greatest strategic importance can also be times of great turbulence. It is always easier for Presidents, no less than citizens, to do the expected thing, to follow the accepted path. Boldness is always criticized; change is always suspect. Yet Presidents from Teddy and Franklin Roosevelt, to Harry Truman, to Ronald Reagan knew that it is history that is the final judge. And I can tell you that, like those Presidents, this President knows that his obligation is not to the daily headlines. Securing peace and freedom is the obligation of the American President. And it is history that will be the final judge.

I remember serving on the National Security Council staff a dozen years ago, when the Berlin Wall fell, and the Warsaw Pact dissolved, and the Soviet Union gave way to a free Russia. Except for a slight anxiety that my area of study was going away -- (laughter) -- I found it exhilarating. And it was, of course, exhilarating to be in government at a time, and to feel some small measure of pride. But that pride quickly gave way to a humble awe for the giants who faced the great challenges of the post-World War II moment -- the Truman, the Marshalls, the Achesons, the Kennans, and to those who re-imagined and revitalized the struggle.

These people in the most uncertain times, amidst often noisy acrimony, made decisions that would bear fruit only years later, in most cases decades, later. My colleagues and I, in 1989, and in 1990, and in 1991, were simply reaping the harvest that they had sown.

That harvest -- a safer, freer, better world -- is no less our hope for the decisions the United States and our allies are making today, another time of consequence. Realizing this vision can take decades. It certainly will not happen on my watch or on this President's watch. It will require a commitment of many years. But that is what Americans have always done. When the work is hard, but worth it, we commit to it and we stay the course. The effort and the wait will be worth it.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

DR. GREGG: Thank you, Dr. Rice. Dr. Rice has agreed to take some questions that have been handed in to our ushers. And for efficiency, they're going to ask -- the two ushers are going to ask the questions now of Dr. Rice.

Q Dr. Rice -- the first is, outside of programs like Shared Values and Outgrowth, what is the United States doing to improve its public image in the Arab Muslim world?

DR. RICE: Thank you very much for the question. It is absolutely the case that the United States needs to put new energy into its public diplomacy. Frankly, after the end of the Cold War. And by the way, our public diplomacy programs were enormously successful during the Cold War. I, myself, was a couple of times a visitor to the then Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc as an international visitor. People came here in the waning times of the Cold War. We had programs through Radio Free Europe, the Voice of America that spoke the truth to populations that were looking for the truth. And we, unfortunately, I think have not paid as much attention after the end of the Cold War to the effort to get the story out.

And all that we have to do is tell the truth. People want to hear the truth. They know that in the Middle East, that this is a region of the world in which the 22 countries of the Arab world do not have the combined GDP of Spain. They know that these are young and burgeoning populations where unemployment is starting to run rampant. They know that the unwillingness to fully integrate women into the country's life is holding these countries back. These are things that are known. And it is, therefore, not an imposition of American views. These are universal values that people want to be able to say what they think. They want to be able to worship freely. They want their girls and boys to be able to go to school. They want to be able to have freedom of conscience. These are things that are universal. And so we have to talk about them, and we are looking for different platforms from which to do that.

The President has doubled the budget of the National Endowment For Democracy, which is a very fine institution that was born in the Reagan period, which did much of the work with Eastern Europe, with building parties and free trade associations and independent media. And he now has doubled that budget and is trying to do the same thing with partners in the Middle East. That would be a very important initiative.

But it's not going to be just -- we also have the International Broadcasting Board of Governors here in the United States, a new -- two new Middle East broadcast venues -- one television, satellite television; another, Radio Sawa), which has been very popular in the Middle East. And so it's really important to get the message out.

But it's not going to be done by the United States government alone. Some of the most popular and important connections between people in the former Soviet Union, then the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe were private connections, where universities and civic societies and the Rotary Clubs and Lions Clubs established relations with people -- people to people. We need to do the same thing in places like the Middle East because I think there's a hunger for that contact, and it shouldn't all come through the United States government. So I hope that as we talk about the importance of the spread of these values, the importance of supporting those people in the Middle East who want a different kind of Middle East that will not think of it as just something that the United States government should do.

Q This being an election year, many Americans are becoming more increasingly concerned with domestic issues, gay marriages, the economy, terrorism, homeland security. How do you see national security, plus the foreign policy in Iraq and Afghanistan, Haiti, North Korea and abroad in the next four years helping President Bush get reelected?

DR. RICE: Well, I think Americans will have an important debate about the direction of foreign policy, and defense policy, and the war on terrorism, post-September 11th. These are not ordinary times. Americans are not accustomed to waking up one fine September morning and seeing the Twin Towers go down by foreign hand. Americans are not accustomed to waking up one fine September morning and realizing that these people have attacked the Pentagon, and that they were trying to attack the Capitol. They were trying to take us down.

I was saying to someone earlier, I read a newspaper account of September 11th just a little while ago. And the day after September 11th I was kind of busy, so I actually didn't read the newspaper. And this account

came across my sights, and it was of September 12th from some of the major newspapers in London. And it said things like, thousands of Americans dead; American forces on high state of alert; central bankers stand by to intervene in markets should markets collapse; no one knows when the markets will open. This was war. These people started a war with us. And the American people have to have a discussion and a debate about how they're going to respond to the most vicious attack on American soil in almost 200 years. They've got to have that debate.

Now, we think that the administration has responded in the following way. Yes, we will do everything that we can to defend the homeland, to secure ports. Anybody who has been in an airport lately knows that we're doing everything we can with airports. We will try to disrupt terrorist cells in the United States. We will work hard to share intelligence information, law enforcement information. Every day, when we sit in the Oval Office, we look at intelligence information from countries all over the world. And we share and work law enforcement with countries all over the world. But if we're going to defeat the terrorists, that's not enough. We have to fight the war that they started.

And that means that we have to take the war to them. We have to fight this war on the offensive. And the first night after September 11th, that's what the President said, we're going to take this war to them. We're going to defeat them on their territory.

And we're doing pretty well at it. Because while we're taking down their leadership, we've also denied them Afghanistan, which was their home base. We've denied them Iraq, which was a supporter of terrorism and a weapons of mass destruction state. Libya has come on the other side. Sudan and countries like Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are fighting much more fiercely in the war on terrorism as allies of the United States. We're rolling them back. We're going to defeat them. If anybody thinks this is just about law enforcement, just go back to September 11th and think that we were attacked on that day. This was war. And they didn't want to just hurt us, they wanted to -- they want to bring down this civilization. To me that's this war. We need to have a debate about it, and I think we're ready for that debate. (Applause.)

Q Dr. Rice, do you still follow closely the developments in Russia? And do you have any comment on the upcoming Russia election, presidential election? And secondly, would you consider any changes in the United States attitude towards Putin?

DR. RICE: Yes, I do follow issues in Russia. Let me start by saying we do have a very positive relationship with Russia. It is a relationship that's based on common interests. Russia was one of the first countries in the war on terrorism after September 11th to, I think, recognize the threat that international terrorism -- that the international extremists posed to the state system. And as a result, we've had very good cooperation on intelligence and law enforcement, the hunt for al Qaeda terrorists. So we have very good relations, and we're making a lot of progress. This is not the relationship that I once knew between the United States and the Soviet Union. It's a very positive relationship.

We've always said that in order for that relationship to deepen, Russia had to remain committed to the values of a democratic state and to make a transition for democracy. This is not easy. This is a state that has been in existence, really, for 15 years -- sorry, for 13 years, since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is a state without a democratic tradition and heritage, and it has not had an even path of development. People are freer to say what they want to say. People are freer to worship as they please. But the institutions of democracy have not, frankly, consolidated in a way that protects democracy for the long run. And so we would hope that the Russians would be attuned to the fact that people are watching to see that elections are held in an environment in which people can make criticism of the government, that independent media again springs to life. It's not been very much lively for the last few years.

We would hope that the people understand -- that the Russians are watching to see that the judiciary is independent and not used for political purposes. We would hope that Russia would do everything that it can to strengthen political parties because only when you have strong countervailing institutions to the presidency, do you have the chance of a real democracy.

The Russians have made a lot of progress. We need to continue to talk about these things. We need to invigorate -- help to invigorate civil society in Russia so that parties and free associations and independent media can flourish. And it may surprise people that we have these discussions with the Russians on a pretty open basis.

The road hasn't been smooth. The path is certainly not straight, but I think that this is -- that the future of U. S.-Russian relations is going to ultimately depend very much on how these values take hold in Russia and how they move forward on their democratic path.

That said, we have had very good relations. The President and President Putin have a very good relationship. We have a strategic dialogue that's under way. We have much more in common than we have that tears us apart.

Q What role do you see China playing in the next 10 to 20 years in light of their conflict with Taiwan, and in general?

DR. RICE: China is a country that is also in the midst of a huge transition. I first visited China in 1988, and then again in 1992, and then not until very recently. And it is transformed in economic terms, particularly in its cities. It's a huge, burgeoning economy in which entrepreneurship is growing. People are pressing for economic freedoms, and I believe that China will see that that will translate into people's desires for political liberty, as well --the two sometimes separated a little bit in time, but almost always they eventually come together.

That transition is underway, and we as Americans need to do everything that we can to make certain it turns into a positive transition because China is going to be a major player in international politics. It is a great power now. It is going to be a major factor in Asia and a major factor in the world. It's already a major factor in the world economy. We are talking with the Chinese and insisting that they live up to the terms, for instance, of their accession into the World Trade Organization because the World Trade Organization rules govern things like openness in your economy. And those are very important rules for China to participate in.

As to China's relations with Taiwan, the United States has a very clear policy on this, and the United States remains the kind of upright anchor to keep that policy in place. There's one China, but we expect that no one will try -- in one way or another -- to change the status quo unilaterally. That means that Taiwan should not try to move to independence unilaterally, and it means that China should not provoke or threaten Taiwan. And we say to both sides the cross-straits problem will eventually resolve in a way that is acceptable to everyone. But the important thing right now is that no one try and change the status quo.

That's the American role. The United States has obligations to Taiwan under the Taiwan Relations Act. We also have obligations under the three communiques that we signed with China at the time of reestablishment of relations, and we intend to stay on this path. And we expect Taiwan to do the same, and we expect China to do the same.

Q Building for the future, what changes would you suggest in our immigration policies, given the vulnerability of our homeland?

DR. RICE: Thank you. Well, we are making, I think, a lot of progress with our neighbors on the borders, with Canada and Mexico, to try to put in place a more effective system of border controls that can make us more secure, while still allowing the free flow of goods and services across the borders.

We do most of our economic activity with Mexico and Canada, and so you don't want a situation in which you have shut down these important avenues of commerce. And yet we learned on September 11th that people had gotten into the country who should not have gotten into the country. And my colleague, Tom Ridge, has developed a very effective set of programs

with Mexico and with Canada called Smart Borders, where they are using technology, where we're about to put in certain biometric data that can help to identify who is coming across the border, and being able to clear -- pre-clear the products that need to go through so that you don't have a hold-up in trade. These are all extremely important things to do.

We believe that we can have immigration policies that are welcoming. The United States is a country that I think thrives because we have people from all over the world, and it thrives because people from all over the world want to come here. And we want people to continue to want to come here. I'm an academic. At

Stanford, one of the great joys is to have students from all over the world. And they have to feel welcome here. They have to be able to get visas to get here. And so we are working to make sure that all of those very important principles are followed.

And so the President and his homeland security team, in conjunction with the State Department, I think made some very useful changes to our visa policies; Tom Ridge and his colleagues, some very useful changes to our border policy. And I believe we're making a lot of progress, and we just have excellent cooperation with Canada and Mexico. Really excellent cooperation.

Last question.

Q This one was posed by a great number of people from audience. If you had a choice between becoming the NFL commissioner, or being the Republican nominee for President in 2008, which would you choose, and why? (Laughter.)

DR. RICE: No contest. The only thing that's holding me back is that I think Paul Taglibue is doing a fine job as NFL commissioner. But I look forward to the day that he decides to retire, and I very much think that the best job in America has got to be NFL commissioner, or maybe coach of the Louisville Cardinals. (Laughter and applause.)

END

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