Remarks on Transformational Diplomacy

Secretary Condoleezza Rice
Gaston Hall, Georgetown University
Washington, DC
February 12, 2008

View Video

(10:45 a.m. EST)

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you. Thank you very much. I want to thank President Jack DeGioia for that really kind introduction and for welcoming me back here. I'd like to thank my friend, Bob Gallucci, the Dean, and everyone here at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service for inviting me to speak this morning. Kayla Branson, thank you for welcoming me on behalf of this wonderful student body in this great institution of learning.

I also want to recognize someone who is here with me, Pat Kennedy, who is the Under Secretary for Management at the Department of State. And not only is he a terrific State Department officer, but he's also a graduate of the School of Foreign Service. And I want you know that he is according himself very well and casting a lot of honor on this school.

Now, it's great to be back at the Foreign Service school here. It's been two years since I was last here and a lot has happened. For example, last March, for the first time in more than two decades, the Hoyas made it all the way to the Final Four. (Applause.)

Now I want to congratulate you; I know you won last night against Villanova and you're looking pretty good this year, you're number 8 in the nation – Stanford's number 7. (Laughter.) What really matters is what happens in March and maybe I'll see you in San Antonio in April.

Seriously, though, two years ago, I spoke about how our world is changing and how we must change diplomacy as a result: to work in new ways, in new places, with new partners, and for new purposes. I call this transformational diplomacy. And I've returned to Georgetown today not to review the work of the past, but to consider the work of the future.

In thinking through the future of our diplomacy, my team at State and I have benefited from our internal efforts, but also from several external bipartisan studies that have been done, such as the Embassy of the Future project, the HELP Commission on Foreign Assistance, and my own Advisory Committee on Transformational Diplomacy. And last summer I gathered everybody, our major management team, and we had a retreat to talk about how to advance the future of diplomacy in our changing world. And I'd like today to discuss that with you.

In the three years that I've been Secretary of State I've had the honor of serving beside men and women of courage and dedication: the Foreign Service, Civil Service, and Foreign Service Nationals. America has the finest diplomatic service in the world and I see the evidence of this time and time again. I see it in our many diplomats who are now living and working far apart from their families in difficult and often dangerous posts. I see it in our development professionals who make their homes in conditions that are often hard to bear, simply because they believe that no human being should suffer in poverty.

In that regard, I just want to note that I see Andrew Natsios, also a member of this great community and our former Director of USAID. Thank you for the great service that you did in the service of these goals, Andrew. I see also courageous diplomats and civilians who are embedded in combat units in Iraq and in Afghanistan, people who have to show up every day in Kevlar and who are defending our country, side-by-side with our men and women in uniform.

You see, America's diplomats and America's development professionals are up to any challenge. Still, change isn't easy, especially right now when the international system is reordering itself, when we're rethinking many of our assumptions about international politics, and when we must reorganize ourselves to succeed in the 21st century. There are no precedents or playbooks for this work. We are trying to do things, quite literally, that have never been done before and this is the work of a generation.

But we should be confident because America has risen to these challenges before. We recall, of course, the time of our founding when we forged relations with great powers as a young state, when we created the State Department and laid a foundation that sustained our diplomacy for many decades. And to think: Thomas Jefferson, the first Secretary of State, apparently did all of this with seven people, 11 by the time he left. Now I'm going to assure you it took twice as many people to get me here today. (Laughter.)

We recall also that in the early 20th century, when America emerged as a great power and created new institutions, we created the Foreign Service to advance our global interests. And we recall the early years of the Cold War when we expanded our diplomacy to dozens of new countries, created new agencies for development and public diplomacy, and summoned our young citizens to study Russia's culture and politics and language.

And one of those young Americans who answered that summons because it was the patriotic thing to do, to speak Russian, was a young girl from Birmingham, Alabama, me. Now it is true that I found my passion and I also found a way out of a dead end music major which was going to lead me to a future of playing at Nordstrom's or teaching kids to murder Beethoven. (Laughter.) So I'm very grateful that I chose the course that I did.

To us now, these efforts all look like part of a strategic master plan; the creation of the Foreign Service, the creation of the great institutions of diplomacy, public diplomacy of development. But I can assure you they were anything but a

strategic master plan. As Dean Acheson wrote, “The significance of events were shrouded in ambiguity. We groped after interpretations of them and hesitated long before grasping what now seems obvious.” That is fitting advice for us as we consider our present and as we look to our future. The main driver of change today is growing interdependence among peoples and governments and the rapid international movement of information, of capital, of technology and of people. This is commonly referred to as globalization and it is, indeed, transforming our world in two important ways.

On the one hand, globalization is empowering those states that can seize its benefits. In this way, globalization is not displacing the importance of geopolitics, as many assumed that it would in the last decade. Rather, it is reshaping it. In countries like China and India, Nigeria and South Africa, Brazil and Indonesia, countries that had not been the main focus of our diplomacy in the past, billions of citizens are joining the global economy and their growing wealth is translating them into rising national powers. As a result, the landscape of international politics is becoming more decentralized. More countries are pursuing their interests vigorously and to advance our global leadership America must be active in more places.

At the same time, globalization is revealing the weaknesses of many states, their inability to govern effectively and to create opportunities for their people. Many of these states are falling behind. Others are simply failing. And when they do they create holes in the fabric of the international system where terrorists can arm and train to kill the innocent, where criminal networks can traffic in drugs and people and weapons of mass destruction, and where civil conflict can fester and spread and spill over to affect entire regions. Just think of the Afghanistan of 2001.

Perhaps our greatest foreign policy challenge, now and in decades to come, then, stems from the many states that are simply too weak, too corrupt, or too poorly governed to perform even basic sovereign responsibilities like policing their territory, governing justly, enabling the potential of their people, and preventing the threats that gather within their countries from destabilizing their neighbors and ultimately, the international system.

In response to these unprecedented challenges, our foreign policy and national security strategy must be guided by the objective that I laid out here at Georgetown two years ago: to work with our many international partners to build and sustain a world of democratic, well-governed states that respond to the needs of their people, that reduce widespread poverty, and that conduct themselves responsibly in the international system.

Now some would say that this goal is ambitious and idealistic and in this way, it is keeping – in keeping with the best traditions of American foreign policy. Like any country, the United States has national interests and we use our power to advance them. But what has always distinguished America is that we are a people united and led into the world by universal ideals, our conviction that all human beings are born free, equal in dignity, deserving of justice, the protections of law, and that the most responsible governments are those that respect the rights of their people.

These principles do not lead us to ignore the complex nature of international politics. I can assure you we deal with the world as it is. But America at its best does not accept the world as it is. America at its best unites our power and our principles and works to make the world better than it is – not perfect, but better. We recognize that there will be tensions in the short term between our interests and our ideals. But in the long term, we believe we find the fullest peace and prosperity in an international system that reflects our values. I have called this tradition of ours American Realism.

We will not meet the challenges of the 21st century through military or any other means alone. Our national security requires the integration of our universal principles with all elements of our national power: our defense, our diplomacy,

our development assistance, our democracy promotion efforts, free trade, and the good work of our private sector and society. And it is the State Department, more than any other agency of government, that is called to lead this work.

We must recognize that this is a place not of privilege and not of entitlement; we must earn it. We must ensure that our ability at the State Department to implement policy is second to none. We must match a can-do spirit of our diplomats with the appropriate resources, resources that unfortunately dried up in the 1990s as our country looked to cash in on a peace dividend.

Since 2001, this Administration has begun the long-term effort of rebuilding and transforming American diplomacy for the challenges of the new era. President Bush has designated the State Department as a national security agency. And to fulfill this mandate, transformational diplomacy requires a civilian-led, whole-of-government approach to the challenges of our time. Already, our diplomats are showing and have shown that with adequate funding and support, they can lead this kind of effort.

Consider for a moment the case of Colombia. Several years ago, Colombia was on the verge of becoming a failed state. Insurgents were winning the war, thousands were fleeing their homes, and the democratic government was losing control, literally physical control of parts of the country. So the Clinton Administration began, and our Administration has sustained and expanded, a comprehensive strategy to support Colombia. Our diplomats have led a country team that unites our law enforcement agencies, our military, our development professionals, and our trade negotiators. And we have helped our democratic allies in Colombia to reclaim their country and improve the life of their people. Now, the best way to support Colombia in completing its transformation to a pillar of peace and prosperity in our hemisphere is to pass the free trade agreement that we have negotiated and I urge Congress to do so.

Efforts like these are a foundation for future progress. Now let us consider what it will take to realize the vision of transformational diplomacy. First, America must recruit and train a new generation of Foreign Service professionals with new expectations of what life as a diplomat will be. We see glimpses of this in many places today. We see it in the jungles of Colombia where our diplomats are helping old guerrilla fighters become new democratic citizens. We see it in the towns of the West Bank where our diplomats are supporting Palestinian efforts to build the democratic institutions of a decent and free future state. We see it in Zimbabwe, where our diplomats are taking up the just and peaceful cause of a tyrannized people. These men and women are not managing problems; they are working with partners to solve problems.

That is the essence of transformational diplomacy and we measure our success in the progress countries make in moving from war to peace, despotism to democracy, poverty and inequality to prosperity and social justice. This mission will require our diplomats to be active in new places far beyond the walls of foreign chancelleries and American embassies. It will also require them to work with new partners, not only with a nation's government but also its local leaders and civil society, its entrepreneurs and its NGOs; those impatient patriots who are working to open schools and clinics and secure their neighborhoods, to start businesses and attract investment, to fight corruption and promote equal justice under the law for men and women.

We will also need a diplomatic posture that reflects the landscape of international politics in the 21st century. We must move more of our people out of Washington and dramatically increase the number of diplomats we deploy overseas, especially in countries like China and India. And we've begun to do this. When I took office, America had the same number of State Department personnel in Germany as we did in India. So in the past three years we have shifted about one-tenth of our political, economic, and public diplomacy officers to emerging new centers of international power.

Now to be clear, we still need diplomats in traditional centers of power in places like Europe. But more and more we need those diplomats to advance transformational goals – not manage the transatlantic alliance; mobilize it to defend our common interests and mobilize it and inspire it to advance our common values, whether that is ending the violence in Darfur or supporting the democratic aspirations of the Burmese people or helping the free Afghan Government to defeat the Taliban and transform its country.

All of this requires further modernization of the State Department. We need to trust our people to manage greater amounts of risk. We need to get our people the best technology to liberate them from embassies and offices so they can work anytime, anywhere. We will need to be better at fostering and rewarding creativity and initiative, innovation and independent thinking, especially among our youngest professionals. We must not only continue to recruit America's best and brightest into our ranks; we must make them even better and even brighter. And that means training in languages like Chinese and Urdu and Arabic and Farsi. And it means greater opportunity for all of our diplomats to spend more time during their careers working in other agencies or doing exchanges with private companies or studying at places like Georgetown.

In the past seven years, we have laid a foundation to achieve these goals. With the support of Congress, President Bush created 2,000 new State Department positions over four years under Secretary Powell. Since 2005, the President and I have requested annual budget increases for our international operations totaling $8 billion, an increase of over 25 percent. And in the President's 2009 budget, we are asking Congress to fund 1,100 new positions for the State Department and 300 new positions for USAID.

So as we continue to use our resources wisely and continue to transform the practice, posture, and purpose of our diplomacy, we will need greater capacity. How can it be, for example, that the Pentagon has nearly twice as many lawyers as America has Foreign Service Officers? How can it be that the United Kingdom, with one-fifth of our population, has a diplomatic service nearly as large as America's? Clearly, modernizing our diplomacy and fully resourcing it will be the challenge of a generation, not just one administration.

To realize this vision of transformational diplomacy, America must also align our foreign assistance with our foreign policy goals, especially the long-term progress of countries and the freedom of peoples. This is beginning to happen as a result of major reforms that we've made. Today, we are asking how our foreign assistance can support the development goals that individual countries identify themselves – to help them progress along a continuum, from being recipients of assistance to nations that are powering their own transformation with economic growth, open trade and investment, and effective democratic institutions.

To meet this strategic objective we must continue to refine our ability to target the kinds of assistance that we supply, be it funding for public health and education or training of justices and police officers, to the unique demand of developing countries. We should define success not by how many dollars we move out the door year after year, but rather by how effectively our partners lift themselves permanently out of poverty. In short, we should strive for the long-term goal of working ourselves out of the development business altogether.

Now this will require a continued focus on making our foreign assistance more effective. We've learned from decades of experience how we can best support a country's effort to rise out of poverty. We know that when governments embrace free trade and free markets, invest in their people and govern justly, they can create prosperity and translate it

into social justice for their citizens. More and more, our development programs must continue support to countries that are adopting smart policies, just as we tried to do with our Millennium Challenge Account, which has thus far devoted $5.5 billion of development grants to 16 partner countries.

Here too, we confront the question of resources. And what President Bush has done on this account, with the full support of Congress, has been nothing short of historic. We've doubled our assistance to Latin America, we've nearly tripled it worldwide, we've quadrupled it to Africa, leading a multilateral effort to forgive $60 billion of debt for poor nations, launching $1.2 billion to fight malaria, and a $15 billion Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, which the President has now asked Congress to double. This amounts to the largest international development effort since the Marshall Plan and it should be sustained and expanded by coming administrations.

Ultimately, though, we must realize that more than anything, it is free and fair trade and investment that will best enable our partners in the developing world to fight poverty and transform their countries. It is in times like these, when the idea of openness to the global economy is increasingly under fire, that Americans must remember that our free trade agreements are not matters only of domestic economics. They are also essential to the democratic development of our partners and, therefore, essential to the success of our foreign policy. If we as a nation unilaterally turn inward those who will suffer most will be the world's poorest people.

To realize the vision of transformational diplomacy, America will also need to forge a partnership between our civilians and our military. Our goal of fostering country progress will not always occur in peaceful places and without security there can be no development and without development there can be no democracy. Indeed, one of our most urgent national security challenges will remain the work that we do to support nations that are trying to lift themselves out of conflict, as we have done in Bosnia and Kosovo, Haiti and Liberia, and now in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

Further, America will remain engaged for many years in a new global confrontation unlike anything that we've ever faced. Leading security experts are increasingly thinking about the war on terrorism as a kind of global counterinsurgency. What that means is that the center of gravity in this conflict is not just the terrorists themselves, but the populations they seek to influence and radicalize and in many cases, terrorize. So our success will depend on unity of effort between our civilian and military agencies. Our fighting men and women can create opportunities for progress and buy time and space. But it is our diplomats and development professionals who must seize this opportunity to support communities that are striving for democratic values, economic advancement, social justice, and educational opportunity. It is by nurturing the prospect of hope that we defeat the purveyors of hate.

In this effort, we see at the present another glimpse of what future diplomacy must be like. Our diplomats are providing critical expertise to our elite military units in the hunt for al-Qaida. And in Afghanistan and Iraq, as part of Provincial Reconstruction Teams serving far outside of the capitals of those countries, our civilians are helping local leaders and people to open markets and expand the institutions of liberty, to rebuild schools and hospitals and roads and restore hope and opportunity to those living in former terrorist strongholds.

Much of our work with the military these past several years has, frankly, been experimental, even improvisational. To staff our positions in Iraq, we have had to transform our personnel system and that is working. We now have some of the most senior and outstanding members of our Foreign Service leading our efforts in Baghdad, including four ambassador-rank officers. And most importantly, our diplomats in Iraq have answered the call to serve voluntarily and I thank them for that. Now, we must lay a new institutional foundation that will form the future nucleus of our civil-military partnerships.

We are urging Congress to meet the President's request to double the number of our positions for political advisers to military forces, diplomats who can work not only with four-star generals, but also deploy as civilian experts to Navy SEAL teams and to North Africa.

We are also urging Congress to fund our Civilian Stabilization Initiative, an idea that finds its greatest supporters among men and women in uniform. In recent years, we have tried two different approaches to post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction missions. Both have had their strengths and many weaknesses. One was in Afghanistan, where many countries adopted elements of the effort to build Afghan capacity. These were welcome efforts, but I have to tell you that we are still living with the incoherence of the effort. We see another approach was taken in Iraq where a single U. S. Government department, the Defense Department, found it difficult to harness the full range of our capabilities to conduct development and reconstruction in a counterinsurgency environment. The truth is that there was no single department, no institution in the U.S. Government, capable of doing these tasks.

The answer is the Civilian Response Corps. This expeditionary group will be led by a core team of diplomats that could, say, deploy with the 82nd Airborne within 48 hours of a country falling into conflict. These first responders would be able to summon the skills of hundreds of civilian experts across our federal government, as well as thousands of private volunteers – doctors and lawyers, engineers and agricultural experts, police officers and public administrators. Not only would a Civilian Response Corps take the burden of post-conflict reconstruction off the backs of our fighting men and women, where it was never supposed to be in the first place; this civilian organization could be deployed in times of peace, to strengthen weak states and prevent their collapse in the future.

Ultimately though, it is not enough just to align our civilian and military tools. We must work to marry the efforts of our government to the good work of our society. The diplomacy of the past was defined by delivering demarches to foreign governments, reporting on foreign affairs, and keeping track of relations among states. That is changing today and we must change too. The diplomacy of the future will increasingly take the forming – the form of aligning peoples – our people and those of the world. Indeed, we see the truest success of transformational diplomacy not only in the alliances of governments, but in the alliances of peoples – peoples with whom we trade and visit and share values and work for prosperity and success as we do throughout our own hemisphere and throughout the world.

We define the success of transformational diplomacy as a new kind of engagement among peoples, new and ever more public diplomacy. This is not and cannot be the job of just American diplomats. It's a mission for the American people. That is why we are dramatically increasing our people-to-people engagement to connect students and journalists and scholars of the world. That is why we issued more student and exchange visas last year than at any other time in our history. That is why our government is building partnerships with American companies to connect young Palestinians and Lebanese to the world through information technology. And that is why we need the active engagement of young Americans like you. You are just as connected to the world as our diplomats. And you should use that power to become private ambassadors not for the American Government, but for the American people.

And it's on that note that I'd like to conclude with a message to all of you who may be considering a career in diplomacy or in development. You are America's best and brightest. You are America's future. Your horizons are limitless. When you graduate, you're going to have lots of opportunities. You'll have opportunities to continue your education. You might have an opportunity to make a fortune at a hedge fund. You'll have an opportunity to do just about whatever you'd like.

But I'd like you to consider one opportunity in particular. As I look out at you, the students here at Georgetown, I see the faces and the heritage of America, an America that is diverse, an America that believes in the equality and the intrinsic value of every human being. I see Americans who perhaps trace their ancestry to Asia, to Europe, to Latin America, to Africa. I see the descendants of slaves like myself. I see men and women who look like America. Our diplomats have to look like America. If America is going to stand for the belief that multiethnic democracy can work and if we are going to show that multiethnic democracy can work, then we cannot continue to show up in rooms where it looks as if multiethnic democracy was left at home.

I want to ask you personally, consider a role in diplomacy, in development, in the exciting times in which we're engaged historically to bring the blessings of prosperity and liberty across the world to people who've never enjoyed them but who I assure you want them just as much as you do. When you have a chance to look back on your life, I hope that it will have included service to a cause higher than yourself, so in what will be an unabashedly very clear commercial: come join us at the State Department. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

MR. DEGIOIA: Ladies and gentlemen, Secretary Rice has agreed to answer some questions and I've selected a few here from the many that I was given. Madame Secretary, I took out the ones that asked about your interest in the presidency and the vice presidency and requested that you play the piano and I've picked some other ones.

SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much. (Laughter.)

MR. DEGIOIA: You're welcome. The first question comes from a freshman in the School of Foreign Service who asks: What do you think America can change in how it behaves overseas in order to improve the world's view of America as a hegemonial superpower?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, thank you for the question – a very good question from a freshman. You must be doing a good job here early on. Let me separate the issue of popularity of America, American policy, from respect and I think deep admiration for America as a country. Any American Administration at any time in our history is sometimes going to have to adopt policies that will not be popular. They may be policies that require people to face hard realities and hard truths, like the threat of terrorism. They may be policies that require a re-thinking of long-held views of how you solve a problem. We had to rethink really pretty tremendously the way that we thought about the possibilities or the path to peace in the Middle East when the President said that it was – he was no longer going to deal with Yasser Arafat who had one foot in terrorism and one foot in politics. That wasn't very popular. Sometimes it requires using American power to do what you believe is the right thing and sometimes that use means the use of military power and it's sometimes not popular.

Now, I do think that I would be the first to say that the United States is not always patient enough in taking the concerns of those who look at us as very powerful and spending time perhaps explaining why it is we've done what we have done. There can be a kind of American haste to what we do or a tendency to let's get on with it. And yes, sometimes that happens and that's the role of diplomacy and I'm sure there are times that we could have done a better job. But I want to be very clear that I don't think American policies are always going to be popular. However, America is viewed and revered throughout the world as a country that is a fierce defender of human rights, a fierce defender of liberties, a great multiethnic democracy that, if I complete my term, will not have had a white male Secretary of State in 12 years. People notice those things. And one way that people can get to know that America, not the America that they see

through propaganda on networks, not the America that perhaps they see in some of our less flattering ways, some elements of our culture, but an America that cares about families, an America that cares about protecting people's religious beliefs, whether they hold any religious belief or any of -- many varied religious beliefs. The way for that message to get through is, yes, sometimes through the government but more importantly through the American people and that's why I focused a lot and we've focused a lot in this Administration on public diplomacy as a matter of student exchanges, of bringing people here.

I can tell you that when I meet with students from around the world who've spent maybe a summer and with a family in Iowa or a year at an American university, they have a completely different view of what the United States is about. And it goes the other way. It is true that people need to understand America better. It is true that we need to understand the rest of the world better, too. We're a big country. We can all speak English forever if we want. But it is a really terrific thing to go and live in another place and speak the language of another people and hear them in their own tongue and get to know them. So this is a two-way conversation, not a one-way conversation. But I do believe that the more people get to know us up and close, the more they admire America.

MR. DEGIOIA: Thank you. This question comes from another freshman in the School of Foreign Service: In order to gain access to China's markets, companies like Google and Microsoft have agreed to effectively censor the internet. How should the U.S. respond to this, if at all?

SECRETARY RICE: Yes. Well, we've been very clear. And look, I won't – I'm not going to comment on specific decisions of specific companies, but we've been very clear that we believe that it is both wrong and probably impossible to sensor the internet. The – there are certain things that are unfortunate when they're on the internet. I know; we find very often that there are radical extremists who use the internet very effectively.

But I believe that on balance, the internet is going to be a vehicle and a force for freedom. That when people are not, in fact, dependent only on what their governments will let them see, that you're going to have a worldwide explosion of the insistence on basic liberties and freedoms. And I don't believe that governments are really going to be very effective at harnessing that power. First of all, there are always hackers who can get around it. And secondly, I just -- I think that, you know, countries -- and I know that there's a kind of fascination in some places with what I'll call authoritarian capitalism. You know, that well let's get the economics right first, then we'll worry about those political rights. Or people -- another version of that is -- people don't really care about their political rights, they really care about their economic freedoms. And I just don't believe it. Because I think that the idea that it is sustainable, that you are somehow going to respect the talents of your people, but you're not going to respect their rights, is really very shortsighted and it's not sustainable in the long run.

And so harnessing the internet in this way is going to lead to harness it in a way that doesn't give it its full power in helping the society and the economy to develop. I don't think it will be effective. And I think that those countries that recognize that the free flow of information is one of the most important sources of creativity are ultimately going to be the ones that benefit.

MR. DEGIOIA: Thank you. Madame Secretary, I'm going to combine two questions. Both of them go to foreign assistance, the first from a senior in the School of Foreign Service and the second from someone apparently who wishes to remain anonymous: What do you think will be the long-term impact of the Defense Department assuming greater responsibility for development work? In your view, does this have the potential to undermine USAID's effectiveness?

And the second question: Is the ever increasing convergence of US foreign aid with foreign policy objectives at all undermining the legitimacy or intent of aid as humanitarian assistance?

SECRETARY RICE: Right. Did these people take Andrew's class or something? (Laughter.) They're very good questions about development assistance.

Let me take first the question of the links between foreign policy and foreign assistance. I see foreign assistance as being very critical, particularly in these days, in this modern world, to the success of American foreign policy. It's not the only element of American foreign policy, but it's an important element of American foreign policy.

I think where development -- and I've spent a lot of time with development specialists on this, where they get worried is that they believe that development assistance, which needs to have a long-term perspective -- you're not going to change the development profile of a country overnight. You're not going to eradicate poverty overnight. You're not going to wipe out disease overnight. That if those goals become subservient to foreign policy goals which can be shorter term -- we'd like that country to do X, Y, or Z, that you're going to have an erosion of the ability of foreign assistance to really make a dent in the long-term problems of poverty and development. And I would say poverty -- dent in poverty and development which leads then to stable democracies.

My view is that it would be shortsighted of people who practice foreign policy to believe that we are going to succeed if we are constantly engaging just in short-term, today kinds of work with a country. Because the way that I think about our long-term goal as I've said is that you have to develop well governed, democratic states that can provide for their people, can govern wisely, can educate their people, can provide healthcare for their people and that will be democratic. That in and of itself is a long-term goal, and to me it's the most critical foreign policy goal. Because when we don't do that, we get failed states that then become a problem for security, a problem for foreign policy. So I think this is a false dichotomy between the short-term needs of foreign policy and the long-term needs of development assistance. I see them as much more working in harmony.

Now, yes, there will sometimes be short-term goals that have -- that foreign policy has to meet with assistance. But I think those are increasingly smaller numbers of contingencies. Rather you are doing what the Millennium Challenge is trying to do. If you look at an average Millennium Challenge compact, what is it giving foreign assistance to? It might be giving foreign assistance to the development of infrastructure so that a road network can be built so that farmers can get their food to market.

If we can then marry that with USAID programs to make those farmers more efficient in what they're doing, to be able to get out of subsistence farming, and we can marry that even with a free trade agreement that has the effect that I saw that the Central America Free Trade Agreement has had on subsistence farming in Guatemala, you can see that we have actually a long-term strategy and it’s going to redound to our foreign policy benefit because we’re going to have a friend and a stable government in Guatemala. So I see them as very linked. I understand the concern, but I believe that these are not opposed to one another.

As to the issue of what the military does, the military does some very good humanitarian work and they are capable, particularly in humanitarian crises, of deploying very quickly. Increasingly, they deploy with our development assistance relief teams that go alongside so that you do have actually USAID or State Department

people involved when we do, for instance, the earthquake relief in Pakistan or the tsunami relief in Southeast Asia. These are very much merged.

But I do think that if the State Department, the USAID, our ability to in an expeditionary way deploy civilians is not modernized and upgraded, we will have to depend on the military to do it. And that will erode both their central function and our central function. And this is something, by the way, on which the Secretary of Defense and I are in complete agreement, that we have got to build greater civilian capacity to do many of these things, but the fact is we have to get there faster, we have to get deeper into ever more difficult places, we have to be able to sustain it. There are certain elements of this that civilians are really the best positioned to do, but we have to be able to get there.

I will tell you that the good news to me is there is no absence of people who want to be involved in that work. But our agencies have not kept pace. Our civilian agencies have not kept pace. We, frankly, have allowed our numbers to come down, our budgets to come down, USAID now I think about 1,100 officers worldwide. That's just not – we're not capable in that term. That's why the President has asked for 300 additional officers. And I hope that over the course of the next several years we'll continue to build back up these civilian capabilities.

MR. DEGIOIA: Thank you. Madame Secretary, there were many questions that went to Darfur. This is one of them from a freshman in the School of Foreign Service: This month marks the fifth year of the conflict in Darfur. What should America's role be in ending this crisis in the near future?

SECRETARY RICE: Well, let me say first that this is something that the President asks me about practically every time I see him. It is something about which he feels deeply and I feel deeply.

Sudan is a country that has gone through far too much conflict and far too much killing and far too much deprivation. And we tried with the good work of Jack Danforth, former Senator Jack Danforth under – and Colin Powell, and we managed to conclude an agreement between Southern Sudan and the North, the Comprehensive Peace Agreement. That was very important because it ended decades of civil war that actually cost millions of lives. And we need to continue to work to make sure that we are carrying out the terms of that agreement between the North and the South, because we can't allow North and South Sudan to once again descend into conflict.

At the same time, Darfur then broke out, not too long after the CPA was concluded. And that is a conflict that has the characteristics that we have worried and have said have genocidal tendencies and it has been a special responsibility for the international community to make sure that it's solved.

The United States has been the leading supplier of humanitarian assistance. The United States has led every effort in the UN to try and get the peacekeeping forces in place that need to be there to provide protection for innocent civilians. We've been a major supporter of the African Union forces, which really need to be augmented now and sustained by UN forces. We have been leaders in trying to bring about a peace agreement between the rebels and the government, and we're going to continue that work.

We're going to continue to press it. We're going to continue to raise the attention of the international community. We're going to continue to press on those who might have greater leverage with Sudan – countries in the Arab world, China, others – to get the Government of Sudan to live up to the obligations that they first undertook with Kofi Annan and

then undertook again with Ban Ki-moon.

But ultimately, this is something the United States can't do alone. We are often accused of being too unilateralist – not just this Administration, but American administrations in general. We are not able to deal with this crisis in a unilateral fashion. It requires UN peacekeepers. It requires an international effort in a humanitarian side. It requires an international effort of pressure on the Sudanese Government to do what it has said it will do. And we will be tireless in continuing to bring this to the UN, in continuing to call attention when the UN fails to act – the UN Security Council fails to act. We'll support Ban Ki-moon's efforts to bring this to an end. But the United States has been at the forefront and this is time for the international community to catch up, follow suit and solve this crisis in Darfur.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

MR. DEGIOIA: Madame Secretary, on the part of – on behalf of Georgetown University, let me thank you for taking your time with us this morning, for your remarks, for your forthright responses to the questions, but most especially for your extraordinary service to this country. Thank you very much. (Applause.)

2008/104

Released on February 12, 2008

BACK TO TOP