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## Remarks At the U.S. Agency for International Development On Foreign Assistance

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Washington, DC

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(3:15 p.m. EST)

Thank you very much. Well, first of all, thanks very much for coming out and I hope we can have a good discussion about the changes that are underway and about how we are going to work together to make American foreign assistance even more effective in changing people's lives, in alleviating poverty, in creating the conditions for stable and well-governed states around the world, and in doing so in enhances America's security and America's compassion. And I look forward to that discussion.

I've had an opportunity to thank Andrew Natsios for his fine leadership of this organization. As a matter of fact, I was at Georgetown yesterday sitting right in the front row and he's now a professor. It's quite clear. He told me he's taught his first course. But I want to also thank Fred Schieck. This gentleman has been a core part of my team since I've been here. I see him pretty often at staff meetings. But I want you to know that he has provided excellent leadership and that he has been just a really important part of my core team. And would you just join me in thanking him for his leadership. (Applause.)

As I stand here in this historic building, the building in which the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was created and signed in 1949, I am reminded of how well America has done when it has mobilized all of its resources, all of its assets, in support of its values and its interests. This indeed is where NATO was -- where the NATO treaty was signed. And if you look back on those historic times at the end of World War II, they were times of great challenge with a rising Soviet Union, a rising communist China, with a Europe that was still weak and prostrate from World War II, and from just enormous challenges to our values and to our security.

And if you fast-forward to today and you -- as I have had the opportunity to do -- you sit in the councils of NATO and you



look around that table -- and it's not just France and Germany and the fact that they will never fight again, something I think that was clearly not to be anticipated in 1949 -- but you also look around that table and you have Estonia and Lithuania and Poland and Hungary and you think what a remarkable transition there was in Europe to a Europe whole, free and at peace and based on democratic values. You just know that despite the fact that we have new challenges in the promotion of those values that we can indeed meet them and that we can make a difference in helping to create a world of well-governed states that will be committed to their people, committed to democracy, committed to bettering the lives of their people. And that's what we want to do with our foreign assistance.



I want to just say that I want to thank each and every one of you for the crucial role that you have played over this last five years of challenge. When we came here in 2001, I doubt that any of us who joined the Bush Administration really thought that we were going to be trying to build democracy in Afghanistan, for instance. We didn't know that the Twin Towers were going to be attacked and the Pentagon. We didn't know the world that we were going to be facing.

But the wonderful thing about this organization, about USAID and about its people, is that you have responded and you have in your own way transformed, and we're now taking another step in making the institution stronger, in aligning it with the State Department. I want to just emphasize a couple things that Fred mentioned. First of all, that USAID is going to remain an independent organization. Anyone who tells you that I once considered that we were going to somehow dissolve this organization, they're just not telling you the truth. It was simply never a consideration for me. I always started from the premise that USAID would stay intact and it will indeed stay intact as an independent organization.

I think that the changes that we announced today will greatly strengthen the role of the Administrator and in dual-hatting that person at State I hope that we will be able to see the best of both worlds. There are many things that State does very well, there are many things that USAID does very well, and I hope that the interchange between those organizations will make us much stronger, make us both much stronger.



I think we will have an opportunity to have strategic country plans that will guarantee that resources will be available for long-term development. I want to be very clear. I consider development to be one of America's most important priorities because our goal ought to be to use our assistance to help people to better their lives, but also to help their governments to be better able to deliver for them. We don't want to create permanent dependencies. We want governments that can actually deliver. And I know you're very involved in capacity building and we need to do more of that. And we're going to work to closer align our budgets and priorities.

The United States is best when it leads both from power and principle. Everybody has concentrated a lot on our power. They very often don't look at what we do in terms of compassion around the world. I want you to know that many Americans do know how gifted and capable you've been as first responders to disasters, to humanitarian situations around the world. But perhaps not enough people know that you've been equally impressive in your grit and determination to apply the hard work that you do to successful development transitions in countries around the world, and I want to applaud that work and see it extended.

Finally, I think that if we keep in mind three very key words we will do our job well.

First of all, we do need to align our priorities and to make certain that we are pulling in the right direction to get the job done.



Secondly, we need to be more effective in the ability to bring all of our assets together and to deliver.

And we need to be good stewards of the American people's money. We've had very major increases in development assistance in this Administration, in fact major increases unseen since the Marshall Plan. We have created the Millennium Challenge Corporation. We have had the PEPFAR program, the U.S. program for AIDS and HIV. We have doubled our official development assistance around the world, tripled our assistance in Africa. We've made trade preferences possible for the developing world. We've relieved debt for some of the most heavily indebted countries. We have believed in using America's resources to make the world better and safer.

But I want to assure you that it's going to get tougher to get those resources because there are a lot of competing priorities. And what we have to be able to do is to go to the American people -- and I want to make a commitment to you, I will go to the American people through the Congress and publicly -- and say that we must continue to devote resources to development. We must continue to devote resources to democracy promotion. We must continue to devote resources to poverty alleviation, because, yes, it is consistent with our values and our compassion, but it is also essential to our security. And if we can show that we are good stewards of the American taxpayer dollar, I believe that we can sustain a course of economic assistance around the world that will serve our interests and our security as well as make life better for people around the world.

So I want to thank you for joining in the changes that we're going to make. I want to thank you in advance for the efforts that you're going to make to make this new organization work. And now I am happy to take your questions.

(Applause.)

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