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## Remarks On Transformational Diplomacy

### Secretary Condoleezza Rice

East Auditorium, Washington, DC

February 8, 2007

(2:15 p.m. EST)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. Thank you. First of all, my apologies for keeping you waiting. There are a few breaking issues around the world and I had to pay attention to those. But I want to first thank Henrietta [Fore] and thank Henrietta and the M family for their tremendous management of this organization. Henrietta, you're a fine public servant. Thank you very much for everything you do.

Last January, I gave a speech at Georgetown and discussed what I and others have called [transformational diplomacy](#). And today, I'd like to take a few minutes to continue that conversation. As you all probably know, I've spent much of the last two days on Capitol Hill explaining how our Department's responsibilities are changing and why it is essential for Congress to provide us with the resources that we need. For the first time ever, the Department of State has been designated as a national security agency and our leadership is more important than ever.

As you enter the Department, you should look to our senior leaders for inspiration. Many of them are here in the front row. But we're also bringing back legendary public servants, people like Frank Wisner, who is acting as our special envoy on Kosovo, General Joe Ralston who is acting as our special envoy for the PKK Turkish and Iraqi issues. These are people who have put aside some of the benefits of retirement to advance our diplomatic mission as ambassadors-at-large.

And then there is our senior Foreign Service. Among this group you are going to find dedicated people with decades of experience with multiple tours as Ambassadors, who have held more than one cabinet rank job, and that person is the man who I think and hope will soon be confirmed by the Senate, John Negroponte. Most of you were not even born when John entered the Foreign Service, but we won't tell him that. (Laughter.)

As for me, I don't know if you know this or not, but I was actually an intern here in the State Department in the Bureau



of Educational and Cultural Affairs. So be nice to your interns; you never know what might happen. (Laughter.)

Seriously though, I want to speak today about the Department in particular, not about the Department, because that's a rather cold phrase, but about you, our newest diplomats. For beyond anything that I might do, anything that our senior leadership might do, long after we have all gone on to other pursuits -- for me that means playing the piano a lot more -- all of you are going to continue the vital work of transforming America's diplomacy.

I imagine that all of you have chosen a life of public service in the Department for one fundamental reason: You want to serve our country by helping to change the world. And for that you have my deepest respect and my deepest gratitude. I see it as my goal and my responsibility to give you the support, the resources, the tools, the training and the freedom to do just that, to change the world.

If the essence of transformation here at State can be summed up in one word, it's this: Leadership. Not just mine, yours. The key to transforming diplomacy is you. It rests on your creativity and your initiative and your enthusiasm and your dedication. All of you are capable; that's why we hired you. In time, you will come to know your jobs and the local challenges that you face far better than I do. Our Department must liberate your talents and your ingenuity as completely as possible. When you have ideas, I want to hear them. When you have a plan, I want you to have the responsibility and the encouragement to follow it up.

Transformational diplomacy is more than just being told what to do. It's thinking and leading and acting and charting the right course on your own. My job and that of senior leaders in our Department, far more so than we already do, is to look to you, to trust you and to empower you.

The key idea is this: Transformation in diplomacy, as in business and other fields, rests on the empowered individual who works for the greater freedom and greater initiative and thus greater responsibility, with fewer hurdles to clear, fewer boxes to check, and who aided by the power of technology can accomplish what was once required of many people.

And let there be no doubt. Ensuring that America is competitive and successful in this new century is our critical goal. The stakes of this challenge are high. When faced with the reality of our increasingly complex and competitive world, some organizations in business and government and in other fields are evolving and thriving. Others are resisting and falling behind. We here at the State Department intend to be in that first group. We've made a lot of progress in the last decade or two, but I think we all realize that our organization in many ways is still more reflective of the 20th century challenges than the 21st century challenges that we face. In fact, our Department is still set up a little bit too much like an industrial firm from the 1950s rather than a leading company in today's global economy.

I would like to take a few minutes to share with you some of the initiatives that are now underway to enable you to better conduct transformational diplomacy. First, we are continuing our efforts to get more of our diplomats into the places where they are needed most in today's world. Last year, I said that we would move hundreds of positions from our still very large embassies in Europe to the new front lines of our diplomacy in countries like India and China, Nigeria and South Africa, Lebanon and indeed Venezuela.

We are now completing that task for the first 200 positions and we are beginning the next phase. This year, we plan to shift nearly 100 more positions, mostly from here in Washington, to countries where they can make the greatest difference. So just consider this: In only two years, we have effectively repositioned one-tenth of all of our political,

economic and public diplomacy officers overseas. That is a significant step.

At the same time, we are continuing to transform and expand our presence within countries. We cannot successfully reach people if we are situated only in country capitals. We need to be present in the most important regions and cities of countries, many of which have over a million citizens in countries like China and India and Bolivia and Morocco and Kenya.

We are doing this, as I said last year, in two ways. One is what we call American Presence Posts, an unconventional assignment for one intrepid diplomat to represent our country in cities and regions where we have no formal presence. Beginning now, we plan to triple the number of American Presence Posts with many opening over the next two years.

Another innovative way to expand our presence is what is called a Virtual Presence Post. Managing these posts -- which is done mostly by junior officers like you -- combines regular travel, media outreach and new technology to help us engage with new population centers where we have no permanent facilities. Since last January, we have created 14 new virtual posts, in Gaza and in South Korea and in Venezuela, bringing our total number worldwide to 38. Three more will soon come online in Jordan and India and Bolivia. Similarly, we have established a Persian language website to communicate directly with the people of Iran.

Secondly, we are continuing to transform our approach to development. Last year, I created the new position of Director of Foreign Assistance to align our foreign assistance resources more strategically with our foreign policy goals; in other words, to ensure that USAID and the State Department are both pulling in the same direction. Randy Tobias is now serving in this new position and serves concurrently as USAID Administrator.

In the past several months, we have taken important steps to ensure that we are using every one of our limited development dollars as effectively, efficiently and strategically as possible. Now, for the first time, we have common definitions for our development goals and programs and one common process to measure how much we're spending and whether we're getting results. In this way, we have been able to shift billions of dollars of foreign assistance resources to those countries and programs where the money is needed most and most likely to have the greatest impact. We can now assess each country's most pressing needs and direct our resources to help them in a way that supports its own development plan. This will enable more nations to graduate from our assistance, not to grow dependent on it.

Third, we are continuing to transform our partnership with other parts of our government. More and more, solutions to the challenges we face lie not in the narrow expertise of one agency acting in one country, but in partnerships among multiple agencies working creatively together to solve common problems across entire regions.

So we are looking to adopt a new version of regional operations, one where interagency integration would be the norm. These would be joint centers networked with our embassies in the region at which you would serve alongside assistance workers or our men and women in uniform and professionals from other agencies. These regional centers will help us to continue breaking down the barriers that still hinder the interagency cooperation that we need overseas.

One place where we want to put these ideas into practice is in Africa. The President has authorized the creation of a

new combatant command for the military in Africa. But this will be more than a military operation. We envision it more broadly as an opportunity to work side by side with our many partners throughout the government. This will give us a more comprehensive approach to Africa's challenges which sometimes blur the lines between diplomacy, defense, democracy and development.

When it comes to working comprehensively to help societies rebuild after conflict, one group of diplomats is truly at the forefront of our efforts; that is, our Office of Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization. These individuals are not just helping our Department to plan for the next Bosnia or Liberia or Haiti. Some of them are actually deployed right now in the hottest spots overseas. In Darfur, for example, several members of our team moved in fast, they acquired a space to call their headquarters and they have been working for the past few months to help transform the conditions on the ground with everyone from Sudanese rebel groups to African Union peacekeepers to international aid workers.

These men and women are part of our effort to create an expeditionary arm of the Department of State. It is a way of thinking and training and operating that is mostly new for us, but one that we must adopt. Eventually, we hope that members of our Department will become the vanguard of larger teams of civilian experts -- lawyers and engineers and police trainers and health workers and others. In future stabilization missions we want to be able to deploy these civilians anywhere in the world to provide expertise on critical issues like law enforcement and justice administration, urban planning and infrastructure repair. This is the idea of the Civilian Reserve Corps which President Bush mentioned in his State of the Union Address and we are eager to work with Congress to address this challenge.

Finally, we are continuing to transform the way we do business here at State. We are beginning to recruit people for our Foreign Service in new ways, on a year-round basis, evaluating them not just by their performance on standardized tests, though the test will continue to be rigorous and important, but also by their prior experience and achievements. If a prospective member of our Foreign or Civil Service has spent the past several years, say, starting a human rights NGO or running a small business overseas, we think these are accomplishments that should be taken into account because that's the kind of person that we'd like to attract.

We're taking steps to ensure that all of our diplomats have unfettered access to the best possible training, no matter where in the world you happen to be serving. Most important of all is training in those critical languages you will need to do your jobs in the 21st century, languages such as Chinese and Arabic and Farsi and Urdu and Korean.

We are also ending the old practice of each bureau or post providing the full range of administrative services. Rather, today's technology allows many of these functions to be performed by a smaller group of people anywhere in the world and shared among bureaus and posts. This will allow us to better use our resources and to eliminate duplication.

We're doing all of this, but we still need to do more. We must locate and remove every unnecessary or redundant layer of bureaucracy that inhibits creativity. We must cut down on the time you spend doing things -- maybe some of you will agree -- that are arguably not the best use of your time; writing reports, for instance, or clearing papers with two dozen people.

And lastly, we must further collapse the barriers between different jobs to empower you to work across many different disciplines at once, political and economic and security and public diplomacy.

In short, we seek to do everything we are doing now and much, much more, and to do it smarter and faster and better

and cheaper. But I would submit to you that our goal must be even grander than this; that is, we must transform not just the institution of diplomacy but the very culture of diplomacy itself.

I said when I began that I imagine you are all here for one reason: You want to help change the world. Well, my goal and the purpose of transformational diplomacy is to give you an opportunity to do that. In today's world, your leadership is essential. We are a national security agency. Our international engagement, our democracy promotion, our development assistance, our public diplomacy -- all of these efforts are vital to our nation's defense and well-being. What you will be called to do will demand every ounce of your strength and creativity and your talent and your intellect and your compassion. America needs no less from you.

Already, these efforts are underway and I remind people every chance that I get that we have the finest diplomatic service in the world. The dedicated men and women of our Foreign Service, Civil Service and Foreign Service Nationals are serving and sacrificing courageously, even risking their lives for the sake of our country. They are often doing so in places that are far away from their friends and families, and at times they're doing it shoulder to shoulder with our men and women in uniform. America owes them all, and all of you, a tremendous debt of gratitude for service.

You are now a part of a very distinguished group -- only several thousand strong -- that has the honor of representing America to the people of the world as well as the responsibility of defending our interests and advancing our ideas. But you've made this choice at a particularly consequential and exciting time.

We're standing here in an area of the Department named for George Marshall. In fact, the Marshall office is right down the hallway here. And it reminds us that there have been other times when the United States of America has been called to do difficult work under difficult circumstances when the international system was in a sense remaking itself.

From 1989 to 1991, I was lucky enough to be the White House Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War. It doesn't get much better than that. And so I got to participate in the liberation of Eastern Europe and the unification of Germany and the beginnings of the peaceful collapse of the Soviet Union. Extraordinary times, times that no one would have thought possible just a few years before.

I am often reminded though that I was lucky enough to be at the end of a great historical transformation. And when I think about the people who were at the beginning of that transformation, I wonder what it was like to come to work here between 1945 and 1950, to come to work in 1946 when the Italian communists had won 48 percent of the vote and the French communists 46 percent of the vote; in 1947 when there was a civil conflict in Turkey and civil war in Greece, when 2 million Europeans were still starving because the reconstruction had failed; in 1948 when Germany was permanently split in the Berlin crisis; in 1948 when Czechoslovakia, the last remaining free state in Eastern Europe, fell to a communist coup; or in 1949 when the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon five years ahead of schedule; and in 1949 the Chinese communists won their revolution; and in 1950 the Korean War broke out.

Not a great list to say that by 1989 to 1990 to 1991 a young special assistant to the President would be there for the end of the Cold War on Western terms and the peaceful collapse of communism throughout Europe. But they stayed true to their values. They were creative. They were innovative. And they managed somehow over almost 50 years to create the conditions that finally won the Cold War.

We now stand at the beginning of another historic transformation. It's a transformation that is going on around the world where people are demanding their democratic rights. It is a transformation that is going on around the world where people are electing democratic governments and then demanding that they deliver.

But it is a transformation that of course is most acute and most noticeable in the Middle East, where for the first time the freedom deficit that has existed in the Middle East for 60 years is finally being addressed. And yes, it's turbulent. And yes, it's sometimes violent. And yes, it is very, very challenging.

But if you don't believe that the people of the Middle East really do look to a day when they can have stable democracies, just think about the risks that people took in Afghanistan to vote in a country really still very much a couple of centuries behind in terms of infrastructure and development, thanks to 25 years of civil war. But people went out and they voted in huge numbers. I think about the people who voted in Iraq, where terrorists put up signs that said if you vote, you will die. And they voted anyway. Or think about the women of Kuwait who just voted for the first time.

These are people who are seeking the non-negotiable demands of human dignity, as the President has called them. And you have a chance to help them. You have a chance to help them realize their aspirations, and in doing so you have a chance to better secure America. Because there is one thing that we know: When democracy is in retreat, America is vulnerable; and when democracy is on the march, we are more secure.

I hope that every day that you get up, whatever job you are chosen to do, that you will think about the historic circumstances in which you're doing it; and that if you are ever lacking in optimism or lacking in confidence about what can be done, just think about the following.

A couple of months ago, I attended a NATO summit with President Bush in Riga, Latvia. And as the President of the Czech Republic said, "Welcome to the first NATO summit on the territory of the former Soviet Union." If you think for one minute that anybody would have thought that possible in 1947, in 1957, in 1967, '77, or even '87, of course not.

That's how historical transformations work and I'm very glad that each and every one of you has chosen to be a part of it. Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

**MODERATOR:** The Secretary can take a few questions. We'll have her for another 10 minutes.

**QUESTION:** Could you elaborate on how transformational diplomacy might apply in Russia, which I think is unfortunately backsliding away from democracy?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Obviously, I think we've been disappointed in Russia with some of the developments there. Now, to be fair, it's not the Soviet Union. I was in the Soviet Union in 1979 as a student. Let me assure you it's not the Soviet Union.

But some of the hope that we had had for really pluralistic institutions, I think that that is where the real difficulty is, concentration of power in the Kremlin, absence of countervailing institutions and legislature, in an independent judiciary, certainly not a free media. And so that's been, I think, the problem.

So I think the transformational diplomacy there is, of course, to keep talking about this with the government, but also to give hope to and work with nongovernmental institutions, with civil society that is trying to keep the torch alive for these democratic institutions. And so much of the funding that we have put into Russia is for democracy promotion. We have fought very hard to make sure that the Russian NGO law did not unnecessarily burden NGOs. As a matter of fact, I just talked to the Russian Foreign Minister about some of the reporting requirements that appear to be making it hard for these NGOs to operate.

So working with those people -- and I think there's another group that's going to be a natural for us to work with and those are the young entrepreneurs and property owners. You know probably the most popular thing right now in Moscow is to have a 30-year mortgage. Well, these are going to be people who are going to have economic interests they are going to want to defend. And they're going to recognize, ultimately, that you have to defend them by being able to petition the state in an organized way. I think on that basis, you will start to see interest groups grow up and perhaps political movements because right now, the weakness of alternative political parties, political movements is much of the problem.

We also have an opportunity -- there's going to be an election. I know everybody thinks that it will be a selection, not an election, but we're going to stand for the principles of free and fair elections there, for access of the opposition to the media and so forth. And let's see what kind of debate actually happens in Russia as that election goes forward.

**QUESTION:** I'm a Presidential Management Fellow in the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. One of the things I've noticed in the short time that I've been there is that sometimes the toughest audiences that we face when we talk about advancing human rights and democracy is audiences that are within this Department itself. And so I'm wondering if you can talk a little bit about what you're doing among senior staff to cultivate a more collective sense of our foreign policy and what that entails.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes. Well, thank you. Yes, people are asked to do multiple things and I'm not surprised that there are sometimes debates about whether or not something that we're pursuing with a particular government, if there's a problem if we're pursuing simultaneously a democracy agenda.

But let me tell you, I don't see them as in conflict. In fact, I think if we don't pursue the democracy agenda, if we don't insist on democratic change in some of the places where it's most difficult to bring about, then we're going to pull ourselves right back into the old policies that let the kind of stagnation in the Middle East that has produced the extremism -- that really has become the only form of political expression is this extremism. And so when we talk about it among senior staff, I don't ever talk about the competition or the conflict between our democracy promotion and our interests. I think you would be hard-pressed to hear that I've ever said that, because I see them as one.

Now I understand that we have priorities with countries. For instance, I'm disappointed in what has happened in Egypt since the presidential elections, even though I think the presidential elections were kind of watershed and Egypt will never go back to a time when there can't be criticism of a candidate after what happened there. But I was very disappointed in the way the parliamentary elections -- we raised those issues with the Egyptians privately and publicly. But it doesn't mean that we can't continue to work with the Egyptians to try to bring a two-state solution to the Middle East or to deal with the problems that we are having with Iranian assertiveness.

So I think that we can't see them in conflict. We have to recognize that we're going to be working with countries that we

also have concerns about their democratic development, but we have to do both.

**QUESTION:** I am going to Dhaka, Bangladesh and I'm currently in language training. And I read an interesting article this week about the tensions between the Pentagon and the State Department about trying to get more Foreign Service officers into Iraq to take over some of the jobs that the military is currently doing, and then the State Department's stance is to try to give us as much training in language and tradecraft as possible.

So I wonder if you could talk about that tension and how you think it could best be reconciled.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes, thank you. Well, first of all, I think there's a little bit of misunderstanding of some of the articles about what's actually going on here. This relates to a fairly specific issue, which is that in order to surge civilian assets to do things like -- to work in the PRTs, we need certain, very specialized skills; for instance, agronomists and engineers. We don't have any in the Foreign Service. That's not what we do.

The Foreign Service positions, the State Department positions for that surge have been identified and filled. So what we agreed to do was to oversee the recruitment of civilians from other government agencies and, frankly, other government agencies don't have that many either, and from the population -- the national population at large. And we need the military to temporarily, for six months or so, take those positions so that we can go ahead and get started with the surge while we recruit those civilians.

Now what will really help this in the long run, and it's why the President has proposed this civilian reserve corps, is if there were comparable to what there is there in the military, the reservists, if there were civilians who were already vetted, already trained, working their jobs in Nebraska or Alabama or wherever, but when there was a need to surge civilians, they would be prepared to and would have volunteered to go and be the agronomist or the city planner. That's really the structure that we need.

The Foreign Service is doing its job in Iraq and Afghanistan and other unaccompanied posts. And I want this to be fundamentally understood, our people are out there on the front lines, they are going out into tough places like Anbar Province, they're going out into tough places in Afghanistan. They're serving and they're serving bravely. They're taking mortar fire just like everybody else. They're taking convoys that are often under attack. These people are brave and they're courageous and they range from junior officers to senior officers to mid-level officers.

These people are doing -- the Foreign Service has stepped up to do these jobs. We are -- for summer -- for this summer, we have 87 percent of the people identified to take the jobs in Iraq. So let me assure you the Foreign Service is doing its job. We do need other civilians with expertise that you will not find in the Foreign Service to be able to go and do this and I hope that we can get a civilian reserve corps, because I agree completely that these are not jobs that should be done by the military; they should be done by civilians. But you're never going to be able to keep that kind of expertise, certainly not in the State Department and probably not in the U.S. Government as a whole.

**QUESTION:** With regard to our public image and our transformational diplomacy efforts, how can we keep our crucial and oldest allies from the perception that they're being slighted with as we refocus our diplomatic efforts?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, thank you. It's a very good point because I didn't want to send an anti-Europe message with



the reposition of diplomats out of Europe. But you know, most people have understood it. In fact, I've gotten a number of people from other foreign offices in Europe who have said, "Tell us what it is you did because we need to do some of the same."

I think people understand that for a variety of reasons, we have built up -- and I don't mean to suggest this is a huge problem, but we have built up large diplomatic services in places where now, we do a different kind of work than we once did. And so I have not found it to be a problem. What we have been trying to do is to enlist our allies in the transformational work abroad so that when I go to NATO meetings these days, it's really not much to talk about NATO qua NATO. It's about how are we going to deal with Kosovo and transform that situation, how are we going to work together in Afghanistan. It's remarkable that NATO is actually in Afghanistan. We used to, you know, talk about out of area. Nobody's talking about out of area now. We're in Afghanistan.

So I think the goal and the way to keep together here is to recognize that the transatlantic relationship is not really about itself any longer. It's a solid relationship based on solid values and solid institutions, it's about taking that relationship and using it to transform places like the Middle East and work together in Africa and so forth. And so that's how we've handled it and so far, the response has been pretty good.

**QUESTION:** How do you see us advancing your goals in transformational diplomacy in the countries and communities in which we will be living?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, thank you for asking that because you -- in some cases, you may be the only American people see. You have to recognize that that's the case. And I think that when you're serving abroad, it means that you, I hope, are reaching out to -- first of all, let me just say a word about our Foreign Service Nationals, that you're reaching out to our Foreign Service Nationals.

You know, they are the crown jewel around the globe. They are people who come to work with us, who get to know us. If you have Foreign Service Nationals working with you or for you, I hope that you will take the time not just to treat them with respect -- that's a patronizing comment -- but rather, to treat them as a partner and to take their views and their ideas about how to work in their countries. After all, they are the people who will go back to their villages and their towns and say what it's really like to be with an American.

And so I think you can start with the Foreign Service Nationals. But, of course, obviously, if you're out, you will be working with other groups and with nongovernmental institutions, with civil society, and that's really, I think, the link. While it's important to work with government, I think the work that our diplomats do with faith-based institutions on healthcare or with children's groups or some of the work that I've seen done with little league teams, that those are some of the most important things we can do.

If you're here in America, I suggest that you also have a transformational job to do and that's in your neighborhoods wherever you live and where you -- we've got to talk about the importance of international engagement and international politics to America. We can't afford to have the American people lose interest in the world. We need the American people -- or to have a negative view that everything we're doing in the world is just so hard that maybe we'll just turn away from it.

And so you, because they will look at you and they'll say, "You work for the State Department," and you'll say yes and maybe someplace in there, to have a chance to really talk about what it is we're trying to achieve and to be a bit of a beacon also here in America.

**QUESTION:** My question concerns American presence posts. Have you been able to evaluate the progress of recently established presence posts in such places as Indonesia, Egypt and Turkey? And how do you see such posts functionally evolving over the course of our careers?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes. Well, I have not had a chance to have a formal evaluation of them, although anecdotally, people like them very much. For instance, I know that the Koreans came to me and said, "Can you put one of these American presence posts in some of these places? We're hearing about them." I think they've suggested Pusan as a possible place. So word's sort of getting out there that this is a good thing to do.

I think it would be great fun to serve as a kind of, as I said, intrepid diplomat out there on your own, really in places that are -- or essentially places that you can move around pretty easily, places where you can be involved with a population where maybe you don't have to write a lot of reports when you go back, although you write some reports, I hope, (laughter) but -- so that you really are having kind of free movement around the population. And I think that would be a wonderful experience which you could then bring back to your foreign service to know how to engage a population in that way.

I hope that each and every one of you, at some point in time, might get to serve in that kind of place. I read a story about our man in Juba, which was very, very interesting to me because that's actually a very tough place, of course, to be, but a place where he seemed to be making a difference and almost making a difference single-handedly. So I think it's a great opportunity and I hope you'll all have a chance to be involved in it as well as in more traditional posts.

Thank you for what you're going to do, thank you for what you've already done, and thank you for your service to the country.

(Applause.)

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