



Remarks With Ghanaian President John Agyekum Kufuor

Secretary Condoleezza Rice

Washington, DC
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SECRETARY RICE: Thank you very much. You may be seated.

Well, I'm absolutely delighted and honored to welcome all of you to the Department of State in order to honor and celebrate the great friendship of the people of Ghana and the people of the United States of America. And we do so with our great friend, the President of Ghana, John Kufuor, and the First Lady of Ghana, Mrs. Theresa Kufuor. The United States of America has no better friend than Ghana, and Ghana could have no better president than John Kufuor. (Applause.)

This morning, as President Bush and Mrs. Bush welcomed the Kufuors to the South Lawn of the White House, many words were said about the special nature of this relationship and about the special relationship between President Kufuor and President Bush. There's much that I would like to say but little that I can add, particularly because I'm standing between you and lunch. (Laughter.) But I would just like to say a few words.

Obviously, this is a relationship that goes back to Ghana's independence. It is a relationship that was born of the fact that the United States stood with Ghana. But also, it goes back much, much further than that. Because, of course, those of us who are descendants of slaves -- many can, of course, trace their ancestral home to Ghana. I don't think I've ever been more moved than seeing the slave castle there and looking out from President Kufuor's window to see along the coast where American slaves were undoubtedly taken into captivity, the sons and daughters of Africa stolen -- literally stolen, but stolen to come here to America and to be one of the founding populations of America.

Indeed, America was founded by Europeans and Africans together. And in that founding, we forged a relationship; we forged a relationship of blood and tears. Now, we forge on that basis a relationship of hope and promise. And indeed, as President Bush has said, it was those stolen sons and daughters of Africa that perhaps helped the United States to reach the fulfillment of the great words that all men and women are created equal.

Now, as Americans return to Ghana, not just from that ancestral past, but to help a new generation of Ghanaians find a brighter future, I am very proud to have been a part of President Bush's team, as we have worked through the Millennium Challenge, through the AIDS relief, through malaria relief, through girls' education, and through the African Growth and Opportunity Act to perhaps help to make the future a little brighter for Ghanaians. But the truth of the matter -- (applause) -- the truth of the matter is that it could not have been done were it not for the will and the strength and the determinations of Ghanaians themselves. This is in every way a partnership. And Mr. President, Mrs. Kufuor, members of your delegation, we welcome you here as a sign of that partnership. We welcome you here because Ghana has made good choices about governance and democracy and fighting corruption and providing for its people. And the United States of America has been proud to be your partner and at your side. And as this Administration leaves office, I'm glad you noticed that that -- you knew that that was not an applause line (laughter.) As we leave office, I think that there is nothing of which all of us are more proud than what we have been able to achieve with the peoples of Africa.

I just have to end by saying that our trip to Ghana was really spectacular. We saw the great development projects that were being carried out there. And many of the people who were carrying them out are in this room. We saw the wonderful Ghanaian people, including a great little t-ball match between Ghanaian kids. But we did something else -- we danced. (Laughter.) And that, too, says something about Ghana, says something about the culture of its people, the hospitality of its people and, perhaps most importantly, the genuine joy of its people.

And so Mr. President, Mrs. Kufuor, I would like to raise a toast to you and to the people of Ghana, to our friendship of the past and our friendship of the future.

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