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GEORGE W. BUSH

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Press Gaggle by Dana Perino and Dan Price, Assistant to the President for International Economic Affairs and Deputy National Security Advisor on G8 Leaders Meeting with African Countries

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MS. PERINO: So I thought Dan would come and give you a readout of today, and a little preview about tomorrow, answer a few of your questions before he has to go back to yet more meetings tonight, that he has to do with his other sherpas.

MR. PRICE: More sherpa meetings. So today the President and the other G8 leaders met with representatives of African nations. These nations were Senegal and Ghana, South Africa, Tanzania, Nigeria, Algeria, Ethiopia, and the chair of the African Union. They met to discuss global issues, including health, food, trade and investment.

One thing that was very clear from these meetings, there was universal emphasis by virtually all African leaders on the essential need for G8 countries to honor their past commitments in respect of health and development assistance. This was a point of emphasis by virtually every African speaker.

And as you know, the President, too, is concerned about accountability, not only for promises that had been made, but importantly, building accountability into the system going forward, so that we don't just account this year for promises that have been made in the past, but going forward that there be accountability mechanisms for the various commitments that the G8 has made, in respect, for example, of AIDS, malaria, polio, corruption, education, et cetera.

The leaders -- the African leaders also put a great deal of emphasis on the food situation, and the need to boost productivity. And they stressed the need for new technologies and for educating agricultural scientists and for having access not only to immediate food assistance, but non-food assistance, such as fertilizer and high yielding seeds. In this regard, the President again emphasized the importance of biotechnology, and in particular the importance of the developed world, all of the developed world opening its markets to crops grown with biotechnology, so that poor African farmers may have the benefit of these seeds and the domestic increase in crop yields, and have access to foreign markets.

The African leaders identified the importance of economic growth through trade and investment, acknowledging that part of this involves creating an attractive business climate at home, but also

involves getting new market access through the Doha Round; market access not only to developed country markets, but to the rapidly growing major emerging markets, such as Brazil, India and China.

The President emphasized in this meeting the importance of concluding a Doha Round this year, but a Doha Round in which both developed and major developing countries open their markets to help lift millions out of poverty.

I think those of you who have followed this administration on issues of health and development know that the President is quite passionate on these issues, and this came across in the meeting. He cares deeply about improving the lives of the less fortunate by alleviating poverty and disease, and by confronting these global challenges head on. The President is a firm believer in the power of collective political will to make a difference, especially when that will is translated into concrete actions.

There was also a good discussion about Zimbabwe. All of the leaders are troubled by what's happening there. The African leaders have of course been working their own diplomacy in the region, and they talked about that. And as you note, there will be a discussion this week in the U.N. Security Council about Zimbabwe and the possibility of a Security Council resolution.

Looking forward to tomorrow -- tomorrow is the day of just G8 meetings. It will begin with a discussion in the morning on the world economy, which will cover such issues as credit markets, the financial situation, oil prices, the need for further liberalization of trade and investment regimes, the need to push back on protectionism. At lunch there will be a discussion of energy security and climate change. In the afternoon there will be a discussion among the G8 on development and Africa. And in the evening will be a discussion of political issues, such as Zimbabwe, North Korea, Burma, Sudan, the Middle East, Iran, and other issues that leaders will be discussing.

Q Can I go to the accountability question?

MR. PRICE: Yes.

Q On Africa aid, is the U.S. going to be getting -- within the G8 -- an agreement on accountability? Are people going to pledge? Should we expect that?

MR. PRICE: I think you will see a good discussion among leaders about the need for accountability. And we are hopeful that that discussion will be reflected in a declaration and in reports that underscore the recognition by all G8 members of the need for accountability, and you will see concrete demonstrations of that.

Q Okay, so we're going to get a pledge for that, then. Can I --

Q They're going to agree on progress reports?

MR. PRICE: I think it is certainly our hope that there will be agreement on that.

Q Can you -- hope is one thing, is it a little stronger than hope?

MS. PERINO: It's just a little bit -- they haven't even had their meeting yet. I think as much as we'd like to be a little more concrete for you guys, I think we should let the leaders meet first.

MR. PRICE: Certainly, as I said, it has certainly been a theme and issue that the United States has been advocating since the very beginning of this G8 process.

Q And a related question: What exactly, or can you elaborate a little bit what exactly has the President been telling the so-called laggards about their writing checks? What's he been saying?

MR. PRICE: The President, as he did today, has been underscoring the need for the G8, for each G8 member to honor the commitments that it made, and be in a position to demonstrate how those commitments are being honored.

Q Has he been blunt?

MR. PRICE: The President has made his views known very clearly.

Q I was going to change the subject to Zimbabwe. Can you help us understand what exactly the discussion focused on? And it seemed, based on what the President and the Tanzanian leader said, there are differences there. Can you elaborate?

MR. PRICE: I think all of the leaders recognized that we're facing a very tragic situation in Zimbabwe. And I think there was also broad recognition that any way forward must reflect the will of the people of Zimbabwe who voted for change in the March election and a solution that brings peace to that troubled country.

Q Can I ask you specifically -- President Kikwete said, "The only thing we differ on is the way forward." Then subsequent to that, he said, "You have some things you want us to do, we have some things we want you to do." But he wasn't specific. It was very clear from their talk to us that they had differences, and it seemed implied that the differences were over President Bush's plan for sanctions. So is that correct?

MS. PERINO: I think you should be careful about "President Bush's plan for sanctions," okay, because this is not a President Bush versus the world situation. As you just heard Dan say, it's been reflected around the world, not just in the United States, but is a recognition that what is happening in Zimbabwe is tragic for the people there, and it is certainly become the single largest security challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa.

There are discussions about how do you move forward, and one of them is the U.N. Security Council resolution that's going to be discussed. Sanctions is one of the tools in the tool box in order to move forward. People might have different positions on whether or not there should be sanctions, but it's not a President Bush versus the world.

Q Okay, that's fair enough. The President, it did seem to me, took the lead in his recent announcement over a weekend that he was calling on the U.N. to do this. But despite that, were there differences over the question of whether the best way forward is to proceed with sanctions?

MR. PRICE: There were differences. Not all leaders are there yet, in respect of sanctions.

Q Can you talk about --

Q Are we talking about the African leaders?

MR. PRICE: Correct.

Q So that's what he was saying?

MR. PRICE: I don't want to interpret what either of them --

Q It was really hard to understand, because we took the transcript, it was really hard --

MS. PERINO: Well, I think you can -- I think it's a very complex situation, and I don't think that there is -- there aren't concrete answers yet, in terms of the way forward.

Q But he kept referring to, like, "we" or "they" and we weren't sure who the "we" and the "they" were.

Q Well, there was the AU -- is he speaking on behalf of the AU?

Q Is he speaking as AU leader, or was he speaking as President of Tanzania?

MR. PRICE: You'll have to ask him.

Q Dan, one of the leaders who has been opposed to sanctions has been President Mbeki of South Africa. What did the President say today, if anything, to President Mbeki to try to encourage him to join the other nations that do think that sanctions are the correct way to go?

MR. PRICE: Without getting into details of who said what to whom, I come back to the point that there was a very good discussion among the leaders, with virtually every leader participating in this discussion. And as Dana said and as I said, it is fair to say that not all African leaders are in a position to support sanctions at this time.

MS. PERINO: But that doesn't mean that they don't all agree that the situation is tragic and needs to be dealt with. And I do think that there has been significant effort -- time and discussion spent on trying to figure out -- on behalf of the African leaders trying to figure out how do we move forward, what's the best way to do that. And some have talked about a power sharing arrangement, but what would that look like? I think there are just a lot of unanswered questions right now, and they're spending a little bit

of time trying to figure it out, because it's not something that you can just -- it's not instant solution, just add water. It's going to take a little bit of time.

Q Is power sharing a real -- kind of a viable option, or --

MS. PERINO: I think it's one of the questions that -- how do you reflect the will of the people of Zimbabwe and also have a power-sharing arrangement, in a way that --

Q I understood that that was --

MS. PERINO: Well, there are some people that really -- that think that is possible, but then you think, well, what is the makeup of it; you have the MDC party, the Tsvangirai Party and the Mugabe party in some way figure out a way to share power without Mugabe -- is that a possible situation, because the legitimate -- the government not being legitimate right now? A lot of those things are still being worked out. I think some people still think it might be possible to do a power sharing arrangement, and I just think that it's a little premature to say.

Q I thought that had sort of faded.

MS. PERINO: I don't think so, I don't think so. I think some people still think that that is possible.

Q Has Bush weighed in on that?

MS. PERINO: We're waiting to see what it would look like. We don't believe the current situation -- well, clearly the current situation does not reflect the will of the people -- if you go back to the March 29th election, with the MDC party winning 48 percent of the vote, which was not quite a majority, which forced it into a runoff, and then the runoff became a sham election.

But I think "sham" is one way to describe it, but I think it doesn't reflect the horrors that the people that supported the Tsvangirai party went through, including deaths and displacements, maimings, kidnappings -- I could go on.

So I think that the African leaders are trying to figure out how best to help -- be constructive and try and solve the situation for their region. But I would point you to also the African -- I'm sorry, the European leaders. And their involvement and their leadership on this issue has been very important. And if you look at the first U.N. Security Council resolution that came out, which was a unanimous resolution, it included South Africa. And so that was a strong statement. And the question is then how do you continue to move forward, given where we find ourselves now.

Q Can you explain what President Kikwete meant when he said you have -- we have some things we want you to do and you have some things that you want us to do?

MR. PRICE: No, I really don't have anything for you on that.

MS. PERINO: I don't know what he was referring to. I don't know what he was referring to.

Q Did they just want to show that while they had differences on the sanction issue that the discussion was open and they were together moving forward on something to do about this?

MS. PERINO: Well, I think the point of them coming to talk -- to have a readout meeting -- of that meeting was for a couple of reasons. One, there's a lot of issues that the G8 is dealing with in regards to Africa, from food and energy, clean energy development, water projects, the accountability issue that we just talked about.

MR. PRICE: Infrastructure, health, education.

MS. PERINO: NTDs -- neglected tropical diseases. There's a wide range of issues. And this G8 summit, in many regards, as it has in the past, has been overtaken by discussions about climate change, which is a very important topic and one that we will spend a considerable amount of time on tomorrow. But this was a chance for the President to say, here I am with my friend, President Kikwete, who I met just in February of 2008, and we had very good discussions on a range of issues. He's representing the African Union. And it was a chance for him to announce that he'd invited President Kikwete to the White House and he'll be here at the end of August -- August 29th, I think is the date.

MR. PRICE: And if I could say, there was very little discussion in these two sessions about climate change. The focus really was on health, on agriculture, on education, on infrastructure development. And some of the observations that came from African leaders about climate change were more or less focused on what the G8 could do in terms of in the area of science and technology, developing technologies and making those available in Africa and the developing world.

Q So can you -- I'm sorry, can you try to be a little clearer about where you go from here, then? You say that the African leaders are trying to figure out a power-sharing agreement, and you want to wait and see what that would look like.

MS. PERINO: Well, I said some are. I don't want to put -- where we are right now is thinking through the push for the next U.N. Security Council resolution, okay, because that's coming up sooner than later. And then considering other tools that are in the toolbox, which could include sanctions. And then also working with people around the world, our allies around the world who have all expressed concern about the tragedy that is Zimbabwe today.

That's as clear as we can get, and that's as concrete as I can get for you today.

Q Does the resolution to come up this week at the Security Council include the travel ban, arms embargo, et cetera?

MS. PERINO: I think there could be separate -- remember, this is what -- the President asked the Secretaries of State and Treasury to look at sanctions that they could do or -- whatever they could bring up. And I think that it's a little premature still for that. They're still working through those issues.

But I haven't have an update, I don't think, but I don't know if it's happening.

Q The draft also included -- the draft that was circulated by the U.S. addressed those ideas as well.

MS. PERINO: Those are certainly all tools within the toolbox that could be used, including, as you mentioned, the travel ban.

Q Today, were these meetings -- the G8 and the African leaders -- and then did President Bush have a separate meeting alone with President Kikwete?

MS. PERINO: No.

Q Okay, this was President Bush and Mr. Kikwete were giving us a readout from that large meeting. Can you just say how long that meeting went on and can you characterize the tenor of it?

MR. PRICE: Yes, it went from 12:30 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., and then there was a break for approximately 20 minutes, 25 minutes. And then it went from roughly 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

And, as I said, I mean, a number of your questions have focused on one particular topic, but -- and that was an important part of the discussion -- but by far an overriding theme throughout these sessions was the need for accountability and the need to keep promises made.

And the tenor of the discussion was very open. I think every leader spoke, and it was -- I think the G8 leaders found it interesting to hear the perspective of the African leaders on the development situation and on the situation in these key areas of health, infrastructure, trade and investment. And I think the African leaders found it interesting to get the perspectives of the G8 members on where they were on honoring commitments and their ideas on trade and investment and on how accountability could be enhanced.

Q What is Russia's position on sanctions?

MS. PERINO: Not going to comment on anybody's in particular.

Q Can you give us a preview on Merkel?

MS. PERINO: Merkel bilat tomorrow?

MR. PRICE: You know, Merkel is tomorrow. I don't know that there is --

MS. PERINO: Well, obviously President Bush and -- sorry, I can't remember the schedule -- President Bush and Prime Minister -- or Chancellor Merkel, excuse me -- met just three weeks ago --

Q Three or four weeks.

Q I think they were last month.

MS. PERINO: So, obviously -- and they have a range of issues that they always discuss, including economic issues, including energy and climate change, issues of Africa. In the runup to this meeting and in their meeting just three weeks ago, they talked a lot about the G8 and about Africa accountability, neglected tropical diseases. They'll talk about Iran, I'm sure. And she also is very interested in North Korea, as well, just in terms of -- as something of interest.

Q What do you think was the -- is there a main message out of the Bush-Merkel meeting tomorrow, do you think? Climate?

MS. PERINO: I think it's a range of issues.

MR. PRICE: I think it's going to be -- yes, it's going to be continued close cooperation on a range of global issues -- economic, security and development.

Q How come they have to meet again? They just met.

MR. PRICE: How come they have to meet again? I think there was a --

MS. PERINO: The President and Chancellor Merkel have established a very good relationship. They've got deep ties, and they look forward to working together because there's a lot of important issues that are facing us, such as the ones that we've talked about today, but others as well, including Iran. And I'm sure that they'll talk about that.

Q I hate to keep pressing about Zimbabwe, but would it be fair to say that the President tried to encourage --

MS. PERINO: We'll just make it the last question.

Q -- the President tried to encourage African leaders to consider sanctions as a way forward to deal with the situation in Zimbabwe but found that not all the leaders are accepting of that idea? Would that be a fair summarization of that issue in this meeting?

MR. PRICE: No, it wouldn't, because that suggests the discussion was focused on trying to persuade -- on some people trying to persuade others to adopt a particular tool. That wasn't the nature of the discussion. It was a broader discussion about the situation in Zimbabwe; how it is grave; how the international community needs to come together to, as I said, try to find a solution that reflects the will of the people of Zimbabwe who voted for change and brings lasting peace to that country.

Q And there was no resolution on what that should be?

MS. PERINO: Correct.

MR. PRICE: Correct.

MS. PERINO: I was wrong. The Merkel meeting is tomorrow at 9:00 a.m., but there's -- the Brown meeting is not tomorrow. Just the rest of the day tomorrow is all G8 working sessions.

Q Is there a Brown meeting?

MR. PRICE: I don't think so.

Q I don't think there was.

MS. PERINO: I think there was a discussion about having one, but then we didn't need to have one since they just met, so -- but then which would lead you to ask me again, then why does he have to meet with Merkel? But I don't know.

Q Can I ask a quick climate change?

MS. PERINO: Okay, and then we've got to go.

Q Yes, I know, I understand. Do you expect tomorrow that the leaders will come together on a numbers answer on whether they will back a long-term number, 50-in-2050 reduction?

MR. PRICE: I don't want to prejudge the outcome of their discussion. There will be a number of issues under discussion by the G8. Certainly long-term goal will be one of them. But there will also be discussion on the clean technology fund and other funding mechanisms to deal with deploying clean technologies in the developing world. There will be discussion on what actions the G8 can take as the G8 to help advance the U.N. negotiations, what actions the G8 can take as the G8 on climate, including discussion of efficiency, including discussion of the desirability of eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers to clean energy goods and services, how to give that momentum. But, as I said, I don't want to prejudge the outcome of their discussions, although the issue of long-term goal will be one of the items to be discussed.

MS. PERINO: You might not have seen it yet, but Jim Connaughton went to the filing center and there's a transcript in which he goes through this again for all of you.

MR. PRICE: Pardon me?

MS. PERINO: Connaughton's briefing. Transcript just came out, but I don't know if they had a chance to see it.

MR. PRICE: Great.

Q Thank you very much.

END 5:35 P.M. (Local)

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