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Office of the Press Secretary
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President Bush Visits Paris, Speaks to Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
Paris, France

[Trip to Europe 2008](#)

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3:36 P.M. (Local)

PRESIDENT BUSH: Thank you very much. Mr. Secretary General, thank you for your hospitality. It's good to see you again. I remember our days together in the la frontera de Tejas y México, when I was the Governor of Texas and you were one of the leading officials of Mexico. And it's great to see you here in Paris, también su esposa. Madam Secretary, thank you; Ambassadors; World War II veterans, and distinguished guests. Laura and I are having a wonderful trip through Europe, and we are so pleased to be back in Paris. It's been a little more than four years since we were last in Paris together, and a lot has changed. Laura wrote a book. (Laughter.) Our daughter got married. (Laughter.) My dad jumped out of an airplane. (Laughter.) And my hair is a lot grayer. (Laughter.)

What has not changed is the friendship between America and France. Recent history has made clear that no disagreement can diminish the deep ties between our nations. France was America's first friend. And over the centuries, our nations stood united in moments of testing -- from the Marne, to Omaha Beach to the long vigil of the Civil War* [sic]. After September the 11th, 2001, a major French newspaper published a headline my nation will never forget: "Nous sommes tous Américains." America is grateful to the people of France. We're proud to call you friends. And our alliance will stand the test of time.



We gather to commemorate a landmark in the moment of that alliance, and that's the 60th anniversary of the start of the Marshall Plan. In 1948, the United States Congress passed, President Harry Truman signed, legislation to fund this unprecedented effort. Just steps from here at the Chateau de la Muette -- the headquarters for the organization that implemented the Marshall Plan and worked with our allies to promote open economies and strong free market policies across Europe. Through this building flowed "friendly aid" that helped renew the spirit of the continent -- what one magazine called "the D-Day for peace." From this building came money for fuel and vehicles and machinery that helped bring Europe's economies back to life. And in this building were written the first chapters of European unity -- a story of cooperation that eventually resulted in institutions like NATO and the European Union and the organization that carries the spirit of the Marshall Plan into a new century, the OECD.

Marshall Plan was the source of aid and assistance, and it wisely gave Europeans a leading role in reconstruction. By doing so, the Plan conveyed a message of partnership and respect. And by offering help to nations across Europe --including communist nations -- the Plan also had the effect of clarifying the new ideological struggle that was unfolding.

When he announced the Plan, Secretary Marshall made it clear it was "directed not against any country or doctrine, but against hunger and poverty and desperation and chaos." With these words, he showed that we stood for a future of unity and prosperity and freedom throughout Europe. Yet the leaders in the Kremlin denied the Marshall Plan aid to the suffering people of the Soviet Union and its captive nations. What followed was nearly a half century of repression and fear in the East, until at last freedom arrived. In an ironic final scene, the Soviets did accept some Western assistance after all: As the last Secretary General [sic] sat down to sign the papers

ending the Soviet Union, he discovered that his pen was out of ink, so he borrowed one from an American news crew.

In the years since the Cold War ended, Europe has taken inspiring strides toward a continent whole, free, and at peace. Over the past eight years, we have watched nations from the Baltics to the Balkans complete the transition from the Soviet bloc to the European Union. We've seen former members of the Warsaw Pact proudly sign the treaty to join NATO. We witnessed an Orange Revolution in Ukraine, a Rose Revolution in Georgia, a declaration of independence in Kosovo, and the rise of a democratic movement in Belarus. America admires these brave stands for liberty. We look forward to the day when all free people on this continent take their rightful place in the institutions of Europe.



With these changes has come a revitalization between the relationship -- of the relationship between Europe and the United States. Instead of focusing on issues within Europe, we're increasingly looking to matters of global reach. Instead of dwelling on our differences, we're increasingly united in our interests and ideals. On my first trip abroad of my second term as President, I traveled to Brussels and called for "a new era of transatlantic unity." This week, I have seen the outlines of that new era. In leaders like Berlusconi and Brown and Merkel and Sarkozy, I see a commitment to a powerful and purposeful Europe that advances the values of liberty within its borders, and beyond. And when the time comes to welcome the new American President next January, I will be pleased to report to him that the relationship between the United States and Europe is the broadest and most vibrant it has ever been.

We see this broad and vibrant relationship in the expansive agenda for our meetings this week:

America and Europe are cooperating to open new opportunities for trade and investment -- and we're determined to help make this the year the world completes an ambitious Doha Round.

America and Europe are cooperating to address the twin challenges of energy security and climate change while keeping our economies strong. We will continue working to diversify our energy supplies by developing and financing new clean energy technologies. We will continue working toward an international agreement that commits every major economy to slow, stop, and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases.



America and Europe are cooperating to widen the circle of development and prosperity. We lead the world in providing food aid, improving education for boys and girls, and fighting disease. Through the historic commitments of the United States and other G8 countries, we are working to turn the tide against HIV/AIDS and malaria in Africa. To achieve this noble goal, all nations must keep their promises to deliver this urgent aid.

America and Europe are cooperating on our most solemn duty of all -- protecting our citizens. From New York and Washington, to London and Madrid, to Copenhagen and Amsterdam, we have seen terrorists and extremists rejoice in the murder of the innocent. So America and Europe are applying the tools of intelligence and finance and law enforcement and diplomacy, and -- when necessary -- military power to break up terror networks and deny them safe havens. To protect the people of Europe from the prospect of ballistic missile attacks emanating from the Middle East, we're developing a shared system of missile defense.

These measures are critical to the success in the fight against terror. Yet as in the Cold War, we must also prevail in a wider struggle -- the battle of ideas. On one side are all who embrace the fundamental tenets of civilization -- the natural right to liberty, freedom of conscience and dissent, and the obligation of the strong to protect the weak. On the other side are men who place no value on life, allow no room for dissent, and use terror to impose their harsh ideology on as many people as possible.

Ultimately, the only way to defeat the advocates of this ideology is to defeat their ideas. So the central aim of our

foreign policy is to advance a more hopeful and compelling vision, especially in the broader Middle East, a vision on the ideals of liberty and justice and tolerance and hope. These ideals are the foundation of France's Declaration of the Rights of Man and America's Declaration of Independence. Yet these ideals do not belong to our nations alone. They are universal ideals. And the lesson of history is that by extending these ideals -- it's more than a moral obligation, that by expending these -- extending these ideals is the only practical and realistic way to protect -- to provide our security and to spread the peace.

The rise of free and prosperous societies in the broader Middle East is essential to peace in the 21st century, just as the rise of a free and prosperous Europe was essential to peace in the 20th century. So Europe and America must stand with reformers, democratic leaders, and millions of ordinary people across the Middle East who seek a future of hope and liberty and peace.

In Afghanistan, we must stand with a brave young democracy determined to defeat al Qaeda and the Taliban. NATO has accepted an historic mission in Afghanistan. And I applaud the leadership of President Sarkozy, who hosted an international support conference yesterday, and will soon deploy additional forces to Afghanistan. President Sarkozy has said: "What is at stake in that country is the future of our values and that of the Atlantic Alliance." He is right. Our nations must ensure that Afghanistan is never again a safe haven for terror.

In Lebanon, we must stand with those struggling to protect their sovereignty and independence. We must counter the dangers posed by Hezbollah terrorists supported by Iran and Syria. Together, we must show the people of Lebanon that they will have the lasting support of the free world.

In the Holy Land, we must stand with Palestinians and Israelis and all others committed to a two-state solution -- a permanent peace based on two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in security and peace. I firmly believe that with leadership and courage, a peace agreement is possible this year.

In Iran and Syria, we must stand with the decent people of those two nations who deserve much better than the life they have today. We must stand -- we must firmly oppose Iran and Syria's support for terror. And for the security of Europe and for the peace of the world, we must not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.

In Iraq, we must stand with the courageous people who have turned the momentum against al Qaeda and extremists. From Anbar province, to mixed neighborhoods in Baghdad, to the cities of Basra and Mosul, Iraqis of all backgrounds have made it clear they reject extremism and terror. Today, violence in Iraq is down to the lowest point since March of 2004. Civilian deaths are down. Sectarian killings are down. And as security has improved, economic life has been revived. Reconciliation is taking place in communities across that country. And the government in Baghdad is showing strong leadership and progress on the path to a free society. With the terrorists on the run and freedom on the rise, it is in the interests of every nation on this continent to support a stable and democratic Iraq.

Since 2001, the freedom movement has been advancing in the Middle East. Kuwait has had elections in which women were allowed to vote and hold office for the first time. Algeria held its first competitive presidential elections. Citizens have voted in municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, in competitive parliamentary elections in Jordan and Morocco and Bahrain, and in a multiparty presidential election in Yemen.

Liberty takes hold in different places in different ways, so we must continue to adapt and find innovative ways to support those movements for freedom. The way to do so is to stand with civil society groups, human rights organizations, dissidents, independent journalists and bloggers, and others on the leading edge of reform. We have taken important steps in this area, such as the Broader Middle East and North America Initiative** [sic] led by the United States, the Forum for Freedom*** [sic] led by the G8, and the Partnership for Democratic Governance led by the OECD.

Spreading the hope of freedom is the calling of our time. And as we look ahead to the great task, we can be guided by four key principles: unity, confidence, vision, and resolve.

We must go forward with unity. Over the course of the Cold War, the transatlantic alliance faced moments of serious tension -- from the Suez Crisis in the 1950s to the basing of missiles in Europe in the 1980s. Yet with the distance of time, we can see these differences for what they were -- fleeting disagreements between friends. We'll have more disagreements in the decades ahead, but we must never allow those disagreements to undermine our

shared purposes. Dividing democracies is one of our enemies' goals, and they must not be allowed to succeed.

We must go forward with confidence. Our vision of freedom and peace in the Middle East and beyond is ambitious, and of course there will be voices that will say it will never arrive. And that's natural, and it's not new. There were times when it seemed impossible that there could ever be peace between Britain and France, or France and Germany, or between Germany and Poland. Yet today all those nations are at peace, and war in Europe is virtually unimaginable. Something happened in Europe that defied the skeptics and the pattern of the centuries, and that was the spread of human freedom.

In truth, this is a strange time to doubt the power of liberty. Over the past 30 years, the number of democracies has grown from 45 to more than 120, which is the fastest advance of freedom in history. As some of the world's oldest democracies, we should never be surprised by the appeal of freedom. We should stand against the moral relativism that views all forms of government as equally acceptable. And we should be confident that one day, the same determination and desire that brought freedom to Paris and Berlin and Riga will bring freedom to Gaza, Damascus, and Tehran.

We must go forward with a clear vision. In the Cold War, we laid out a vision of liberty and trusted its power to transform societies. And that transformation took place in ways almost no one could foresee. In the late 1970s, for example, many in the West worried we were losing. And then one October afternoon, there came a sign as bright as the white smoke above the Sistine Chapel. Onto the balcony of St. Peter's stepped the first Polish pope in history, who inspired millions behind the Iron Curtain with his call, "Be not afraid." John Paul's election was followed by the elections of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan -- who helped restore confidence in freedom's power, and pursued a policy of peace through strength. And Hishlsoon other remarkable events began unfolding: shipyard workers in Gdansk brought down a government, a jailed playwright in Prague touched off a Velvet Revolution, and citizens of Berlin prayed for the end of a wall and then found the strength to tear it down.

Today's struggle we have again laid out a clear vision of freedom, and it will transform lives in the Middle East and beyond in ways we cannot fully predict. We can see some of the sources of change. Sixty percent of the Middle East population is under 30 years old, and over time these young people -- surfing the Internet, and watching satellite television, and studying abroad -- will demand that their societies fully join the free world. The women's movement in the region is growing, and over time this movement will spark reform, as mothers and daughters make clear that it is costly and unwise to keep half the population from fully contributing to the life of a nation. Middle Eastern immigrants here in Europe are seeing the benefits of freedom, and over time they will insist that the liberty of their adopted homelands also belongs in the lands of their birth. The future of the region is the hands of its people, and those of us who live in free societies must continue to encourage these early stirrings of reform.

Finally, we must go forward with resolve. In the years ahead, there will be periods of difficulty, yet history shows that freedom can endure even the hardest tests. Picture what the future of Europe must have looked like for leaders meeting here in Paris 60 years ago: Moscow had occupied much of Central and Eastern Europe after World War II. Communist parties had threatened governments in Italy and here in France. A severe Soviet threat imperiled Greece and Turkey. A communist coup had toppled the elected government of Czechoslovakia. Stalin ordered a blockade of Berlin.

Yet in America and in free capitals of Europe, we summoned the resolve to prevail. We launched the Marshall Plan and the Berlin Airlift. Then came the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty and the formation of West Germany. Looking back over the decades, we can see that these brave early measures put us on the path to victory in the Cold War.

There are moments today when the situation in places like the Middle East can look as daunting as it did in Europe six decades ago. Yet we can have confidence that liberty once again will prevail. We can have confidence because freedom is the longing of every soul, and it is the direction of history. We can have confidence because men and women in the Middle East and beyond are determined to claim their liberty, just as the people of Europe did in the last century.

Near the end of his life, George Marshall made a final trip to Europe. He came not for a military meeting or a diplomatic summit, but to accept the Nobel Peace Prize. In his address, Marshall offered a bold prediction: "Tyranny inevitably must retire before the tremendous moral strength of the gospel of freedom." Sixty years ago, the faith in liberty helped the gospel of freedom ring out in nations devastated by war. Today, freedom rings out across this continent. And one day, freedom will ring out across the world.

Thank you for having me. God bless.

END 3:56 P.M. (Local)

*Cold War

**North Africa Initiative

***Forum for the Future

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