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Building the Bridge to a More Peaceful Future

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, The World Affairs Council and the Commonwealth Club, San Francisco, CA, Friday, December 6, 2002.

Thanks, Bill [Perry, former Secretary of Defense]. Bill, of course, is now at Stanford and can certainly appreciate this story I used to tell when I was at Johns Hopkins. It came to me from my former boss, [former Secretary of State] George Shultz, who, I understand, may have had something to do with my getting an invitation to speak here today.

George was once asked: “What’s the difference between managing in the private sector, government, and academia?” And he reportedly replied: “It’s sort of like this: “In the private sector you have to be very careful what you ask people to do because they’re going to go out and do it—so be sure you ask them what you want. In government, you don’t have to worry about that—you ask people to do something and check back a couple months later to find that nothing’s happened. In the university, you ask some people to do something, and they look at you strangely and say, ‘Who do you think you are giving us orders?’”

Wednesday night, I returned from a three-day trip to London, Turkey and Brussels. According to my body clock, I think we’re still somewhere over the Atlantic.

I’d like to take a brief look at each city we visited because each one of these three major capitols symbolizes, in its own way, an important dimension of the war on terrorism. Brussels symbolizes the importance of the coalition in the war on terror; London, what we need to do to hopefully peacefully disarm Iraq of its weapons of mass terror; and, finally, Ankara symbolizes the importance of supporting moderate Muslims, in order to build a better world beyond the war on terrorism.

Brussels: The Importance of the Coalition

Brussels, of course, is the headquarters of NATO, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, which is why I stopped there. I remember the first press conference of President George H.W. Bush after the Berlin Wall came down 13 years ago. He was asked pointedly what need there was for NATO now that the threat had seemingly gone away. I remember that many people discounted his wise answer that a threat did remain, and that threat was called “uncertainty.”

Looking back, I recall my own thoughts about NATO at the time in terms of one great fear and two great hopes. First, the fear that NATO, would, in fact, disappear, if the world made the mistake of thinking, like the naysayers at that press conference, that just because the threat we had feared for so long had disappeared, that there was nothing more to worry about—and that the mechanism that had been so effective at dealing with threats—NATO—would no longer be available.

Alongside that fear, I had two great hopes. The first was the hope that NATO could help the new democracies that were emerging in Central and Eastern Europe, to move forward with confidence to build free institutions and representative self-government.

The second hope was that this consolidation of democratic progress in central Europe would not erect a wall against Russia, but instead could build a bridge to Russia—a democratic Russia that would have no security conflicts with NATO. To the contrary, Russia's security concerns would tend to overlap those of the West.

Well, here we are, 13 years later. And history records those two hopes have come true, and the great fear has been overcome. NATO not only survived. It adapted—dealing effectively, with a new kind of threat, the threat of ethnic cleansing and genocide in the Balkans. NATO has grown, welcoming new democracies and encouraging the democratic process by doing so. NATO has established an unprecedented relationship with Russia that has contributed to better relations between Russia and the countries of the Atlantic Alliance, including countries of the former Warsaw Pact.

NATO has demonstrated that an alliance based on common values of freedom and democracy has more staying power than any previous alliance built purely on a narrow coincidence of interests. And now, at the beginning of the 21st Century, NATO has been an instrument not only for solidifying peace in Europe and building bridges across the continent, but also for responding to the extraordinary new threat posed by international terrorism.

The attacks of September 11th not only killed thousands of Americans, but also citizens of some 80 nations. This global attack required a global response. And the world responded. NATO invoked Article V from its charter—the one that states that an attack against one is an attack against all—for the first time in its history in response to something that NATO's founders probably didn't envision, an attack on U.S. soil. Many countries have contributed to the significant progress we've made in the last year. Some have joined us publicly; others have chosen more quiet forms of cooperation.

Seventeen nations have contributed some 6,000 troops to Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and to the international peacekeeping force in Kabul, that country's capitol. Just as important, if not more so, the work of our law enforcement and intelligence agencies with more than 90 countries has resulted in the arrest of some 2,400 dangerous individuals worldwide.

We are not alone in defense of freedom and justice and peace. The coalition will remain vitally important as we face other dimensions in the war on terrorism—a commitment that was reaffirmed—in very strong language—by our allies in Brussels.

London: Coalition's Role in Disarmament of Iraq's Arsenal of Terror

In London, our discussions focused on how to achieve that goal of disarming Iraq's weapons of mass

terror, peacefully if at all possible, but by force if necessary. President Bush and Prime Minister Blair have been the leaders of that effort.

When I saw Prime Minister Blair, he'd just met with a group of 10 Iraqi women, who'd given him their own accounts of the intimidation, torture and murder inflicted on their families by the current regime in Baghdad. It was plain that Blair had been profoundly moved. In Iraq, the experiences of those 10 women, unfortunately, is multiplied a thousand fold. Theirs is part of a larger story told, in part, in a dossier released this week by the British government, outlining brutal human rights abuses in Iraq.

The former U.N. weapons inspector, Scott Ritter, recently spoke about that horror. He did so reluctantly, because, as he puts it, he's "waging peace now." It was a scene more horrible than he was willing to say, but what he did say was bad enough. He described a prison in Baghdad whose stench was unreal. It was an amalgam of "urine, feces, vomit and sweat," a hellhole where prisoners were, as he reports it, "howling and dying of thirst." The oldest prisoners were 12 years old, the youngest, toddlers. Their crime: being children of political enemies of the Iraqi regime. It's hard to imagine a more grim symbol of a regime that rules by terror and which embraces terror as a policy against those who oppose it than a children's prison.

That regime poses a particular danger to the Iraqi people. And it poses a danger to the world at large. But, the fact that Saddam terrorizes his own people is also his greatest weakness, a crucial weakness if it should become necessary to use force to disarm his arsenal of terror. Since Saddam Hussein rules by fear and fear alone, when his people no longer fear him, he will have to fear them.

But we still hope to achieve that disarmament by peaceful means, if at all possible. The UN Security Council's unanimous passage on November 8th of Resolution 1441 opened a decisive final chapter in the eleven-year struggle to achieve that goal. That strong international expression, backed up by the determination of President Bush, the strong bipartisan support from both houses of the U.S. Congress and many expressions of international coalition support, demonstrate a unity of purpose that is essential if we are to convince Baghdad in no uncertain terms that the time has come—once and for all—for Iraq to rid itself of weapons of mass destruction.

Remember, though, the goal is not merely the resumption of inspections in Iraq. The goal is disarmament—the elimination of Iraq's programs to build chemical, biological and nuclear weapons and the means to deliver them.

One of the questions that has been asked frequently, is "whether disarming Iraq would distract the United States from the global war on terror." The answer to that is simple and powerful: disarming Iraq and fighting the war on terror are not merely related. Disarming Iraq's arsenal of terror is a crucial part of winning the war on terror. If we can disarm or defeat a terrorist regime in Baghdad it will be a defeat for terrorists globally.

Let me explain why, and I'll start with words of Secretary of State Colin Powell, when he testified before the House International Relations Committee earlier this year. "Since September 11th, 2001," Secretary Powell said, "the world is a more dangerous place. As a consequence of the terrorist attacks on that day a new reality was born. The world had to recognize that the potential connection between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction had moved terrorism to a new level of threat, a threat that could not be deterred because of this connection, between States developing weapons of mass

destruction, and terrorist organizations willing to use them without any compunction and in an undeterrable fashion.”

The war on terrorism is a global war, and one that must be pursued everywhere. We cannot allow one of the world’s worst dictators to continue developing the world’s worst weapons. We cannot allow one of the world’s most murderous dictators to provide terrorists a sanctuary in Iraq.

Clearly, the peaceful implementation of the U.N.’s will cannot happen without a fundamental change in the attitude of the Baghdad regime. It is not and cannot be the responsibility of the inspectors to scour every square inch of Iraq. It cannot be their responsibility to search out and find every illegal weapon or system and disarm Iraq. That would be a task beyond their means and beyond their responsibility. It is the responsibility of the Baghdad regime to do so. What inspectors can do is give us some confidence if the regime has, in fact, assumed its responsibility, if it has, in fact, declared and destroyed every weapon of mass destruction and every delivery system and disclosed and destroyed every development program.

The bottom line is that Saddam Hussein and his regime must fundamentally change their attitude and finally implement a disarmament that they agreed to more than a decade ago. If the inspectors are forced to go back to the old cat-and-mouse game that the world saw so often before, then the effort to resolve this problem peacefully will have failed.

Let me repeat, we are trying to achieve the disarmament of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction—to eliminate this serious danger to the United States and to the world—if possible, by peaceful means. But, by one means or another, we will eliminate that threat. As President Bush made clear in Prague, Iraq must disarm—“voluntarily, or by force, that goal will be achieved.”

But 11 years of bitter experience with the Baghdad regime makes it clear that Saddam Hussein will give up those weapons only if he believes that doing so is the only way for him and his regime to survive.

The debate is not between those who desire peace and those who love war. I know of no one, no one, except the terrorists, who loves war. The issue we face today as a nation is how best to increase the chances of a peaceful outcome.

Let’s acknowledge that there is a seeming paradox here. The simple truth is that our only hope, and let me emphasize—our only hope—of achieving that peaceful outcome is if we can confront the Iraqi regime with a credible threat of force behind our diplomacy. To be effective, the two must be part of a single policy.

President Kennedy understood that paradox in 1962. When he began negotiating with the Soviet Union for the removal of their missiles from Cuba, he assembled a powerful force to demonstrate that, if the missiles were not removed peacefully, the United States would force their removal. That action was risky, but without it, a peaceful resolution of the Cuban missile crisis would not have been possible.

Some people said back then that Kennedy should have waited until the threat was imminent. We hear that again today. But, we cannot wait to act until the threat is imminent. The notion that we can do so assumes that we will know when the threat is imminent. That wasn’t true even when the United States was presented with the very obvious threat of Soviet missiles in Cuba. As President Kennedy said 40 years ago, “We no longer live in a world where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient

challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril.”

If that was true in 1962, facing a threat that was comparatively easy to see, how much more true is it today against threats developed by terrorists who use the freedom of democratic societies to plot and plan in our midst in secret.

Stop and think for a moment. Just when were the attacks of September 11th imminent? Certainly they were imminent on September 10th, although we didn't know it. In fact, the September 11th terrorists established themselves in the United States long before that date—many months or even a couple of years earlier. Anyone who believes that we can wait until we have certain knowledge that attacks are imminent, has failed to connect the dots that led to September 11th.

As we seek a peaceful removal of the Iraqi threat, we recognize that we would never have succeeded in the United Nations without the support of our coalition partners. And we would have no chance of getting Saddam Hussein to take the UN's seventeenth and latest resolution seriously were it not backed up by the resolve of the brave men and women in America's armed forces and those of many other countries.

When the national security of the United States is at stake, we are not playing games. We cannot tolerate the game that Secretary of State Powell has correctly dismissed as “rope-a-dope in the desert”; the game that the Baghdad regime played so adeptly over the last decade. The President of the United States has made his determination clear; his intentions are unmistakable. If Saddam Hussein and his regime underestimate our will and this coalition, they will have made a big mistake.

Ankara: Moderate Islam and Building a Better World Beyond the War on Terror

My visit to Ankara came during an extraordinary moment in Turkish history. It was fascinating to visit that city at one of the most critical moments in the history of modern Turkey's relationship with the rest of Europe and Turkey's aspirations to join the European Union. Ankara symbolizes the importance of supporting moderate Muslim countries and people, which is critical—in order to work for peace and to build a better world beyond the war on terror.

This is also a crucial time for Turkey because that Muslim majority country has a new government headed by a party that has special appeal to Muslim voters, but which rejects the label Islamist and supports the secular principles of modern Turkey.

Turkey can be a useful model for others in the Muslim world. That is because, in the long run, real success in the war on terror requires building what President Bush referred to in his State of the Union Address last January as a “just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror.”

It is our great good fortune that Turkey, one of our strongest, most reliable and most self-reliant allies, occupies one of the most important strategic crossroads in the world. In Ankara, we had a series of very positive and constructive discussions about Turkey's future—a future of further integration with Europe, a future of economic and democratic progress and a future of freedom and tolerance. I discussed with the head of the new governing party, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and the new prime minister, Abdullah Gul, a range of very important matters including the threat now posed by Iraq's arsenal of terror. With the cooperation of the Turks, and our other allies, Saddam Hussein should make no

mistake: his regime is literally surrounded by the international community.

This unity of international will is enormously important. It is the most hopeful route to achieving a peaceful resolution—with the prompt and complete disarmament of Iraq's most horrible weapons of mass terror.

Turkey's strong commitment to peace is also demonstrated by peacekeeping forces in Bosnia, Kosovo and Afghanistan, including the leadership of the peacekeeping force in Kabul. When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, Turkey was crucial in the coalition that liberated that country. Later Turkey helped us in Operation Provide Comfort, enabling hundreds of thousands of Kurdish refugees to return to their homes. Turkish forces played an important role in Operation Restore Hope that rescued thousands of Somalis from famine.

Modern Turkey also demonstrates that a democratic system is indeed compatible with Islam. In upholding a peaceful vision of Islam's morals and values, Turkey offers a valuable model for Muslim majority countries striving to realize the goals of freedom, secularism and democracy.

Turkey's recent election has been described by some as a "political earthquake," and there is no question that it has transformed Turkey's political landscape. But, most informed observers agree that in this election Turks were casting their votes for the concept of responsible and accountable representation—not, as some fear, seeking to politicize religion.

The ruling AK Party, which is best known for its Muslim identity, rejects the Islamic label. And it has strongly declared its belief in a Turkish destiny in Europe. Its leadership has traveled to 14 European capitals to argue Turkey's case for joining Europe, knowing full well what that will require of Turkey. It has repeatedly expressed its support for the separation of religion and the state, which is the basis of Turkish democracy. If AK continues to carry through with its stated positions, there is no more reason to fear this party than religious-based parties in Europe that combine religious faith with belief in tolerance and religious freedom and the separation of church and state. It was clear in our discussions this week that the new government is working to realize people's best hopes, not their worst fears.

Europe now has a strategic opportunity. Turkey's success could demonstrate to the world's 1.2 billion Muslims that there is a better path—a far better path—than the path of destruction and despair that the terrorists offer.

When Europe's leaders stand by Turkey, they will be making a great contribution to the war on terror and to building what President Bush called "a better world beyond." The stakes are huge.

People who share the values of freedom and democracy that grew out of European civilization are seeing increasingly that these are not just Western values or European values. They are Muslim and Asian and universal values as well. They are the bridge that spans civilizations.

Turkey's democratic model can also serve as an inspiration to Iraqis. It is important to democratic Turkey, and to us, that the people of Iraq should be able to govern themselves democratically, with full respect for the rights of all its citizens, and that the territorial integrity of the country be maintained. A democratic Iraq can stimulate economic growth with neighbors like Turkey and stabilize the region.

Beyond the reach of Baghdad for a decade, Iraqis of the north—predominately Kurds, but Arabs and Turcomans as well—have demonstrated an impressive ability to manage longstanding differences and even develop relatively free and prospering societies. They have done this even though they labor under the same economic sanctions that have applied to the rest of that country.

Once freed from Saddam's tyranny, it is reasonable to expect that Iraq's educated, industrious population of more than 20 million could build a modern society that would be a source of prosperity, not insecurity, for its neighbors.

We may someday look back on this moment in history as the time when the West defined itself for the 21st Century—not in terms of geography or race or religion or culture or language, but in terms of values—the values of freedom and democracy. That great British Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, once said, "Democracy is the worst form of government, except for all of the other systems which have ever been tried." In our time, more and more people who have tried those other systems are turning, in their own different ways, to freedom and democracy.

I'd like to close with one more story about our former Secretary of State George Shultz. Every new ambassador heading out to his or her post would go to George's office for a picture with the Secretary of State to hang proudly in their office in their embassy. Each time a new ambassador came in, George would take them to this enormous globe, some three or four feet tall, that sat on the floor of his office. He'd causally say, "Just for this picture, turn the globe to your country." The new diplomat would eagerly spin the globe around to France or Germany or Mali. And it was at that point that the Secretary of State would say, "No, let me explain something," as he slowly turned that giant globe back to the United States of America.

I have to confess that by the time I went to Indonesia, I'd already heard the story, so I passed the exam. But, I think George's exercise illustrates two very important things. First, the security of the United States must be always be foremost in our mind. And, second, people around the world look to the United States for leadership—whether it be as an example of representative government or in fighting terrorism, the great evil of our time. When we guard our own interests, we help shape a secure and peaceful world.

For people who cherish freedom and seek peace, these are difficult times. But, such times can deepen our understanding of the truth. And this truth we know: the single greatest threat to peace and freedom in our time is terrorism. So this truth we affirm: the future does not belong to the terrorists. The future belongs to those who work to achieve the oldest and noblest dream of all, the dream of peace and freedom.

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