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GEORGE W. BUSH

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For Immediate Release
Office of the Press Secretary
June 6, 2001

Press Briefing by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice on President's Travel to Europe

The James S. Brady Briefing Room

5:35 P.M. EDT

DR. RICE: Good evening, everyone. On Monday evening, June 11, the President will depart on a five-day trip to Europe that will take him to Spain, Belgium, Sweden, Poland, and Slovenia. The President will return on Saturday night, June 16th -- I might add, very late on Saturday night, June 16th.

The President's first official trip to Europe will express his vision of a Europe, whole, free and at peace, and it will include the following themes: NATO as an anchor of U.S. engagement; transatlantic security, and a force for stability and security throughout Europe; the U.S.-EU partnership for security and prosperity; the enlargement of the sphere of freedom, security and democracy. And the President also looks forward to his first meeting with President Putin and advancing an agenda for a constructive and realistic relationship with Russia.

I should note that this the first of two trips to Europe this summer. The G7-G8 meetings in Genoa in July will highlight the global dimension of our relationship with Europe. First, to the stop that we will make in Spain. The President will arrive in Spain on Tuesday morning, June 12th. While in Spain, the President will meet with King Carlos I and Queen Sophia. He will hold a bilateral and a lunch with Prime Minister Aznar and he will participate in a press availability at the Aznar ranch.

Spain is an appropriate place for the President to begin his trip. This country is an important NATO ally and trading partner, and a great example of successful post-authoritarian transition, and it is fast emerging as an influential European partner.

U.S. cooperation with Spain extends from the Mediterranean to Latin America. We have troops on the ground together in the Balkans, and we have important U.S. military installations in Spain. The President plans to cover a range of issues while there, including bilateral relations, trade issues, the Balkans, the Middle East, and European security including NATO enlargement.

The President spoke with Prime Minister Aznar early in February, and he, of course, received the King and Queen here in late March, and he looks very much forward to seeing them again in Madrid.

The President departs Spain Wednesday morning, June 13th, and goes on to Belgium. While in Belgium, the President will meet with NATO Secretary General Robertson, and with NATO leaders at

NATO Headquarters. There he will have a press availability at NATO Headquarters. He will, afterwards, meet with King Albert II and Queen Paola. He will attend a U.S. Embassy greeting and hold a bilateral meeting with the Belgium Prime Minister.

During that part of the trip, the themes are that NATO embodies the transatlantic link that binds Europe and North America. It is based on common defense and security, as well as shared values and principles. The visit to NATO reaffirms the U.S. commitment to a strong alliance and to meeting new challenges together with our allies.

The President will discuss key NATO issues, adapting the Alliance to meet new challenges, defense capabilities, NATO enlargement, a new strategic framework for nuclear weapons, the European Security Defense Policy, missions in the Balkans, NATO outreach to Ukraine, Russia and --

The President is also looking forward to the bilateral component of the visit there. Belgium is a valued NATO ally and will hold the next EU presidency starting July 1. As I've said, the President will see the King and the Prime Minister there, and he will discuss U.S.-EU trade agenda, the broader U.S.-EU agenda, European security and also begin to preview with our European allies the question of AIDS in Africa, because that will undoubtedly be a major topic at the G-8 in July.

The President departs Belgium Thursday morning, June 1, and arrives -- I'm sorry, June 14th, and arrives on June 14th. While in Sweden, he will hold a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Perrson, attend a U.S.-EU summit and luncheon, participate in a press availability, meet with King Karl Gustaf and Queen Sylvia and have dinner with EU leaders.

The President's first U.S.-EU summit is a chance to advance his vision of a global partnership with the EU. The EU is already our largest economic partner, with an annual, two-way trade and investment profile of well over \$1 trillion per year.

We're working well together to bring peace and stability to the Balkans and to integrate emerging democracies into Euro-Atlantic institutions. The summit is an opportunity to provide better definition and impetus to our common agenda with the EU, including the launch of a new trade round, addressing the scourge of contagious diseases like HIV-AIDS, exploring the different approaches to meeting our common goal of addressing climate change, and looking at Southeastern Europe and other regional security challenges.

The President will depart Sweden on Friday morning, June the 15th, and arrive in Poland. While in Poland, the President will hold bilateral meetings with the President and Prime Minister of Poland, lay wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown, at the Warsaw Ghetto memorial, and at the Warsaw Uprising Memorial. He will deliver a speech at the university library and attend a state dinner, and of course, visit the U.S. Embassy in Poland.

Poland is a great success story of the post-communist era. It has built a stable democracy, a strong economy and a vibrant society. It's one of the three new allies in NATO, and the President will take the opportunity to celebrate that with the Poles while talking about this as just the beginning of a U.S.-Polish relationship that should benefit all of Europe and beyond.

The key security issues that the President will talk about there will be NATO enlargement, and he will talk also about our consultations on the new security framework. You may remember that Poland was one of the stops for the consultative team that went out a few weeks ago.

You should know that the President phoned President Kwasniewski early in his presidency, and he's stayed in close touch. And he appreciates the Polish government's tough economic reforms and will make that point to Prime Minister Buzek.

President departs Poland on Saturday morning and arrives in Slovenia. And while in Slovenia he will hold bilateral meetings with the Slovenian President Kuchan, and with the Prime Minister and, of course, he will meet there with President Putin of Russia.

But I want to make very clear that Ljubljana is not just the site of a meeting with the Russian President; it is in its own right an important stop for us, because the Slovenes have shown what a successful country in transition can achieve. It has been excellent on matters of economic reform. It is moving to an excellent political consolidation of its democracy, and the Slovene leadership seems to be determined to implement the necessary economic legal military reforms to become contributing members of EU and eventually of NATO.

The President looks forward to these meetings, and he also looks forward, of course, to meeting Russian President Vladimir Putin face to face. He will have an opportunity there to discuss with President Putin his vision for security in the 21st century and to explain to President Putin his desire to build a positive and constructive relationship with Russia.

The meeting is planned for a little over two hours between the two Presidents. We have a lot of work to do with the Russians, and the President is eager to begin it with President Putin. In addition to presenting his view on the nature of the relationship and its very important security component -- that is, to talk about the new security framework -- the President really wants to talk more broadly about the U.S.-Russian relationship, areas of cooperation, regional areas in which we are already cooperating, like Nagorno-Karabakh. Economic cooperation, and as well, areas with which we have differences with the Russians on proliferation, on Chechnya, on media freedoms in Russia.

But I want to be very clear that this will be an opportunity for the two men to get to know each other and an opportunity to sketch out a broad vision for the relationship. That is really the purpose of this meeting.

At the conclusion of the meeting with President Putin, the President returns here to Washington.

Q What's the message the President's going to bring to allies who are critical of the administration's positions on global warming and missile defense?

DR. RICE: Well, first of all, the administration will bring to the allies another statement of our very strong interest in a strong alliance and strong Alliance relations. And as a part of that, we will understand that there will be times when we don't always agree on exactly what approaches to take to

different problems. They will, I think, an important discussion of global climate change, a problem that the President takes very seriously, and he's looking forward to hearing from our friends and allies.

On missile defense, I think that I would not characterize it as disagreement. I would say that we're in the midst of ongoing consultations with our allies about how to best move forward to address the common threats of today's security environment. We understand that we're putting a lot on the table in talking about an entirely new security framework, a new comprehensive approach that includes a new offense-defense mix that puts offensive nuclear reductions on the table; that talks about new efforts at nonproliferation. We understand that there is a lot to digest here. The consultations have just begun and we look forward to talking with the Europeans.

But the one thing the President will really underscore is that we have more in common than we have in disagreement, and that we really should be celebrating that which we have in common.

Q Just to follow up, besides listening to them on global warming, what is the message he's going to bring? "I'm opposed to Kyoto, but" --

DR. RICE: The President, as you know, because he was concerned about this issue, but has believed that the Kyoto Protocol did not address the issue properly, the President has had a high-level Cabinet working group that has been working very hard at this problem, but it's ongoing work. It is work that is continuing. A lot of ideas are being explored.

It has been a matter of bringing up to speed some of the highest-ranking people in this government. I would dare say -- dare challenge you to find a situation in which you've had so many high-ranking people sitting there week after week after week, understanding the challenge that we face in global climate change. Everybody from the Vice President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Interior, Secretary of Agriculture. It has been quite something to see all of these people grappling with the issue.

The President has met with that group and he will have some ideas. But this is ongoing work and he really wants to talk about the seriousness of the problem and how we address it.

Q Dr. Rice, is that to say, then, that whatever is announced, either prior to or during the course of the talks during the trip, will be more in line with I'm opposed to Kyoto, but these are principles that I adhere to and we're still talking about that before we come out with any specific ideas?

DR. RICE: Well, the President wants to keep this Cabinet-level working group continuing to work, because he feels that we have learned a great deal, that we have some good ideas, that we are getting a better sense for what the science does tell us and what the science does not tell us, and that ultimately, this is going to lead to better policy. But we are not through with the work, and we would be wrong to represent that we are through with the work.

This is a complex problem. It's a far more complex problem than one usually reads on the pages of the newspaper. And I think we understand its complexities. Addressing it is also a complex set of issues. So the President is going to keep this group working, and with his allies he'll talk a little bit about what

we've learned thus far.

Q You're not saying that the President is going to Europe with this buddy-buddy attitude when there's been so much hostility in the things that he's said. They don't really feel that he is on board with them or on the same page on Star Wars or everything else. So he's got a lot of fence-mending to do, doesn't he? I mean, the whole question of the whole missile defense, it doesn't work yet, and yet you're going to unveil it as our defense?

DR. RICE: Well, Helen, first of all, I want to say very clearly that the President is talking about a new strategic framework for dealing with threats of today, not the threats of yesterday. It is not 1972 --

Q Right, but he doesn't have a system that works yet.

DR. RICE: It is not 1972. What we are embarking on and have told the allies that we wish to embark on is a comprehensive research-development, testing and evaluation program of many promising ideas. Some will accelerate; some will drop by the wayside. But this needs to be seen not just in the context of what we do about missile defense, but what we do about addressing the threats that are really there today.

This is not an era in which the Russians, pointing thousands of nuclear warheads at the United States on high stages of alert, with concerns about a Soviet conventional attack in Europe, is anything like the current situation. So the President is going to talk about the new security environment.

As to how he's received in Europe, I have sat in every meeting that he's had with European leaders. I've been there when he's made the telephone calls. These are friendly, respectful, outgoing relationships. And he's going to have a chance to renew them. The notion somehow that we have tremendous tensions with our European allies I think are, frankly, just not right.

Q How can you say that? On global warming, on --

DR. RICE: Of course, we have policy differences on a number of issues. Not, by the way, on missile defense. There, the allies have made very clear that they appreciate the consultations that are going on, that they expect those consultations to continue. The NATO communique says that, yes, there are new threats to worry about. And so we have a lot of work to do with our allies, but, you know, the common values here, and the common agenda, far out-weighs policy differences that we have.

Q The President is not going to be going to the Balkans, but do you expect him to make some statement about the pace or the prospect of withdrawal of U.S. troops?

DR. RICE: The President's been very clear that we are going to honor our commitments in the Balkans; that he understands that we went in together, that we will eventually come out together. What we have been talking to our allies about -- and I think everybody believes that this is appropriate -- is as conditions do change on the ground, what do we do about the troop presence, about the structure of our troops, and how do we get on with the business of building civilian institutions like police forces

and a functioning judicial system that can actually be the bedrock of stable democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina, or ultimately in Kosovo.

A lot has changed in the Balkans, including the election of a democratic government in Belgrade, and so we do have to keep assessing the circumstances. But the President has made very clear he has no deadline and that he's going to honor our commitments in the Balkans.

Q Could you elaborate on what the President is going to be advancing or possibly proposing on AIDS? And could you also possibly react to a proposal today by Congressman Hyde, the Chairman of the International Relations Committee, which would put forward about a 50-percent increase in the funding for U.S. support for other countries dealing with HIV-AIDS?

DR. RICE: Outside of Africa? Essentially Africa, yes. I have not seen the Hyde proposal and, I'm sorry, so I can't really react to that. I know that Chairman Hyde has been very interested in this problem, and we've, indeed, talked about it. There's a lot of support on the Hill for doing something about the scourge of AIDS.

The President outlined his approach when he had Secretary General Annan here and President Obasanjo of Nigeria. And it is an approach that is comprehensive in the way we go about it. It recognizes that yes, treatment is an important issue, but so, too, is education and prevention; so, too, are health delivery systems that can actually carry out the rather complicated regimen that one needs to treat AIDS.

I think that perhaps Secretary General Kofi Annan said it best when he talked about the tremendous leadership that the United States had shown in being the first to respond to his call for a global fund to deal with infectious diseases like AIDS, tuberculosis and other such diseases.

The President will talk more about the need for accountability, for knowing what works, for having ways to measure the progress that we're getting. But most of all, I think he will join, hopefully, the allies in putting forth a real effort to deal with this scourge. And I might just want to note again, the United States already provides almost half of the funding internationally for AIDS. So it is a challenge, in a sense, to others to also come along.

Q A question on the summit with the Russian President. Do I understand you correctly that no policy documents are expected to come out of that summit? And more generally, what outcome of the summit would you describe as a credible success to the Americans, to the Russians, and to the Europeans?

DR. RICE: I believe that the success of this summit is going to be seen in the long term. And that is that what we really are doing here is establishing a foundation with these two Presidents in their personal relationship that can help us to promote a constructive and realistic relationship with Russia going forward. No, we're not expecting major agreements here. This is, after all, a two-hour meeting of the two men. But we felt that it was time to go ahead and do this, to get them to start to get to know each other, to have them lay out a vision of how we see the relationship unfolding, and so I think that it will be successful, because I would speculate or I would guess that these two men will find that they

have a lot in common in what they view as a successful U.S.-Russian relationship.

Of course, there will be disagreements. I know that it's sometimes better to write about the disagreements. But, you know, countries do disagree about some things. It doesn't mean that it's a fundamentally hostile relationship or that it's a relationship of enemies. Russia is a big power going through a major transition. I think the President wants to signal his support for having a Russia that is really a part of Europe, that is a respected partner in international politics, and they will talk about that as well.

Q Dr. Rice, in diplomatic circles and in meetings with the President, how frequently do our European allies raise the issue of their governmental opposition to the death penalty? And do you see any possible awkwardness next week in the possibility that the U.S. will carry out the death penalty in a very high-profile case on the same day the President leaves for his trip to Europe?

DR. RICE: The death penalty has not been raised in a single meeting between the President and a head of state. I believe that our allies probably understand that this is a matter for the American government, its democratically-elected government with the American people to be concerned about. We are an open and democratic society, we have debates about the death penalty. Reasonable people disagree about the death penalty. But it is a matter for America's democracy, not a matter for international negotiation.

Q With the 2002 target for the next round of NATO expansion coming up, do you expect that to come up in the discussions with the allies, and particularly with President Putin?

DR. RICE: I believe that it will certainly come up with the allies. It is, after all, NATO's business to decide when and where and how to take in new members. And so I suspect that there will be discussions there. It will probably also come up in the EU context because NATO and the EU are the two great European institutions and, of course, they have different profiles and different circumstances for entry. But obviously, in talking about the European Project, building a Europe whole and free and at peace, they both have their role to play. So I would expect it would come up there, too.

I think what the President will make clear in both those stops as well as when he talks to President Putin is that this really is a matter for NATO to decide. The United States believes strongly that enlargement needs to continue. It is only natural that enlargement will continue, that we believe strongly that there should be no red lines, geographic or historic, that eliminate any country as a fait accompli, and that we believe that there can be no veto by any country over NATO enlargement.

The final thing that he will make clear, though, is that anyone who wants to eventually become a member of NATO has to meet certain criteria. And there are membership action plans out with a number of states, and so fulfilling those is really very important.

Q Going to Slovenia, does that indicate we believe Slovenia has met those standards?

DR. RICE: No. Nobody has been invited yet. Slovenia is a country that is making a lot of great strides. It seems to be a very good place to meet the Russian President and also to meet the Slovenes.

Because frankly, in the Balkan story, Slovenia is a pretty remarkable success story.

Q Dr. Rice, do you think -- first of all, were you accurately quoted in The Journal today about the administration's backing away from the Kyoto Accord? Do you believe that the administration could have better handled its withdrawal?

DR. RICE: What I think I said is that the President had made clear when he was a candidate that he did not believe the Kyoto Protocol addressed the problem of climate change in a way that the United States could support. He had the backing, by the way, of a Senate that was under no means prepared to ratify such an accord, and I think if you really look at the history of what was going on, nobody was ready to bring that treaty up for ratification because of the way that it was.

In retrospect, perhaps the fact that we understood that we had already said this was not immediately observable to everybody, and it might have been better to let people know again, in advance, including our allies, that we were not going to support the protocol. But as I said to European ambassadors, I was surprised that anyone was surprised.

Q Dr. Rice, following up on this question, can you outline, at least at this date, what the President's principles are for a new Kyoto treaty or a new opening to discuss it? What are his principles?

DR. RICE: I think you will have an opportunity to hear this as well prepare for the European trip in one way or another. Let me say, the Cabinet-level working group is still working on what it wishes to say to the President before we go to Europe, and so I don't want to try to prefigure that. But the President's been clear about a few things.

First, he's been very clear that the problems with Kyoto could not be repeated in any further international effort. And so, one would want to be certain that developing countries were accounted for in some way, that technology and science really ought to be important parts of this answer, that we cannot do something that damages the American economy or other economies because growth is also important.

But it is also very clear that this is a President who takes extremely seriously what we do know about climate change, which is essentially that there is warming taking place. But he takes it seriously enough to also want to understand better what we don't know. It is the reason that he has worked very, very hard to put this Cabinet group together; that we've spent so much time understanding the science; that we've had experts in to help us understand what we do know and what we don't know, so that you can have intelligent policies that balance, given what we do and do not know about this problem.

Q To follow up, in terms of timing, when would we expect, or when would the President -- Cabinet-level group? Maybe by G-8?

DR. RICE: Well, I think we don't want to set a time limit on it. It is working; it is continuing to work. I might note that even as this goes on, I think it will continue to work well into the future. I mean, one of the advantages of having this particular Cabinet group together is that you can look at the potential for agriculture and sequestration to play a role in dealing with emissions; that you can look at the effects

on the economy as a whole, when you have both Larry Lindsey and Paul O'Neill sitting at the table; that you can look at concerns about energy supply when you have Spence Abraham at the table; and you can look at what we might want to do with our allies if you have Colin Powell there. So you could think of this as an ongoing way to address the problem.

Now, I think that there will be interim reports along the way, but we're taking this seriously enough that we're not just going to slap something together and say, okay, that's it. We think it's a problem that has many dimensions and deserves serious attention over an extended period of time.

Q Dr. Rice, about the President's missile defense plan, Japan's new Foreign Minister has criticized the President's proposal, at least on several occasions. Are you disappointed? Are you willing to talk with him about the missile defense system?

DR. RICE: Well, of course, we're willing to talk with the Foreign Minister of Japan about the new strategic security framework. I must say that we've heard from the Japanese government that there is a willingness to listen and to continue to consult. Let me be very clear: We have not asked anybody to come out and say, oh yes, we woke up this morning and we think this is all a great idea to change the way that we think about nuclear weapons. That would be too much to expect. There's a lot on the table, and we're continuing to consult. And of course, we'll consult with the Japanese Foreign Minister as well.

Q Dr. Rice, a question on some breaking news. Can you confirm that the U.S. will reopen negotiations with North Korea on a broad range of issues, including dealing with the troublesome issue of nuclear weapons?

DR. RICE: As you know, the Secretary of State is going to meet with the Korean Foreign Minister tomorrow. The President will issue a statement a little bit later tonight.

Q Is that a confirmation?

DR. RICE: The President will issue a statement a little bit later tonight. You'll have to wait to see what it says.

Q A question on the trip. How did you interpret the Secretary of State's ability to deal with the NATO foreign ministers on the question of missile defense? There was some language he specifically proposed that they did not endorse, and some of the communique changed what NATO had historically said about missile defense and about the ABM Treaty itself. What is your general assessment of what happened there and how does that set the table for this trip?

DR. RICE: I thought it was an enormously successful session for the Alliance. As a matter of fact, I think Lord Robertson went on the record to say that he believed that the characterization of what had happened in that meeting and the drafting of the communique was 180 degrees wrong, to paraphrase.

And it is true that for the first time, there is no mention of the ABM Treaty at all, let alone as a

cornerstone of strategic stability. And so, you have to take that as a clear indication that the Alliance is moving on, that it understands that while there is a transition to be made, and while it understands that, and we understand that people believe that the treaty continues to be an issue, that people are listening when we say that the ABM Treaty can not only not be the cornerstone of strategic stability, but it is an impediment to getting to a new foundation for security in the modern era.

So I thought that -- I judge it as having been very successful, and it does lay the groundwork of continuing to move this ball forward. But I just want to emphasize, nobody expects breakthroughs on any given day, most especially so early in the process. We are early in the process of consultation.

Q Dr. Rice, can I follow that? The reporting I've seen indicates that the language on the ABM was removed because we objected to it, and NATO being a consensus organization, it could not be included unless we went along with it. Is that inaccurate?

DR. RICE: I think that if you listen very hard to what Lord Robertson says, that Lord Robertson does not see this as having been the United States pitching a fit, and therefore getting some language that he wants.

Lord Robertson says that the reports that were out there about how the United States did not get language that it wanted, how this was all very contentious, he says this was respectful, this was a dialogue, and I think that that is exactly how this took place.

Now, all that I'm saying -- I've said that there are still people who believe in the importance of the ABM Treaty; nobody is -- we're not fooling ourselves in that regard. But in moving forward little by little -- and I would point you in this regard to the joint statements that were made with Prime Minister Blair, with Chancellor Schroeder, with the Japanese Prime Minister, with the South Korean President, all of which talk about a new offense-defense mix and working on the new threat environment -- this intellectual argument is moving forward and I think that we are at this stage very pleased in where we're going.

Q Is it inaccurate, Dr. Rice, that a majority of the members of NATO wished to keep the language and the U.S. and perhaps Britain objected and, because -- and not in a contentious way, but simply because NATO is a consensus organization --

DR. RICE: I'm not going to give you a head count, but the United States was not alone in thinking that this was the right way to characterize the current situation.

Q And his question on majority?

DR. RICE: Yes, all the way in back.

Q Dr. Rice, you talk about -- you said earlier that countries -- people need to understand that countries do have their differences. But can you clarify one difference about the Bush administration, when the President's top trade negotiator, Bob Zoellick, said one day earlier, he said that it would be a constructive step if Taiwan's President can attend the APEC Summit, while today, the State

Department seems to have said the opposite way, saying that Taiwan can only be represented by its senior economic official. Where does the President stand on this issue? Can Taiwan's president attend the APEC summit, or not?

DR. RICE: We have been very clear about the way that the President views the situation in the Taiwan Straits, including that we do not believe

in a change in the status quo unilaterally by either side, that we don't believe in any change by force. And I think you would find that Chen Shui-bian was treated with the kind of respect when he came to the United States that we think should be accorded to a democratically-elected leader.

But the matter of who attends the APEC summit, we don't expect any change in what has traditionally been U.S. policy at the APEC summit, which is the highest-ranking economic official.

MS. COUNTRYMAN: Last question.

Q A question about Russia, please. This is your area.

DR. RICE: Listen, since I did this, I'll go there and there. How's that?

Q Thank you. As you know, India approves the President's NMD, and you had spoken with the Defense Minister of India when he was here, and also you called him. But also, India is saying that China is a threat to the region as far as security and peace is concerned, because it's building up. Don't you think China is really a threat to the U.S. in the future? And if this is -- discussed between the two Presidents, also Afghanistan.

DR. RICE: We do not see -- we are not out to find a threat in the region. And what we are trying to do with China is to build a constructive relationship with China that would allow us to continue to support what is a very important fundamental transition that is going on in China. That is why the President has been so supportive of normal trade relations with China, of WTO accession for China, and a lot is going on in China domestically.

Now, it is true that we don't always see eye to eye with China about other matters, including security issues sometimes. In the Asia Pacific, for instance, we've made very clear to the Chinese that we're not leaving the region, that the United States is a stabilizing presence. But, for instance, on North Korea, there has not been tension with China.

So I think that it is by no means a picture of a threat. It is a China that has interests that are sometimes coincident with ours and sometimes not. It's true of normal relations between mature powers, and I think that we are working hard toward a constructive relationship with China that would benefit, obviously, peace and security in the Asia Pacific region.

Q Dr. Rice, just to follow, are you going to discuss China and Afghanistan during the discussions?

DR. RICE: Well, with our allies, of course, we'll discuss any place on the globe that is of interest to them and I suspect that U.S.-China relations will come up. And most certainly, I would think that the problems that we have with the Taliban and Afghanistan will come up.

Q Can you elaborate, Dr. Rice, on the vision that the President has for the future of U.S.-Russian relations? What does the United States want from them, this administration, other than acquiescence in the modification of the ABM Treaty? What does the President have to offer them in terms of incentives?

DR. RICE: Well, I think the greatest incentive for Russia to be a modern power that is internally reformed, democratic, economically open and marketable is that that would be the true source of Russian power for the future. And so it's not an incentive that we offer the Russians. It is that for Russia, that is the course for full acceptance and for being able to deal in the world in a way that is not a 19th century way of dealing with the world.

And I think that in some sense, Putin understands that. He understands that economic reforms do have to go forward. I am not always so certain on the democratic reform side. But obviously, the modern democratic state is the model that is succeeding. And so the incentive to Russia is to become the modern democratic state so that it can play its rightful role as a great power.

We in the United States have every reason to want that Russia to exist. We understand that it's mostly on the basis of choices that the Russians themselves will make, not choices that we will make. But of course, to the degree that a U.S.-Russian economic dialogue helps, to the degree that our support for Russian accession to the WTO when it meets the criteria helps with that process, we are prepared to offer that support.

We want to be supportive of the burgeoning civic society in Russia. I'm a university former provost and professor; I can tell you that one of the most important things that has happened since the collapse of the Soviet Union are the scores of Russian students that are studying in the United States, the easy exchange of peoples back and forth. That's an important part of the transformation that Russia is going to make.

And finally, the President will sit down, state to state, to talk about areas of potential cooperation on a new strategic security framework on regions of the world. We've cooperated in the Balkans; we've cooperated in the Nagorno-Karabakh. The Russians have been positive in the Middle East in these last -- since we have been in office. It is most certainly a broad relationship that we have with Russia. Russia is, after all, a big and important power. And it's not surprising, therefore, that it's a complex relationship. Some things we will agree on; some things we will disagree on. But there is no reason that Russia has to reemerge as a strategic adversary for the United States.

And that is really what the President is saying to President Putin. That is why he wants to move the security relationship on to a different footing, because this is now becoming a normal relationship with Russia, not the abnormal relationship that we had with the Soviet Union.

Thank you very much. Oh, I should mention, Dan Fried, who is the Special Assistant for Eurasian, will

stay behind to answer any questions, on background, if you've got them.

END

6:15 P.M. EDT

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