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Press Briefing by National Security Advisor, Dr. Condoleezza Rice on the G8 Summit

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DR. RICE: Let me welcome you here to this very important summit. I'd like to start by just saying a word, of course, about the great sadness that the country feels at the death of former President Ronald Reagan, a true giant in international politics, and of course, someone who was very much associated with this summit. He hosted it in Williamsburg in 1983, and I think was one of the people who really gave the G8 a kind of -- at that time, the G7 -- a kind of profile. And so we all are deeply saddened by his death, and look forward this week to the opportunity to remember him, as a country and as a world.

As President Reagan said in 1985, the challenge of statesmanship is to have a vision to dream of a better, safer world, and the courage, persistence and patience to turn that dream into reality. And this week, the G8 statesmen will stand united in their resolve to build a better, united, and safer world.

The statesmen are meeting here at Sea Island in what are clearly challenging times. The G8 leaders have a full agenda, and they will agree this week to launch many new initiatives to advance freedom by strengthening international cooperation. You can expect the G8 leaders this week to agree to take new actions, to promote freedom, democracy and prosperity in the broader Middle East; to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; to strengthen international cooperation in the war on terror; to expand global peacekeeping efforts; to promote global economic growth and expand trade; to harness private sector efforts to help alleviate poverty; to dramatically increase their efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, Polio and famine; and to protect our environment by cutting harmful emissions.

The G8 leaders will also meet this week with leaders from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Jordan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen. These leaders will discuss the President's broader Middle East initiative and developments in the region. First Lady Laura Bush will also host a roundtable to discuss the President's broader Middle East initiative, as it relates to women and women's programs in Iraq, Afghanistan and the entire region of the Middle East.

The G8 leaders will then later meet with leaders from the African nations of Algeria, Ghana, Senegal, South

Africa, Nigeria and Uganda. And President Bush and his G8 counterparts are very excited to welcome to the summit the new President of Iraq.

Just a little more than a year ago, Iraq was governed by an evil dictator. Today the Iraqi people have been liberated, and together with their new interim government, Iraqis are taking their first steps toward freedom. As President Bush outlined in his five-point plan for Iraq, a free and self-governing Iraq will deny terrorists a base of operation and discredit their ideology. It will make the international community safer and more secure, and become a linchpin for freedom and reform in the region.

With that little overview of what is going to be a very busy agenda, I'm happy to take your questions. David. I'll come back to you, John. Yes, David.

Q Good morning, Dr. Rice. Can you bring us up to date, after what has been a busy few days of diplomacy on the U.N. resolution, what you expect to happen, as early as today, what it means, particularly for the security agreement between the coalition and Iraq, and whether you expect that there's now unanimous support for the resolution, going forward.

DR. RICE: Yes, David. I think that we are still in the stages of finalizing a number of elements of the resolution, but I think it's fair to say that the spirit moving forward is very good, that people are working very hard at it, and that there's a general sense that this is going in a very positive direction, and should reach conclusion very soon. It's a little hard to every predict precisely when there will be a vote, but it looks as if it's moving to the point that you could expect something in the next couple of days, or so.

In terms of the security agreement, the security exchange of letters, with the Iraqis, certainly demonstrates that the multinational coalition, with a U.S. commander, of course, and the Iraqi government have an understanding about how this should go forward. And we believe that that understanding should now give comfort to all that the Iraqis will, indeed, have full sovereignty, that the Iraqis will have command of their own forces, that there will be mechanisms for the coordination and consultation, as well as for a discussion of policy of issues like policy on sensitive offensive operations.

So this is a very good letter between the Iraqi interim government and the coalition, and we believe should answer any questions about the relationship between Iraqi sovereignty and the multinational force. I would just caution that, of course, we do this around the world. It's actually unusual to even have, in many cases, an exchange of letters, because so much really needs to be worked out on the ground. But there's a very good spirit of cooperation and partnership already with the new Iraqi interim government, and I'm sure that will carry into the future. And I believe that that should -- this exchange of letters, which will be an annex to the U.N. Security Council resolution, should give everybody a sense that, indeed, we take Iraqi sovereignty quite seriously.

Q One more on that. Did French President Chirac indicate during his meetings with President Bush that, indeed, France would no longer stand in the way, that its reservations, its concerns had been answered through these side letters?

DR. RICE: Well, let me not put words in the French President's mouth. I think he, himself, said in the press conference that he believed that we were moving in a very positive direction, and that this should be able to be done in a few days. And I think that speaks for itself.

Q Dr. Rice, can you kind of give us an assessment on what the President thinks he gained from his European trip? Did he -- was he able to mend fences? And in the press conference in Paris, President Chirac did seem to indicate that there was some more problems with the resolution that had to be worked out. Does that present a barrier?

DR. RICE: Thanks. I didn't actually hear President Chirac indicate problems with the resolution. I thought he said that we were working in a very good spirit. That's certainly the way we feel about it. Things are being carried on, tidied up in New York; a few other suggestions have been made. But I think on the basics of this resolution, there's a general sense that this ought to be able to be done in a couple of days. And that's very good news, because the people of Iraq need to know that the international community is ready to support them, ready to acknowledge them as the government of Iraq, ready to provide multinational support in the form of an international force, which, of course, the Iraqi government has requested. And there are a number of other important issues, as well. So I believe this resolution is moving very well. I expect that it's going to be done very shortly.

The President achieved a great deal on this trip. I think, first and foremost, it was an opportunity to remind everyone of the bonds and the ties of what became the Atlantic Alliance, and how those ties and bonds were born out of the fire of World War II; first to go to Rome and to celebrate the liberation of Rome, second to go to Normandy and to celebrate what is still one of the most remarkable military feats in modern history, that landing at Normandy.

And the speeches and the discussion with all of the European leaders focused on how much we can achieve when we are working together. Everybody knows that there have been differences in the past about the specific issue of Iraq, but the focus was on moving forward to a stable and secure Iraq, which can be the lynchpin of a different kind of Middle East.

There was also a lot of focus on the many things that we're doing together. For instance, France is a core member of the President's Proliferation Security Initiative, an active member. France and Germany both are active in Afghanistan. We had good discussions on the war on terrorism. We had good discussions on the Middle East, where there is hope that we can use forward movement on Prime Minister Sharon's withdrawal plan from the Gaza and the four settlements in the West Bank to spur new momentum for the road map and for movement in the Israeli-Palestinian issues.

I think what came very clear in all of this is that we have a very big and broad agenda in the Atlantic Alliance, and when we work together, we can get a great deal done.

Finally, I think the chance to thank the veterans who survived and survive to this day, and to honor the memories of those who did not survive, that extraordinary day at Normandy was really very touching. The French put on a remarkable ceremony to that, and it was really quite moving.

Q You mentioned the legacy of President Reagan at the beginning of your comments here. I'm wondering, did President Bush at all see Ronald Reagan as a guiding light, in terms of some of the policies that he has pursued? Do you see any similarities between the two? And I'm particularly intrigued by this notion that in the early going, at least, many people, even among his own administration, believe that Reagan was pursuing the wrong track on a number of occasions.

DR. RICE: Well, I don't see how you could help but be inspired by what Ronald Reagan did, as the --

whether the President of the United States or a member of the foreign policy team. What Ronald Reagan did was historic. And it was historic because he based his understanding and his policies in foreign policy on values. He was absolutely clear that when liberty and freedom are on the march, America is safer; and when liberty and freedom are in retreat, America is weaker.

Because he was clear-spoken about it, because he was absolutely certain that there was a right way and a wrong way to think about international politics, Ronald Reagan made an enormous contribution, for instance, to the end of the Cold War. I think if you talk to many people in the former Soviet Union, if you talk to human rights activists, if you talk to people, many of whom emerged to help to build the beginnings of a free Russia, they will tell you that it was Ronald Reagan's steadfastness, that communism didn't just have to be accommodated or coexisted with, but, in fact, could be brought to an end, because it was a sad experiment that had been practiced on a hapless population, and it was going to end up on the ash heap of history -- that kind of blunt, plainspokenness was really not appreciated at the time, John. I can tell you, I was a young Soviet specialist at the time, and there were people who said, oh, my God, how undiplomatic that is. And, in fact, it turned out to be not only true, but by being plainspoken, it was a spur to change.

Yes, I do think that President Bush is inspired by that kind of plainspokenness, about that willingness to tell the truth, about the willingness to be unabashedly clear about the universality of the values of liberty and freedom. And I will tell you that I was personally inspired by it as a young Soviet specialist, and I'm still personally inspired by it now.

Q A follow-up -- what issue do you expect to be raised in your bilateral meeting with President Putin in the coming few days, and what of those issues -- will be discussed in the broader --

DR. RICE: Well, we have a very good relationship, of course, with Russia, and we have a broad agenda. We have the strategic dialogue with Russia that covers a variety of issues. I think you can expect the two Presidents to talk about the importance of the war on terrorism. Russia has been one of the countries that understands fundamentally the war in which we find ourselves, because Russia has suffered at the hands of extremism in its very core, in Moscow. And so we will have that discussion.

We have very good work to do together on proliferation. Russia is a member of the six-party talks on North Korea and has been a good partner in that. We, of course, will have discussions of the energy dialogue. Russia is a major energy producer and, of course, we have had a very good dialogue, not just on production of fossil fuels, but also alternative sources of energy and the problems that arise for proliferation out of certain kinds of civilian uses of nuclear energy.

But the interesting thing about the relationship with Russia is it's so broad and so deep, the Presidents could talk about just anything on the map, and they probably will. They have a very good relationship. I think the President will want to hear from President Putin about his thinking about where Russia goes now on its domestic path. Obviously, there have been some very impressive economic gains and economic reforms made. The President has said on a number of occasions to President Putin that the democratic development of Russia is also extremely important to the future deepening of our relationship with Russia. And I would think that the two of them will have a discussion of what is happening to institutions in Russia as Russia tries to chart a path to a more democratic future.

Q Do you think that the President will go to President Reagan's funeral?

DR. RICE: I don't know. I don't have that information.

Yes, Steve, I'm sorry, up to you.

Q Sure. We're hearing that Yasser Arafat has told Hosni Mubarak he accepts his demands for Palestinian security reforms. What's the significance of this? And also, could we draw you out a little bit about this counterproliferation initiative you talked about? Is that an expansion of the PSI, or what exactly?

DR. RICE: On the PSI, what we're really talking about is that, of course, we believe that Russia has made clear its intention to be involved in the core group. That's a very, very good step forward. There are also some steps being made by the leaders here at the G8 to work forward from the agenda the President put out when he spoke at the National Defense University a couple of months ago, on how to close the gap that is left -- the loophole that is left in the nonproliferation treaty by the fact that many states sign on to the nonproliferation treaty, pursue what are supposedly civilian uses of nuclear power, but, in fact, use that as a cover for producing or for pursuing military uses and perhaps nuclear weapons development. And the President had a number of agenda items about that; they're going to discuss that. I won't -- I don't want to prejudge or preempt what they're going to talk about, but I think you will see that we'll make some progress on the issues that the President raised at the National Defense University.

Steve, I'm sorry, your first question was -- oh, Yasser Arafat. Yes.

Q Mubarak and Arafat.

DR. RICE: Yes. The President remains committed to what he said on June 24th, which is that it is extremely important, in order to make progress in the Middle East peace process, that all parties carry out their obligations. And from the Palestinian side, that means moving toward the institutions of statehood that are based on transparency, based on law and order, based on democratic development. And the first and most important step is to have security forces that are a part of the rule of law. And that means to have security forces that are united, not several different security forces under all kinds of different commands in various states running the streets with weaponry. That's just not acceptable as the Palestinians move toward what the President hopes will be democratic statehood.

And so we do know that there have been discussions with the Egyptians about Palestinian security reform. There have been those discussions before, and the sticking point has always been that the part of the road map, the part of the reform agenda that envisions an empowered prime minister for the Palestinians who can oversee such forces has always been frustrated by Yasser Arafat. So I can't tell you what this new statement means, except to say that the course is very clear: unify the security forces; put them under an empowered prime minister; put them in a position where they can be trained and can fight terror; and begin the foundation for the formation of a Palestinian state.

I will say that it comes now with some urgency because the President is hopeful that as the Israelis begin to move toward disengagement from Gaza and those four settlements in the West Bank -- and by the way, we urge the Israelis to finish their preparatory work as quickly as possible -- as they move toward that, it is going to be extremely important that the Palestinians be capable of managing the security environment. They will need help from their neighbors; they will need help from the Egyptians; they'll need help from us. But it's going to be extremely important that they are capable of taking on those responsibilities. So I don't know what to make of the statement, but I hope it's a step in the right direction.

Q Dr. Rice, when the Iraqi leader comes here, would you anticipate a G8 statement urging the U.N. Security Council resolution? And how important is it, how useful is it to have the Iraqis now speaking for themselves here at the G8 Summit, before the U.N. Security Council and perhaps even later this month at NATO?

DR. RICE: I think it's enormously important for the Iraqis to be in a position to speak for themselves; that is to have a government that is now just a couple of weeks from regaining sovereignty and full responsibility for Iraqi affairs. The fact is that for quite a long time, Iraqi ministers have been running various ministries; the Iraqis have been playing a major role in their own lives. But they're about to become a sovereign government, and so having this new -- the members of this new government be able to speak out is extraordinarily important.

I think they've made some very important statements. I note that the Prime Minister has been particularly concerned to tell Iraqis that it is important now that everybody unite to stop the violence of a lot of which is Iraqi against Iraqi, because the insurgents and the terrorists who want to stop progress are, of course, going to try to intensify their efforts over the next couple of weeks as they move toward sovereignty. And it's extremely important for Iraqis to be able to speak out about that.

It's important for the international community to speak out against this kind of violence. And, yes, I do also think it's a good thing that the Iraqis will be able to urge passage of a U.N. Security Council resolution. They've had input into it; they've made clear their views. We will see exactly when it's done, but it's obviously a very good thing that the Iraqis can speak for themselves.

Q About reform, it was reported that after so many Arab -- reservations, the latest version now is so weak, it's like it's almost going to be irrelevant. And also about the reform, it was reported in The New York Times yesterday, the Emir of Qatar was not invited because of al Jazeera. The U.S. government wants to shut down al Jazeera, and how can it talk about democracy if you are hostile to the only free media medium in the area?

DR. RICE: I don't think anybody has suggested the shutting down of al Jazeera. I do think people have suggested that it would be a good thing if the reporting were accurate on al Jazeera, and if it were not slanted in ways that appears to be, at times, just purely inaccurate. And so that's been the issue with al Jazeera.

The people who were invited -- not everybody was invited to the summit, but what the invitations do say is that there are a number of leaders who wish to come here, have discussions about reform; they wished to have an opportunity to talk with members of the G8 about the deepening and broadening efforts at reform that are taking place in the Middle East as indigenous efforts. Nobody really believes that democratic development can be somehow forced from the outside. That's simply not the case. But that the Middle East is a region that is in need of change is a view that is shared by everyone who is coming to the summit, and certainly by the members of the G8.

I think you will see that reflected in both the political statement and in some of the follow-on action items that are there. It is a very strong -- will be a very strong affirmation of the need for reform and change in the Middle East, for the need for modernization in the Middle East, because, in fact, you cannot have the kind of economic renaissance that needs to take place in the Middle East without doing something to enhance

the creativity of your people, the ability of women to participate in life, the ability of people to pursue their own dreams and aspirations. And so there's a very good common agenda here on economics, on political side, on a variety of issues.

It's a very strong statement. It does key off of what we thought was a very good statement by the Arab foreign ministers, and then the Arab Summit; the Alexandria Conference, which was held. We want to be a partner with members of the nations of the Middle East, and civil society, and people who are fighting for change, but it has to start somewhere. And as the President said in his White House speech, it simply can't be put on hold any longer. The idea that we were somehow buying stability by turning a blind eye to the absence of freedom has been exposed and exposed in the form of extremism. And so we have to get on about this agenda, and I think we have a very good opportunity to do that here at the G8.

Q Dr. Rice, can you tell us, since OPEC has agreed to raise oil production levels, what do you expect in the way of a statement from the leaders here by -- coming by Wednesday or Thursday? And also, can you tell us, when President Bush tries to encourage other countries to offer up more financial support for Iraq, to what extent will contracts figure into this?

DR. RICE: Well, let me start by saying, an awful lot has been done in offering up support for Iraq already. There's a pledge of over \$33 billion at the recent conference that took place -- donors conference that took place in Madrid. I suspect that as the Iraqi economy gets going you will see the beginnings of foreign direct investment into the Iraqi economy. And the Iraqis will have to decide their rules on contracting and how they wish to pursue those.

But I think that you will find that there are a lot of countries that are interested in the economic future of Iraq. This is a country that is, right now, suffering the devastating blows of just years and years and years of Saddam Hussein's policies that were insane in terms of economic development. I mean, there's no other way to put it. If you add to that the fact that Iraq was, of course, under U.N. sanction because the world wouldn't deal with Saddam Hussein and, therefore, left Iraq under sanctions, you have an infrastructure that is really badly, badly deteriorated. The good news is that because the United States was willing to put \$20 billion forward for the most critical infrastructure development projects, that work is being addressed, and it will be addressed by the World Bank and by other donors. I would hope, and I think everybody hopes that over time there will be additional support for the Iraqis.

But I think we shouldn't underestimate that there has already been a lot of support for the Iraqis. The Iraqis need a good deal of help. They're going to need help on the debt; they're going to need help in turning around some of the deleterious effects of Saddam's policies, but a lot of that is underway.

In terms of oil prices, of course, everybody welcomed the OPEC statement, because it's the concern of everybody in the G8 and the concern of everybody in the economic sector that the world economy is one that needs to keep growing and one that needs to keep growing, and where energy prices are a factor. But I think that they will undoubtedly have that discussion, but welcome what OPEC does, and just hope now that they carry through fully.

Q How much of a threat are high oil prices to the world economy? And secondly, you said there will be some discussion of oil prices. But what can the G8 do, other than call on OPEC to increase its production, which --

DR. RICE: I said there would be discussions of the world economy, and the effect of a variety of factors in dealing with the world economy. Look, I don't think that it really helps to try and predict. It's obvious that the world economy needs to keep growing. That's the most important thing. It's the most important thing for the countries of the G8; it's the most important for developing countries to get back on their feet; it's the most important for trade. And so I'm sure they'll have discussions of how to continue that.

Q -- any other than President Bush's statement?

DR. RICE: OPEC has made its statement, and I think there's a hope that it's going to have an effect.

Q You said that the Middle East leaders who are coming here are interested in reform. There are two countries that aren't going to be represented, Egypt and Saudi Arabia. What does that mean for their interest in reform, especially given the fact that there seems to be some skepticism about what this broader Middle East initiative can actually accomplish?

DR. RICE: We have had a lot of discussion with the Egyptians, and indeed, with the Saudis, about the need for change in the Middle East, the need for reform. Every country is moving at its own speed. I think that the speech that President Mubarak gave, for instance, at the Alexandria Conference, was a remarkable speech, and it demonstrated that he understands the need for reform. We have had discussion with the Saudis, who are talking about reform, as well. The Crown Prince has accepted petitions from people, including from women, on the need for reform.

I think that we will continue to have good discussions with the Saudis and with the Egyptians, as well as with other countries in the Middle East. And this initiative will be open to participation by everyone. There are a lot of reasons that certain heads of state were unable to be here. President Mubarak had just been here for -- not very long ago.

But I think that you're going to find that as the President put this on the agenda in Whitehall, just a little while ago, what it has done is to stimulate in these countries a debate and a discussion about how they are going to move forward. They're dealing with enormous demographic challenges, for instance. They're dealing with a lot of young people who are underemployed and under educated, and who have a lot of potential for becoming angry and radicalized, unless there is a way for hope and aspirations to be met.

And so this is not a discussion that the G8 is having about the Middle East; this is a discussion that the G8 leaders are having with people in the Middle East. And it's an enormously important time to have this discussion, and I think it's going to continue with all the countries of the region.

I'll take one more right here. Yes, from Africa, yes.

Q -- announcement that this summit will make regarding the poverty and health and development in Africa?

DR. RICE: Yes. Well, there is a very active G8 agenda with the African countries, first based on the NAPAD, but also based on other development goals, like the Millennium Challenge goals, like the Monterrey consensus, which is broader than Africa, but of course includes Africa. And the President has been, of course, extremely active in promoting in Africa trade, through the African Growth and Opportunity Act. He's been extremely active in promoting the Millennium Challenge Account, which is a process of

donor and recipient relations, which, in effect changes some the role of foreign assistance to one in which one looks at the circumstances and the conditions into which that foreign assistance is going to go. And it's having a wonderful response. And a number of African countries, some of whom will be here, like Senegal, were named as part of the Millennium Challenge group.

And so the President -- the other point, of course, is on HIV/AIDS, to get even more spur to get countries to give to the Global Fund. The United States has been a major donor to Global Fund. The United States, of course, also has the big \$15 billion emergency relief plan for AIDS -- and so to get a recommitment to doing what needs to be done against the pandemic for AIDS.

One of the interesting byproducts of all of this is when we were having discussions with a number of the African countries about what should be on the G8 agenda, they wanted spurring entrepreneurship to be on the agenda, because Africa is not just a place that we should look at the various humanitarian problems -- of course, there are humanitarian problems, like the health crisis -- but where we should be looking to the opportunity that is there for Africa to grow and prosper. There are a number of countries that have done it, and I think that you will see more do it with these approaches that come out of NAPAD that put responsibility on African leaders to take good decisions.

So that's the kind of discussion they will have. I think they will probably also discuss the quite serious crises, the security crises that exist in Sudan. There is a lot of concern, and when we were in both France and Italy we talked about the Darfur problem, the need of the Sudanese government to do everything that it can to make sure that the violence is ended there, to do everything that it can to let international aid relief workers into the area. Darfur is a brewing disaster for which the Sudanese government bears a lot of responsibility, and people will look to them to act responsibly to defuse that crisis. And, of course, we will discuss the DROC, which recently there have been some flare-ups, as well.

So this is a broad agenda with the African leaders. But this continues in the tradition of the G8 to have these discussions with the African leaders about how to move forward for peace and prosperity on the continent.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

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