

R. Nicholas Burns
Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

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Fred Kempe: Welcome everyone. I'm Fred Kempe, president and CEO of the Atlantic Council. Welcome to you all tonight. I know there's been some traffic and other things getting here, so thank you for braving that.

It's my great pleasure to introduce the best kickoff speaker that I can imagine for the Atlantic Council's new Global Leadership Series which is going to headline U.S. and European and occasionally other senior policymakers who are tasked with making some of the most difficult decisions of our time, which is a confusing and critical time of change, and I'm sure we'll hear a lot more of that from our speaker in a few minutes.

I'm pleased to say there are also a lot of people in the audience who have had similarly challenging jobs, many of them Atlantic Council board members, so I'd particularly like to greet the Directors here from the Atlantic Council.

Let me also extend a personal thanks to someone who has had one of those jobs, the former General Counsel of the U.S. Treasury, David Aufhauser, who's now General Counsel for the Americas of UBS, and he and UBS are generously supporting this speaker series.

Ambassador R. Nicholas Burns is, in my opinion, one of America's top strategic thinkers. He also happens to be the United States' Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. That's the third ranking official in Department of State. It also means he's responsible for U.S. policy in every region of the world. In short, that means that you deal with a lot of matters that would seem to extend beyond the reach of U.S.-European relations, but I think part of the point of what you're going to say tonight is that's not the case at all. In fact U.S.-European relations' future is dealing with global issues, and we'd better get used to it.

After an opening statement that you'll make, we're going to engage in Q&A, and heaven knows there are a lot of issues on the plate. Here's a very incomplete quick list:

Vladimir Putin -- and many of us, some of us in this audience were in Munich listening to him -- has been outspoken in his criticism of U.S. policy. And the Russian head of

Rocket Forces has interestingly said Poland and the Czech Republic will be on the target list, so we've got some Russian issues to discuss.

Another deadline has passed on Iran's nuclear problem and program, and Tehran is sending signals of defiance and compromise. That's been an area of close U.S.-European cooperation.

Questions of Kosovar independence are coming to a head.

Afghanistan being considered as a testing ground for the Alliance, and many worry about the level of allied political commitment there.

That's just a short beginning of a very long list, all of which you're in some way responsible for, or in the forefront of being responsible for.

I knew Nick very well in Brussels where I was serving as the *Wall Street Journal Europe's* Editor and he was Ambassador to NATO at a time when there was an Alliance crisis that you deftly and unflappably -- characteristically, one could say -- unflappably dealt with. You've always made tough jobs look effortless, and they haven't got any easier, and I've always thought that could be because you were a lifelong fan of the Boston Red Sox, which trains one for difficult problems. [Laughter.]

But with that, Nick, I'm delighted to introduce you and turn the floor to you. Nick Burns, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. [Applause.]

Under Secretary Burns: Thank you very much. Fred, thank you very much. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. It's a pleasure to be here with all of you. It's a pleasure to be back at the Atlantic Council, especially with good friends like David Atchison and all of you who played such a big role in forming this Council and keeping it going over the years.

You've chosen a good person in Fred Kempe. He was a really outstanding editor and correspondent for the *Wall Street Journal Europe* for about 20 years and was one of the leading voices, especially during the transatlantic crisis of 2002 and '03, arguing for patience and arguing for perspective. And I was so pleased when Fred was named to his current position. I'm a great supporter of the Atlantic Council. So congratulations to all of you who had the foresight to choose someone like him, and thank you very much for coming out this evening and braving the Washington traffic to be here, even on time.

I wanted to say how much we appreciate at the State Department the work that all of you do here at the Atlantic Council. We need institutions outside the government to argue for American engagement in the world, and for a purposeful and serious American engagement, and this institution has stood for that for a very, very long time.

We also need, obviously, to focus this year on America's evolving role with Europe and the changing agenda -- in fact, I would say the complete transformation of the U.S.-European agenda in recent years. And I'd like to focus on two important but I think under appreciated perhaps by the press and other observers, developments in our relations with Europe.

First, the United States has acted with great determination, and I think with great efficiency and results, in reaffirming our partnership with Europe over the last several years. I was Ambassador to NATO in 2002 and '03 during that very difficult time when we had a major transatlantic difference over whether or not the United States should go into Iraq; a difference over the role of the United States and the European countries in fighting the war on terrorism on a global basis; maybe even a difference about the nature of what an alliance was and whether countries should act independently of that alliance or whether they should not. That was a very serious and profound disagreement. A lot of us participated in it.

But we've made a major effort over the two years that have transpired since that time to reaffirm the NATO Alliance, reaffirm our partnership with the European countries, and I think I can say with great confidence today, and I would think most European diplomats would say the same, that that Alliance is now back together again.

France is our leading partner in dealing with the crisis in Lebanon, trying to defend the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Siniora in Lebanon. Germany, France, and the United Kingdom are our leading partners in trying to prevent Iran from becoming a nuclear weapons state.

Europe and America are the two parts of the world arguing that the Balkans now should finally be able to achieve the results that they missed in the early 1990s of peace and stability, of unity and of inclusion in a Europe that's whole, free, and at peace in the words of our 41st president, George Herbert Walker Bush. It's time for the people of Kosovo to know what their future is going to be. It's time for those in Bosnia and Herzegovina to be able to rise, to go beyond the Dayton Accords and to build a modern constitutional state, and Europe is our great partner in that.

And so I think we've been successful -- Europeans and Americans alike -- in returning to the Alliance and returning to the solidity of the transatlantic relationship which for we Americans is so important for our role in the world.

Second, there has been a very dramatic and undeniable shift in the European-American relationship, perhaps the most important in the century, and I think its impact is likely to be felt for a generation to come. And that is that the United States' policy towards Europe is no longer about Europe. It's about the rest of the world. And the U.S.-European alliance is no longer about the divisions in Europe as it certainly was over the course of the 20th century, it's about what we together have to do to be effective and purposeful around the globe in all the regions of the world.

Think of it this way. Between April 1917 when Woodrow Wilson put a million American soldiers into Belgium and France to help and win the First World War -- between that time and April, May, and June of 1999 when President Clinton rescued, along with our NATO allies, one million Kosovar Albanians from Milosevic's ethnic cleansing, United States policy around the world was centered on Europe. It was centered on the divisions in Europe, on the two world wars that we had to fight, on the Cold War that millions of American GIs fought for a generation. And if you asked any American diplomat -- any American member of the Atlantic Council -- for the last five or six decades what area of the world was most important, most vital for American national interest, it was certainly Europe. It was the epicenter of America's global and strategic thinking. It's why we stationed millions of young men in Europe from the spring of 1944 until the present day, and certainly through that time in 1989 and '90 and '91 when the East Europeans liberated themselves from communism and when the Soviet Union fell. It's why NATO was created, and now that Europe is nearly whole, free, and at peace, our European policy can focus for the very first time on what the United States and Europe can do together on a global basis.

Think of it another way. Europeans have just experienced roughly a millennium of internal divisions, internal disunity, and internal warfare. And their achievement of a Europe that is united and peaceful and stable is truly one of the great achievements in world history -- certainly in modern history. It's their achievement.

We Americans were their indispensable partner, especially over the last century or so. And in that sense, I think that we in America can take some satisfaction in looking at the course of our entire foreign policy history over 230 years and say what we accomplished with the Europeans from the First World War onward was one of the great chapters in American foreign policy.

We created with Europe a single democratic space that is unique in the history of the modern world that defines our two political cultures, it defines our political philosophies, it defines who we are as two peoples. It's an extraordinary achievement, and it's a common achievement -- a free world in a democratic space in North America, in Western and in Central Europe.

And now that we've created that free world, for us it really is in our self-interest -- and here I think we get to the defining feature of modern American diplomacy -- it's in our self-interest but it's also our responsibility with the Europeans to see what we can do to bind ourselves together in a common global strategy. And that has been an evolution for some period of time, but we've been slow to articulate -- Europeans and Americans together -- just what that agenda is.

So I think this represents the single most important, most significant change in America's relations with Europe. It means that the entire agenda of how we deal with the European Union, what we ask NATO to do, and what we ask NATO to be in the world, and especially what we do with the larger countries of Western Europe -- the United

Kingdom, Germany, France, and certainly now Poland. This agenda defines our bilateral relations with all those people.

I wanted to say that at the beginning because I think this change is important for all of us as Americans. It continues to mean that America has to be engaged in the world, that we can neither seek solace in isolationism as we have done so often in our national history, and we certainly can seek no solace in unilateralism which is a recipe for failure in our foreign policy in a globalized world where we need friends and we need allies to be successful in confronting all the challenges that are facing us.

If you would agree with me that that's the great change that has taken place over the last 10 or 15 years but is just now becoming apparent, especially to those of us who work in government who have to deal with bilateral and multilateral agendas, then what's the specific agenda for Europe and America in 2007 and beyond?

I would break it down into two areas. First, there's some remaining work that needs to be done in Europe to fulfill this fantastic opportunity that we've had in the last generation to see Europe become truly united, peaceful, and stable, and there's one part of Europe that has not received the benefits of that vision, and that is the Balkans.

Second, what is the global agenda that is right now driving NATO and the U.S. and European Union as we seek to work together in the world?

A word on both: This will be a year of transformation and change in the Balkans. It's the year when we are going to face the final status for Kosovo. It was nearly eight years ago when the NATO leaders led by President Clinton, Prime Minister Blair, and others decided we had to intervene in the ethnic cleansing of the Kosovar Albanians to save those people, and to turn back for a second time in a decade the armies of Serbia led by Slobodan Milosevic. We did so successfully, and the people of Kosovo have now waited nearly eight years to discover what would happen to them. Would they live in an independent country? Would they continue to be associated within a greater Serbia, Serb state? The answer will come in just about four to five weeks' time when President Martti Ahtisaari, the UN negotiator, reveals to the Security Council what is the result of his negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina.

The United States is committed to support President Ahtisaari. We've been leading an international effort to set up his negotiations, and I think around the middle part of March or the end of March you'll see a very vigorous debate at the United Nations about the future of Kosovo, and we hope that one will be of peace, and a peaceful transition to a better future for the people of that province.

We also have some work to do to try to still the forces of irredentism and of violence that unfortunately are part of the fabric of Balkan political life in our time. There are still some Serbs who believe that the Serbs should unite themselves -- the Serbs in Serbia, in Kosovo, and in Bosnia, and that kind of irredentist force which was so destructive when

Yugoslavia broke up 10 or 15 years ago cannot be allowed to return to be a political force in the Balkans.

The Dayton Accords were a uniquely creative instrument to stop a war in the fall of 1995. But now 12 years later, nearly 12 years later they cannot be the way that the people of Bosnia Herzegovina organize themselves for the next 10 years. There has to be an effort made by the people of the region to modernize the Dayton Accords and to allow Bosnia Herzegovina to become a modern state in constitutional and legal and political terms.

Those two objectives, along with bringing Croatia and Albania and Macedonia into NATO in 2008 or '09, those would be the initiatives that we should take to bring the Balkans into association with the European Union and NATO, and to finally break down the institutional and national barriers that have retarded the progress of the people of the Balkans, compared say to the peoples of Central Europe, and to give them a future in NATO and the EU that would solidify for the people of the Balkans the same advantages that the West and Central Europeans have had since the end of communism 15, 16 years ago. That's an important priority for Europe. It's also an important priority for the United States.

The second intra-European issue that is so much a part of our current agenda is what to do about Russia, how to relate to modern Russia, how to be a partner with Russia, but also how to protect NATO and the European Union and the states of Central Europe from whatever dangers may lurk in the future.

You've all seen the extraordinary -- you've heard about or saw the extraordinary speech that President Putin gave at the Wehrkunde Conference in Munich two weeks ago. You've seen this unusually unwise and irresponsible statement by the Russian General Staff about targeting the Czech Republic and Poland because they have the temerity to negotiate with the United States a missile defense agreement.

Our response to that has been that we need to seek a balanced relationship with Russia. We need to take account of what is working in our relationship with Russia but also to be very clear about where we disagree with the Russian leadership -- whether it's on the lack of democracy inside Russia itself, the declining fortunes of the democrats in the Russian political spectrum; whether it's on Russia's attempts to, we think, be overbearing at times in their relations with their neighbors; or whether it's the recent Russian reaction to our attempt to establish a modern missile defense system in Europe, not aimed at the Russians themselves, of course, but aimed at the threats that emanate from Iran and other countries to the south of Russia.

A balanced picture of the U.S.-Russian relationship would take account of the following. That on the two major issues that we face globally -- our ability to defend ourselves against terrorist threats, and our ability to restrain countries from becoming nuclear powers -- Russia is one of our strongest partners worldwide. And on the first, Russia's been a victim of terrorism, the United States has been a victim of terrorism, and we have

achieved a degree of cooperation with the Russians in terms of intelligence and counter-terrorism work which has been, frankly, vital to our abilities to be successful in countering terrorist groups worldwide.

On the second, the Russians are working with us in the six-party talks in North Korea. You saw the success we had there last week. The Russians have been a good partner in Security Council debates about Iran and in our successful passage of a Security Council resolution just before Christmas in December of 2006 to impose Chapter VII sanctions on Iran. Russia has argued that countries should be responsible stewards of their fissile material and nuclear warheads. So in these two important respects, the United States' global interests do coincide and intersect quite nicely and on a favorable basis with the Russian Federation.

But in other areas we see that the Russians and our government -- perhaps other governments in Western Europe -- are operating at cross-purposes.

We believe that Georgia should have a right to define its own future. We believe that Georgia should have the right to seek membership or association with international organizations like NATO in the future if that is what Georgia elects to do, and if Georgia, of course, at some point in its future history meets the requirements of NATO membership.

We believe that Moldova should be allowed to overcome the internal divisions that have held that nation back since the breakup of the Soviet Union in December 1991.

And we certainly believe that the three Baltic countries -- Estonia and Latvia and Lithuania, now members of both the European Union but especially of NATO -- have a right to live in peace and free of the harassment that is sometimes afflicted upon them by the Russian Federation.

We're concerned about the lack of democracy inside Russia itself, the declining fortunes of those who stand up for democracy in Russia.

So I know that President Putin put a number of criticisms before the world audience about United States foreign policy. We have been equally clear about where we disagree with the Russian Federation, and that's our responsibility to do that -- to define a modern relationship in those terms, to be frank about what's working and to thank the Russian Federation when we are able to achieve things together whether it's on counter-terrorism or counter-proliferation, but to be equally frank that when there are challenges in the relationship we face those challenges, and we disagree with the Russians publicly when they do things that are profoundly not in our interest and against the interests of our friends in Europe. This is an important relationship, obviously, for the future.

Russia is going to have to understand that NATO will continue to exist. NATO will continue to grow. We will continue to add members to the NATO Alliance. And the strength of NATO will be based on our common will and our ability to project NATO as

a force for peace and for stability as it certainly is in its Afghan mission. And Russia has to understand that NATO is not and has not been, for the history, for the many years since 1989, '90 and '91, directed at all against Russia, but is the one uniquely unifying force for peace and stability in Europe itself.

NATO enlargement, and if you read Ron Asmus and Greg Craig's op-ed in the *Washington Post* yesterday, NATO enlargement has brought so many positive benefits to the Europeans, as well as to the North Americans over the last 15 years that we think NATO's vocation has to be strong in the future.

We have invited Russia into a NATO-Russia partnership five years ago in Italy. It has worked well at points, but it's been sometime disappointing in a lack of a strategic engagement. That was apparent in the Russian reaction to our plan to establish a very small number of interceptors in Poland and at radar sites in the Czech Republic, to have some capacity to deter the looming missile threat from Iran and other states in the Middle East that all the European countries and the United States face.

To think that in this day and age a member of the Russian General Staff would threaten two NATO countries because they have the temerity to consider negotiating this agreement with us is really quite astounding. Secretary Rice said today when she was asked about this in Berlin, "It was profoundly unwise for that statement to be made, and we hope that the Russians will think twice about such statements in the future."

So those two issues -- relations with Russia and relations, our efforts to try to solidify progress in the Balkans -- are part of the remaining business that the Europeans and Americans have to do to create this unified democratic space that is the strategic objective of both of us as we look to the future.

There is also a global agenda, and I would just list five challenges for the United States and Europe as we operate globally, as we seek to have an integrated approach to the rest of the world for 2007 and beyond. And these five challenges encompass the most important priorities for the United States, and I think right now they're at the heart of the transatlantic relationship.

The first great challenge for us is to be successful in Afghanistan. This is an American and European joint venture to assist the Afghan government, the Afghan people, and the neighbors of Afghanistan, such as Pakistan and India, to be successful in trying to beat back the tactical attacks of the Taliban and al Qaeda, to help bring humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, and to help rebuild this country which had to live under such a difficult regime for 25 years prior to the American intervention in October 2001.

The United States has 27,000 soldiers in Afghanistan. Secretary Gates has said we'll maintain very strong troop levels. We've just asked the Congress for \$11.6 billion in American military and economic assistance to Afghanistan for the next two years. That is an extraordinary leap over the amount of money that we've spent in Afghanistan over

the past five years, which totals \$14 billion. It does show that the United States is in this for the long haul, that we believe we can be successful in Afghanistan, but it's going to take a major effort. And that effort has to come from the Europeans as well. We have to see the infrastructure of the country rebuilt; we have to see the Europeans be willing to put their troops into combat situations.

NATO has now had to face an existential crisis of sorts. We are fighting in Kandahar, Oruzgan, in Helmand and Paktia provinces, United States military forces, with the Dutch and the Canadians and the British and the Estonians and the Romanians. But most of the other NATO allies are deployed to the west and to the north. When we have a firefight, as we did, a major firefight with the Taliban in September, and need tactical reinforcements, it's incumbent upon the NATO allies to come to the support of those NATO allies engaged in the combat. That did not happen in September. And too many of our allies have said that they're quite willing to be garrison troops in the northern and western parts of the country that are relatively quiet and peaceful, but not willing to come down to where the Taliban is crossing the border in great numbers and where al Qaeda is also taking on the American, Afghan, and those NATO allied forces that I named. We need to see that effort from the Europeans. We need to see more European soldiers in Afghanistan, more European money devoted to the task of rebuilding the country, and we are absolutely confident that with that type of cohesive and strong -- cohesive and strong and unified Western effort, we can give the type of support to the Afghan government that the Afghan government requires to be successful.

The Taliban does not represent, in our judgment, a strategic threat to the government of Afghanistan, but it does represent a threat in Kandahar, in Helmand, in Oruzgan, in Paktia provinces; to the young girls who are trying to go to school and the Taliban is trying to intimidate them from going to school, through the assassination of local political leaders that the Taliban has been engaged in. We have to repel that, along with the Afghan forces. We have the capacity to do it, but Europe has to join us in that effort, and that has been our message at the last two NATO meetings that Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates have attended. That would be a first challenge for our relationship.

A second would be to see a combined U.S.-European effort to confront the four great interlocking challenges that confront us in the Middle East. The extraordinarily difficult challenge that we have in Iraq, number one.

Number two, our common interest in convincing, cajoling, sanctioning the Iranian government so that they do not have the capacity to become a nuclear weapon state and do not have the capacity to become the most dominant state in the region, which is clearly the ambition of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

Third, to protect the democratically elected government of Prime Minister Siniora in Lebanon against the axis of Hezbollah, Syria, and Iran, who want to destabilize that government and actually drive him from power and put Hezbollah on the throne.

And fourth, to support the effort that Secretary Rice began this week in Jerusalem, and that is to see if progress can be made between Israel and the Palestinian leadership in the nearly 60-year effort by every American administration to try to seek a final peace between Israel and the Palestinians and to create the Palestinian state that the United States believes is necessary for peace and stability in the Middle East.

Those are the four crises that confront us. We need European political and economic support on every one of them, and the Europeans are involved in every one. But we need a degree of unity and of cohesiveness in our approach to be effective in all of them.

I think as a career diplomat in nonpartisan terms. No matter what happens in our elections in the fall of 2008, the next American administration will have to face these four issues, just as the last two, President Bush and President Clinton, have faced them as well. That would be a second challenge for the U.S.-European relationship.

A third is to confront the myriad of problems, but also opportunities that are presented to Europe and the United States in Africa. This is a new area of cooperation for both of us. And I think frankly it's one of the most welcome changes that I've seen in American national security thinking.

I was away in Europe, serving in Europe with some people in this audience between 1997 and 2005, and when I returned the greatest single change that I observed in the way our government thought about the world was that we now thought about Africa as a national security concern. We thought of African countries and the African Union as national security partners, and we thought that our vital interests were engaged. And that's why we have promoted this \$15 billion global HIV/AIDS program, which is primarily focused on 10 countries in Africa. It's why we have nearly quadrupled American development assistance to Africa in the last five years. It's why we now think of the African Union in Addis Ababa as a regional actor that is critical if we want to be successful in Sudan, in Darfur, or in Somalia or in lots of other problems in the continent.

And it's why Europe and America need to think of strategic engagements with Nigeria and South Africa and Uganda and Kenya and Tanzania and Senegal and Congo, some of the leading countries of the continent. They are our national security partners. And so whether it's on disease prevention, HIV/AIDS prevention, poverty alleviation, or conflict resolution, Europe and America have a common interest in doing what we have to do to help the Africans overcome these problems, because these problems do represent, do have a long-term impact especially on Europe, but also on the United States of America.

And I would just say, in terms of our African agenda, two short-term priorities. Can we take advantage of the very surprising and very effective Ethiopian military offensive to drive the radical Islamists out of Mogadishu and out of power in Somalia, to see an African regional peacekeeping force go in as it is in the next few weeks to Somalia, and then to see it succeeded by a United Nations peacekeeping force. And we just voted in the Security Council yesterday to authorize that force, to provide the people of Somalia with some long-term stability which they have been denied now going on 20 years.

Second, can we be successful in using our combined European and American political influence on the government of Sudan to convince that government that we must have a combined African Union and UN peacekeeping force in Darfur to stop the genocide that is currently underway. It hasn't stopped. We have reports every week of humanitarian abuses, of rapes, of killings of the citizens of Darfur by the Janjaweed and allegations of complicity at certain times by the government of Sudan itself. We have an opportunity with Europe to press that agenda on the Sudanese government, and it's one that we have to do with a great deal of determination and speed in the coming months. And so Africa would, in my view, be a third challenge and opportunity for the United States and Europe.

Fourth, support for the United Nations. If you go anywhere in the world, any region of the world, any country in the world, the United Nations is playing, in many cases, a major role -- in some countries, the indispensable role. And it's going to be up to the wealthiest contributors to the UN system, the permanent members of the Security Council, to lead the way in helping Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon to revitalize the United Nations, to reinforce its ability to be effective in peacekeeping.

We just talked about Africa. Whether it's in Congo or Sierra Leone or Cote d'Ivoire or Sudan or Somalia, it's the United Nations that people are calling on to be an effective instrument of international peacekeeping. And to be successful in peacekeeping, you need trained soldiers. You need finance, you need training, you need logistical support, air support, airlift support, and most of that comes from the NATO countries, from the European and North American countries in NATO. So a combined effort by Europe and America to reinforce what Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon is trying to do to rebuild UN peacekeeping, and to make the UN, as it must be, a leading instrument of the international community around the world. That's certainly a priority for the United States. I know it is for the European countries who have always been devoted supporters of the UN.

And fifth and finally, I would say that the U.S.-European agenda will ultimately, in the next generation come down to the following proposition: Can we engage and work together productively on the great multilateral challenges posed by our age of globalization? If the coming agenda in the world is not the traditional agenda of war and peace but the multilateral agenda of global climate change and of international crime cartels and international narcotics cartels and trafficking of women and children and global terrorism and its juxtaposition with chemical and biological and nuclear weaponry -- if those are the greatest global challenges that we're going to face on a national as well as international basis, well then we need a joint American and European strategy to be effective in confronting all those challenges.

And there is a positive side to globalization -- the extraordinary multiplier effect of the information age in lifting people out of poverty, as we've seen in India and China; and the ability to prevent diseases and to deal with global afflictions like HIV/AIDS pandemics. There's a positive side in our capacity to be successful, but the dark side are those problems like global climate change and terrorism and crime and narcotics. And no

matter what our power is as a country, Germany or the United States or Spain or France or Italy, none of us can attack those problems alone, certainly not the United States of America.

And so it means that we Americans have to reengage with the rest of the world and we have to speak to the agenda of the rest of the world. And, as I traveled in Brazil and Argentina two weeks ago and the Middle East two weeks before that, this is the global agenda. This is what people are talking about in their parliaments, in their newspapers, as they discuss their political futures. And America needs to be part of that global agenda. We need to lead it, and our natural, indispensable partner is going to be the countries of Europe because they do have the capacity and they have the vision to attack these problems with us and to overcome them in the future. And that, I would say, would be one of the great challenges, not just for 2007 but for the next 10 or 15 or 20 years to come. Can we be effective multilaterally? And can we Americans recognize that this multilateral agenda is very much an American agenda, but also one that we have to act in concert with the Europeans to be successful?

Having said all that, it's an exciting time for our two continents. It's a hopeful time, if you look back over the last 20 years and how much we've accomplished, and I'm very proud to be part of an effort with our European partners to be working in all of these issues and very pleased to have the support of Fred and David and all of you who've done so much for the Atlantic Council, to have this institution help us to define this agenda, to drive it forward, and to gain the necessary support in our own society so that we can be successful together with Europe. I think it does represent a new age in the U.S.-Europe relationship, and one that is promising, but also one that has great consequences for success or failure.

Thank you very much.