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Edward on Foreign Relations

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I thank you very much, Ted, for your friendship and your introduction. I'm delighted to be with you and Pete Peterson as well and [inaudible] is missing but his wife Judy is present, which is a special treat as well. I want to thank the Council on Foreign Relations for giving me this opportunity to speak here again-the second time I've been so fortunate to address this group.

But I want to thank the Council for what you have done and stood for over the last century. To challenge the forces of isolationism and champion internationalism, reflective both in our enduring values and our strategic interest.

I want to spend a few minutes talking about some of these underlying values and interests-and then I'm particularly looking forward to the question and answer period.

Now we could not have known a month ago that this reception would take place against the backdrop of the most serious violence and serious threat to Israel since 1973. I am-as I know all of you are-pleased to hear the news out of Egypt, with the president's announcement this morning, that the parties have agreed to a cease-fire.

But clearly the road ahead is a long and difficult one. And agreements in a conference room must be translated into reality on the streets, and they're going to obviously hope and pray that this agreement holds.

But I think we will also expect that Chairman Arafat and the Palestinians to end the violence and make it very clear the renunciation of it that is (inaudible). Then whether or not we can continue to work toward an enforceable or comprehensive peace agreement that guarantees Israel's security and is in the best interest of peace in the Middle East, we will have to wait to determine.

Now, in the days ahead, obviously the United States must continue to stand with Israel and our policies in the Middle East have to be governed by these core values. In this case,

that means a commitment to Israel's security, a staunch and stalwart support of our friend and ally militarily, politically, diplomatically, and economically. And support of a resumption of the peace process.

We also come here today in the aftermath of the brutal terrorist attack against our sailors on the USS Cole and, in effect, an attack on our nation. We have to make clear that we will protect our people, that we will do everything in our power to find out who committed this terrorist act, that we will hold them accountable. And that we call again on the world to join us in cracking down on and tracking down terrorists and those who harbor them-whether they are arms dealers, (inaudible) criminals, or rogue states.

I also come here this morning mourning the death of a good friend of my husband's and mine, Governor Mel Carnahan of Missouri. He was killed with his son and a close campaign aide on his small airplane last night. And I extended my condolences to Mrs. Carnahan and certainly to all the families and the people of Missouri. Mel Carnahan would have been a very fine senator, in the tradition of Harry Truman in the United States Senate.

There is much disagreement these days, that we hear in the presidential debate, over America's proper role in the world. What are our national interests? How can they be promoted? How can we better make the case that the costs of our involvement in dollars, leadership, and influence is usually less than the cost of our inaction?

These and other questions should be asked not only of presidential candidates, but of us all. And I would like briefly to make three points that I believe should inform such a national conversation.

First, at this decisive moment in our history, I believe America needs a renewed internationalism, not an old isolationism. This new internationalism must be shaped, of course, to meet new challenges. But it very much is in our interest to exert leadership required to meet our strategic and national security needs and interests around the globe.

Second, new challenges require new thinking about national interest and security-which is certainly one of the contributions that the Council and your many scholars make

to this effort. We have a clear responsibility to address issues like military strength, terrorism, or trade.

But these are albeit a necessary, but not sufficient understanding of the world in which we live and lead. I have argued for some time that issues like women's basic human rights, the spread of deadly diseases, absolute poverty, the flight of refugees, environmental degradation, and other new challenges should be included in the debate about America's foreign policy objectives.

And three, our ability to protect our interests abroad depends on creating a stronger constituency for American international leadership here at home. This is an issue that the Council is particularly well-suited to address because it is clear that that kind of constituency has diminished over the last decades.

Now we have faced questions like these and others before. In the last century, isolationism prevailed after World War I, and our values were trampled around the world, our security was ultimately threatened.

After World War II, by contrast, we looked outwards toward engagement, not abandonment of American leadership. We looked toward the Marshall Plan to help old allies and enemies alike rebuild as trading partners and strategic friends. And we really developed an understanding that the future of our prosperity as well as our (inaudible) depended on extending peace and the means for economic development, democracy, and freedom to every part of the world.

Now we must choose again. And my first point is that while the world around us has changed, the strength of our international leadership cannot waver. Of course, it is only coincidental that as I mentioned future of our troubled lives, my daughter (inaudible).

New York is comprised of people who trace roots to every corner of the world, know that prosperity is linked to the global economy, and that our fates are tied to events occurring thousands of miles away. This is a state where our senators—from our current senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Chuck Schumer to Jacob Javits and Robert Kennedy—have championed our nation's responsibilities to and in the world. That is a tradition I hope to build on.

Now this is a very different time from when my husband and another George Bush ran for president. In 1992, the Cold War was over, but the new world order was not yet clear. The sudden disappearance of the bipolar confrontation leaves questions that we are still pondering. What after all (inaudible) if not to Soviet domination? What was so-called Third World (inaudible) those alignments had dissolved.

We look at the world today in this new century-the contours are becoming but are still vague and uncertain. That's a problem that about a decade ago (inaudible) because nations freed from the Soviet Union would defend ethnic warfare and ancient animosities, what he called the (inaudible).

He pointed to the barbarism that Milosevic was imposing on the Balkans. Now we can say that, as of last week, the people that have overthrown Milosevic in the wake of the NATO campaign and Europe is more united and free than it's ever been in its history. But in a fast-changing world, nothing is certain. And even events such as those we witnessed in the Balkans may or may not presage what is to come.

We're fortunate that we do have a static democracy. But I believe strongly that our leadership in spreading that democracy and maintaining it has not yet reached its full potential in ensuring that we do all we can to shore up those who are fighting for democracy in still undemocratic regimes, and to do more to help those leaders of the newly democratic states.

There's always a rising force in a time of change, and particularly in our country, that we are little to the rest of the world, and we are little or nothing to international cooperation.

There is a refrain that once (inaudible) that we should intervene with force only when face [inaudible] wars that we surely can win, preferably by overwhelming force in a relatively short period of time.

To those who believe we should become involved only if it is easy to do, I think we have to say: America has never and should not ever shy away from the hard task if it is the right one. Just because we are living in a new and uncertain world, it does not mean we cannot continue to exercise our leadership.

During the recent presidential debates, foreign policy issues were at least discussed. But I think that those issues should be discussed in every congressional and Senate race because clearly, in the United States Congress today, there is not a consensus for international leadership. And we need more who are running for office and holding office to be asked the pivotal questions about where they stand on the issues of today and tomorrow.

Now there are many questions I hope we can get to in the period following my remarks, but let me just say a few things about what the people of this state can expect from me in the United States Senate.

First and foremost, I believe a strong defense is as important as ever. I will work to ensure that we continue to have the best-trained, best-equipped military force in the history of the world that is ready to fight, if necessary, and win.

I will work to guarantee America's leadership in promoting arms control and curbing nuclear proliferation. And that includes voting for the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

I will work tirelessly to safeguard the security of our allies such as Israel, and promote peace in the Middle East. I will also support people who are struggling for peace, such as those in Northern Ireland (inaudible) of the Good Friday Accords.

I will work to promote economic development and democracy in Africa and Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe. And I will certainly work to ensure that Russia continues to draw down its nuclear arsenal, and that Russia (inaudible) to advance democracy and religious freedom and freedom of the press.

Had I been in the Senate this year, I would have voted for normalizing trade relations with China. I will continue to fight on behalf of basic human rights there and around the world. And I will vote to pay our dues to the UN and support critical reform.

I believe that our country cannot afford to be an island of prosperity, that we should use free trade and open markets to increase our fortunes at home and raise living standards abroad. But I also maintain that ensuring fair labor standards,

environmental protection, and transparency in international organizations should go hand-in-hand with free trade.

Now these are just a few of the principles and positions I would take with me to the Senate as part of maintaining and promoting an international perspective that keeps America's leadership strong around the world.

But my second point is that there are additional challenges we must do more to address. Challenges such as AIDS and women's rights, which are becoming more critical in this global era. I gave a speech some years ago in which I said that in addition to real politick, we need to be looking at what I call real-life politics.

The effect of decisions on people's everyday lives becomes a new media environment that can have just as much of an influence on an administration making a decision as any abstract balance of power calculation.

In many ways, this a continuation of the discussion we had here four years ago, when I spoke to the council about women and development. But since then, I have seen even more work take place on issues like these. We've seen, for example, the G-8 and other major mass international organizations such as the World Bank recognize the importance of problems such as illiteracy, foreign debt, and AIDS.

So despite the objection of some, I think it has become frequently clear that our efforts to ensure democracy and human rights cannot be considered marginal, but are indeed central to our foreign policy and justice in this century.

I come to these beliefs as someone who's been privileged to travel to every continent but Antarctica in the last seven years representing our country. I've seen the difference that US leadership has made and is making. I can see the effect of aid and trade, our investment and our commitments on the lives on both leaders and people.

I've tried not only to meet with leaders but also with the men and women and children who will be charting the course of their countries and their regions and will, for better or worse, impact on our own security. I think, for example, the importance of our environment in promoting civil societies

throughout the world, ensuring free and fair elections that determine the direction of countries.

I sat in a small apartment in Siberia talking with three generations of a Russian family, getting a much clearer idea of what it is that is at stake in the various forces that are still working in Russia to determine the direction that country takes really means.

I talked with women who are benefiting from my prophetic, from shantytowns and cape towns, to villages in Uganda to barrios in Guatemala, and I know that there is a tremendous potential for us to support economic development at the macro-credit grassroots level.

I've also been privileged to help start something called the Vital Way Towards Democracy Initiative, which is founded by US commitments to survey democracy by enlisting and including women in the democratizing of their nation. We've had conferences around the world bringing women together following up on the Beijing conference where we made clear that women's rights are human rights.

The stories that I've told I've tried to bring back to our governments, to the private sector, to make clear that there is important work that is happening below the surface, under the radar screen, that can have very big payoffs for our interests abroad.

It is something that President Truman, I think, referred to when he wrote a special message to Congress to discuss economic aid to Europe. He talked about how our nation is strong in material resources and the spirit of its people, that we have an economic strength that has contributed to raising living standards and a moral strength that is the inspiration for people everywhere. I think that is as true today, although in a very different context, as it was when he was President.

We have to use our moral and material strengths in ways that serve our evolving interests. We will not have strong markets to invest in or democratic allies to depend on if children aren't in schools, if ethnic cleansing is ripping apart our communities, if women are being silenced and brutalized as they are in Afghanistan, and if more than half the population of the country is basically marginalized and left behind.

We have to ask ourselves what hope does the global market hold for the tens of millions of victims of child labor, who, instead of going to school, are sent out to work in the most dangerous and deadly conditions, or for the 100 million street children without homes or families, whom I've seen everywhere from Brazil to Mongolia, who are being left to fend for themselves.

What meaning do words like freedom have for the 300,000 child soldiers caught up in brutal wars in Africa? I've met with those children, 3 of them from Pallas, who, like so many others, have been kidnapped and used as human shields, taken into a world where children are forced to kill each other and where girls are raped and given away as wives to rebel commanders.

The global marketplace has meant that business can be shipped more easily across national borders, but one of the most tragic and unintended consequences has been that every year one million women and children are being bought and sold as well. They come from South Asia, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, Central America. Fifty five percent end up in our own country acting as prostitutes or indentured servants.

This is a significant human rights violation and it has become one of the fastest criminal enterprises in the world, second only to drugs and arms. I've talked with many of these women and their families and they've told me how desperate for economic opportunity in believing they could get well-paying jobs as babysitters or even waitresses or sales clerks and found themselves a part of the international trade in human beings.

Over the past years in the Ukraine and Thailand and U.N. meetings, I've shone a spotlight on these women and I am pleased the U.N. is supposed to adopt (inaudible) in the convention (inaudible) international organized crime, which requires our country to make the trafficking of human beings a crime. And just last week, our Congress passed the first comprehensive U.S. legislation to address this tragedy. This is a bill that I was very interested in and worked on and (inaudible) to the president's desk and I think it puts the United States on the right side in the fight against modern slavery.

We also have to be willing to address another major threat to our national security which (inaudible) in our borders and that is the emergence of new infectious diseases like, AIDS and the reemergence of old foes like Malaria and TB. I applaud (inaudible) of putting AIDS on the U.N. agenda and particularly focusing on the ravages of AIDS in Africa.

We face the possibility of having 40 million children orphaned by AIDS in the next decade and the AIDS epidemic is now on its way to Asia where its impact is (inaudible) if one can believe it is more potentially deadly than what it has been already in Africa.

We also have to stand in the fight against poverty and make it clear that the digital divide that is separating the haves and the have-nots into the have manys and have less, leaving the have nots even further behind, is something that deserves our attention as well. I think that the opportunity for economic development is particularly strong, with a focus on women and their ability to use microcredit to improve their lives and the lives of their children and pay that loan, that rate, their monthly 99, 100%. Rates that are the envy of most commercial banks.

And again I am pleased that Congress recognizes the importance of this (inaudible) the Microenterprise for Self Reliance Act, which I have long worked for and moving up closer to the goal of helping 100 million of the world's poorest entrepreneurs.

So there are many issues that I think deserve to be part of our discussion about internationalism and America's leadership. But my third and final point is that if we are serious about combating any of our long term global challenges then would have to create a broader, deeper, stronger constituency for engagement. I think one of our greatest threats to an international leadership is not just opposition to those who probably don't have passports, but apathy of those who do.

And this is from polling data and research information from the 1960s. And it was striking to me how business leaders understood clearly the need for a bipartisan foreign policy and a very strong presence in support of American leadership. That has certainly changed over the last decade. That's where people's eyes often glaze over when we are talking about foreign policy issues we clearly need to bring home the

stakes in these issues put human faces on them but we need leadership in the private sector and the public sector to do that.

As we speak there are a lot of foreign policy discussions going on in Congress as they take up this final appropriations bill. I hope that Congress will vote to support counter-terrorism efforts, embassy security and the debt reduction necessary to allow poor countries to improve the health and welfare of their citizens.

I hope Congress will decide to honor our international responsibilities by paying our UN dues and helping to fund peacekeeping missions from Sierra Leone to East Timor. And I hope Congress will stop attacking family planning, which we have seen reduce abortions, infant and maternal mortality, and poverty around the world. Of course, when it comes to engagement overseas, one of the most important votes that Senators will cast next January will be for Senate Majority Leader.

I've read a lot about the Marshall Plan, and I know it was a difficult sell for General Marshall and President Truman and Secretary of State Acheson and others. It was tough going around the country saying, "We want to use your tax dollars to rebuild our former enemies."

But what occurred was a broad coalition of people in government, the private sector, academia throughout our country who came together and literally (inaudible) our college campuses, our civic clubs, (inaudible) the entire nation.

It is an important goal for us to maintain a bipartisan consensus on foreign policy- and I will certainly work hard to achieve that. But, we cannot achieve that if the debate about America's role does not take place among our citizens and particularly among our leaders as well.

This is something that I have been concerned about for some time. Two years ago, I brought leaders from both parties together to talk about how we could increase public support for our continuing international engagement. I've spoken out about this topic every chance I get - whether it is in front of students, business leaders, or foreign policy experts such as many of you.

But I think we need to go further. I believe that we need a public education campaign that not only educates but inspires Americans to understand and support our leadership in the world today. Elected officials, journalists, business leaders and others who travel around the world have an opportunity to help those of us here at home understand what the real stakes are. This is a cause that I hope I will have some role in promoting in the Senate because I think in the absence of a more consistent, more forceful voice on the part of business leaders, particularly, the Congress will not respond.

And it is clearly in business' interest now that every business is a global business to follow in the footsteps of predecessors in the post War era to the end of the Cold War who were very strong opponents of the kind of engagement that is good for business as well as good for America.

But we need a (inaudible) budget to work with the Council on such an effort. This is certainly the tradition of this State and its Senators. And I look forward to having the opportunity to follow in that tradition and to work tirelessly to help meet America's great international challenges in this next century.

Thank you very much.