



THE WAVE OF FREEDOM

EARLY LESSONS
FROM THE
MIDDLE EAST



GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER
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May 26, 2011

SMU Campus | Dallas, Texas





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Presented by the George W. Bush Institute



Welcome & Dr. Condoleezza Rice
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Ambassador
Jim Glassman:

— of the George W. Bush Institute. The policy innovation arm of the Bush Center, which will include a presidential library and museum. Our home is rising just a few short steps from here. And you can see it photographed every few minutes on our website. I think we have a picture of it right now. Speaking of website, I would like to welcome the audience joining us via live webcast on www.bushcenter.com.

We open in less than two years, but as you can tell, we aren't waiting for our building to begin operations of the institute. This is our seventh major conference since our launch in November 2009, and we've begun several important programs in our four areas of engagement: Education reform, global health, economic growth, and human freedom. In all our areas we empower women through out women's initiative chaired by Mrs. Bush, and we honor and support the sacrifices made by troops and their families through our military service initiative.

In human freedom, the area of engagement for our conference today, our mission is to help spread freedom through providing moral support, education, and practical assistance. Our first program in this area is the Freedom Collection. A permanent archive of video and artifacts telling the stories of men and women who have led freedom movements from the last century to the present day. Including inspirational figures such as Vaclav Havel, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and the Dalai Lama.

Throughout today's conference, you will see a selection of videos from the Freedom Collection, and a website featuring videos and other material related to the collection will be launched at the end of this year. And if you flip over your name card, you will find a brief bio of a freedom advocate featured in the collection. And we hope that you will take these cards home and let them serve as a reminder of the brave men and women who continue to fight for freedom around the world.

In recent months the world has witnessed dramatic expressions of freedom across the Middle East, most notably in Egypt and Tunisia, where autocratic regimes were overthrown. Today's conference moves beyond the twenty-four hour news cycle, and allows us to look more closely at these important events. We want to answer such questions as: What were the causes and catalysts of the Arab Spring? What really happened? For example, what was the role of social media like Facebook and Twitter? What is likely to occur in the near future? That is the course of elections in democratic institutions? What effect is the Arab Spring having on other Arab and non-Arab nations with repressive regime, such as Syria, Iran, and Venezuela? And finally, what, if anything can those of us in this room, and in fact people around the world, do to encourage the spread of freedom?

After hearing from our initial distinguished speakers, we will take a short break and then return for three panel discussions and remarks from Mrs. Bush.

And now it is my honor to introduce the founder and inspiration of the Bush Institute, the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush.

President
George W. Bush:

Please be seated. Welcome, and thank you for coming. Laura and I are thrilled that you are here. And we welcome you to SMU. For those of you who don't know much about SMU, you are on the campus of an excellent university. And we're honored to be associated with SMU. I want to thank Ambassador Mark Langdale for his leadership, Secretary Don Evans for his leadership, and Jim Glassman for his leadership. I am honored to be in the midst of folks who are leading the cause of freedom and for the enablers.

People ask me about what's going on in the Middle East, and as you probably know by now, I'm retired, and so I'm not opining that much. But here's what I think. I think we live in exciting times, and I'm not surprised that freedom continues to march forward. And the reason that I'm not surprised is because I believe, and many in this room believe, deep in the soul of every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth is the desire to be free. It is a desire to have their voices heard, and it is a desire to live under governments that are responsive to their needs.

I have read a lot of history during my 64 years. It is clear that it takes time for freedom to take root. And so while these are exciting times, these times also require a degree of patience, particularly from those of us who live in the comfortable lives of free societies. We've got to understand that sometimes the seed is planted on rocky soil and it takes time. And one of the dangers for the freedom movement around the world is that the United States grows weary and becomes isolated from the inevitable march of freedom.

It's important for our country to understand that what happens abroad affects us at home. And that the spread of free societies make our country more secure and make the world more peaceful. And it's important to recognize that the spread of free societies upholds the idea that all human beings have worth and dignity.

The person who understood that clearly during my time in office was our dear friend Condoleezza Rice, who in the midst of difficult times remained optimistic. In the midst of challenging times stood on principal. I'm proud to call her friend. I was proud to call her Secretary of State, and I am proud to welcome her back to Dallas. Madam Secretary.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice: Thank you. Thank you very much. Well, thank you, Mr. President, for that wonderful introduction. And I would like to acknowledge someone who was really a partner with us as we pursued the American view that no man, woman, or child should have to live in tyranny, and that's First Lady, Laura Bush. Thank you very much for all that you did.

Well, the President said that he is now retired. This doesn't look like retirement to me. And in fact I have been out of government now for two and one-half years or so, and I'm back at Stanford University. The thing that's changed most in my life is that I get up every morning, I read the newspaper, and I think isn't that interesting. And then I go on to whatever else, but indeed it is interesting. These are remarkable, remarkable times.

As I watched the little clip of President Bush's second inaugural it struck me that he made in those remarks a very powerful moral case for democracy and freedom. A case that those of us who are fortunate enough to live on the right side of history, to enjoy the freedoms and liberties that we very often take for granted, have a moral obligation to stand with those who are still seeking the simple dignity, the simple enjoyment that we have, of being able to say what we think; to choose those who are going to govern us; to worship as we please; to educate our boys and our girls; to be free from the knock of the secret police at night; and to be free from the arbitrary power of the government. Those are great pleasures and great joys, but if we don't remember those who do not yet have those, then we ourselves are shirking our own responsibilities and our own obligations. And so there's a strong moral case for democracy.

But there's a practical case too. I was always struck that people often talked about those of us who advocated for freedom as idealists, somehow contrasting us with those who were realistic about the world. But we are seeing that the moral case is not the only case for democracy.

There is a practical case. The reality is that men, women, and children will not long be denied the freedoms that they seek, because it is a universal urging for those freedoms. That practical case that's playing out in the streets of the Middle East today is teaching us something very important. For more than 60 years, the United States while advocating for democracy in many, many parts of the world: Latin America, Africa, Europe, talked not about democracy in the Middle East, but about stability. We actually talked about stability not democracy and we got neither. Because authoritarianism is actually not stable. You see, every authoritarian fears what I've come to call the Ceausescu moment. When we were in Romania, Mr. President, the people told us about a moment when as revolutions were sweeping across Eastern Europe in Poland and Hungary and Czechoslovakia and East Germany, the dictator of Romania, Nicolae Ceausescu, went into a square in Bucharest — 250,000 people in the square, and he was exhorting the people about what he had done for them. And then all of a sudden one old lady yelled, "liar". Then ten people, then 100 people, then 1,000 people, and then 100,000 people are yelling "liar". And now Ceausescu realizes something is wrong. He'd better get out of there. And so he turns — he turns to a young military officer who is supposed to helicopter him to freedom, and instead delivers him to the revolution, and he and his wife, Elena, are executed.

The Ceausescu moment is the moment that every authoritarian fears, and that is the moment when the only thing standing between the authoritarian and his people breaks down. And that is fear itself. When fear breaks down, and one old lady yells, "liar" or a policeman refuses to fire, or an army officer turns his tank away from the crowd, the authoritarian has lost his power over his people. Fear is gone, and all that remains is anger. And anger is a terrible way to make political reform and transition.

That is why we adopted in the Freedom Agenda the view that we had to encourage reform. Yes, for moral reasons, but for practical reasons as well. And that reform is going to come now, but it now comes in the Middle East in the context of anger, not the calm that could have been there had the reforms been begun earlier. And so now it's going to be rocky. There are going to be voices that we don't want to hear saying things that we do not like. But it is better than the silence of tyranny, which does nothing but to cover that anger, make it seethe to the point that it explodes.

The extremist's forces in the Middle East are indeed strong. Indeed they are some of the best-organized forces in the Middle East, and that too is no accident. I can remember speaking with authoritarian leaders in the Middle East. Particularly I remember one conversation with President Mubarak in June of 2005. I was about to give a speech at the American University of Cairo, in which I would advocate for political reform and Egypt to lead that political reform. And President Mubarak in the meeting that morning — I didn't want him to be surprised, so I told him what I was going to say. And he said, "You don't know my people." He said, "They need a strong hand. It's me or the Muslim brotherhood." And in fact, the authoritarians were engaging in policies that made that true. It was a self-fulfilling prophecy, because decent political forces were cut out of the public square. Decent political forces were hounded by the secret police. They were not allowed to form political parties. Civil society was denied its voice, but the extremists — they operated and organized in the radical madrassas and in the radical mosques. And there's a reason that they are the best-organized forces today. But that is no reason to lose heart, because in the open air of contested politics, perhaps the slogan: "Elect us and we will impose Sharia Law. Elect us and we will make your children suicide bombers." Perhaps those slogans will not do so well in open contested politics.

And so, let them contest, but it will be rocky and it will be difficult. And so what are we to do in a region that is so important to us, but where frankly the reform has come so late? Well, we do have some important levers to shape events in the Middle East. I was always struck when people said, "You know, you can't impose democracy." And I would say, "That's absolutely right." You don't have to impose democracy. You impose tyranny. Democracy, if allowed to flourish, does emerge, but it's hard and it's tough and it takes time. So what are we to do?

Well, first of all, strengthen the seedlings of democracy that are in the Middle East already. And there are three to which I would point. Iraq. Iraq as our soon to be [audio malfunction 08:12] but a great man said, who would have thought several months ago that Iraq might be the best example of multiethnic, multiconfessional democracy. A democracy that is to be sure fragile, where they yell at each other and they say terrible things to each other, and sometimes they even march in the streets as Muqtada al-Sadr's forces have recently done. But they do have political institutions to which they are referring.

And I'll just tell you one little vignette that says something about what happens when political institutions are in place. An Iraqi legislator visited Israel, and when he came back the Iraqi Parliament tried to strip him of his citizenship, but the Iraqi Supreme Court said, "Iraqi citizens have the right to travel." You see, institutions, constitutions, documents that establish the relationship between the governed and those who would govern, are not always immediately effective, but they are there and people appeal to them. We have in our own history an example in that way. When Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks wanted to change America in the South where I was born, they didn't have to say that America needed to be something else. Only that America had to be what it said it was. Institutions matter. And in Iraq there are institutions. Strengthen them. Strengthen those seedlings as a way and beacon for the rest of the Middle East. Lebanon — a country with a sad history of confessional conflict, but nonetheless, where on March 14, 2005, a Lebanese sovereign government, more western oriented, willing to take on Syria, emerged. And even though there have been ups and downs in Lebanon, it is a different place than it was in 2003 or 2004. Strengthen those democratic forces. And in the West Bank of Palestine where despite all of the turbulence of the Israeli Palestinian conflict, a government under Mahmoud Abbas and Salam Fayyad, has built in the West Bank institutions and security forces that show us what a Palestinian state, a democratic Palestinian state, might look like. And so strengthen Iraq, strengthen Lebanon, strengthen the West Bank of Palestine.

Help support, secondly, healthy forces in places like Egypt and Tunisia, where there is something to work with. I see many people in this audience who have trained democracy advocates in those countries over the last several years, who have helped to built civil society, who've helped people to understand how to form political parties. We have good relations with professional armies that perhaps can be stabilizing forces. And so strengthen those forces, those healthy political forces in Egypt and Tunisia and places like that.

Third, press friends to reform faster than they might. And there the monarchs of the Middle East have an opportunity. Places like Jordan, Morocco, with reformist young kings, who perhaps can be pushed forward to constitutional monarchy, which is the future of monarchy in the Middle East if it is to have a future. And even in troubled Bahrain, and in conservative Saudi Arabia, there are seeds of reform.

I note that King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia has created a new grand university, because he recognized that the people of Saudi Arabia were learning no skills of real use in the twenty-first century. They were going to universities that just taught religious orthodoxy, and so the new university, where women will have their own area to study, is a potential element for reform. It can be women's empowerment. It can be freeing of civil society. It can be independent judiciaries, education for the people, the beginnings of a franchise for the people, but we have to tell our friends, those who have not accelerated reforms, that the Middle East is not going backward. They have no choice but to push forward and push for it quickly. You see, the fact is that the same principal has to be inviolable for the United States. Every man, woman, and child deserves to live in freedom, but the application of that principal to different circumstances requires different strategies and different tools. And so when you come to the irreconcilables and the unreconcilables, like Syria and Iran, come on. They're not going to make the transition to democracy. And they continue to be for the United States, not just a problem for our values, but a problem for our security too. The world will be better off with Bashar al-Assad, and better off without the Mullahs in Iran. And it's time to say so.

[Applause]

Finally, we need to recognize that there are some hard cases. Libya. I've actually met Muammar Gaddafi for three hours. He lives in his own head to a certain extent. And now that we have said that he has to go, we have to find a way to make it happen. I don't have an answer for you on precisely how it happens. One thing that you understand when you have been in government is that the calculations that are being made on any given day are myriad calculations that you can't possibly see from the outside. And so I, like President Bush, reserve my comments about administration policy for private times, because I know what it's like to be inside. It's a lot harder to be inside than it is to be outside. But we've made a call about Muammar Gaddafi. NATO is not a foreign being. NATO is us. Now that NATO is involved, we have to make certain that Gaddafi's regime does not survive, because if it does, he will go back to the bad habits that he had before he decided, after we took down Saddam Hussein, that maybe weapons of mass destruction didn't look that good after all. And we can all be very grateful that he doesn't have his weapons of mass destruction, but having said that he has to go, he has to go.

And then there's the tough case of Yemen. Yemen is a collection of tribes with insurgencies in the north and the south, and with al-Qaida all through it. The collapse of the regime in Yemen may bring us to another failed state that is a real problem for the counter terrorism fight. And so the situation in Yemen has to be dealt with carefully, but again, a regime that has lost the confidence of its people will not last. It's time to find a way for a stable transition in Yemen.

So it's going to be an interesting time if you sit where we do, and a rocky time if you sit in the White House or the State Department. But this is no time for the United States of America to lose its nerve, no time for the United States of America to lose confidence in our principals, no time for the United States of America to lose its voice in advocating for freedom. The overwhelming record of history is that in the long run our values and our interests are indeed one. In the short run, we will experience sometimes when our interests seem to be counter to our values. But those times rarely actually last. The United States more than any country in the world has a reason for belief in democracy and for patience. I referenced the time of the 1950s and 1960s in my home state of Alabama, where a little girl couldn't go to a movie theater with her family or to a restaurant. But where her parents had her pretty much convinced that she might not be able to have a hamburger at the Woolworth lunch counter, but she could be President of the United States if she wanted to be, and oh, by the way, she became Secretary of State. The United States is a place that in my lifetime finally began to deliver on the grand principals that the founding fathers had stated.

Let's be honest, when the founding fathers said, "We the People" they didn't mean me. Now it means me. That should tell us something about the journey about democracy. It is not actually a destination. It is a journey, and each day you get up and day-by-day you put another brick in place and it gets stronger. And that should be the message to the people of the Middle East, not we don't trust you with freedom; not you might elect people that we don't like. No, those are bad messages. The message should be, freedom is always worth it. It's hard. You've begun your journey. We will be with you. And we have to be optimistic that it will come out right. And we have reason also for optimism from history.

In 1989 to 1991, I was the White House Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War, and frankly, it doesn't get much better than that. I got a chance to see the liberation of Eastern Europe and the collapse of communism, the unification of Germany fully on western terms, and the beginnings of the peaceful collapse of the Soviet empire. But I had to recognize that the good decisions that led to that outcome had actually really been made in 1946 and 1947 and 1948. In 1946, when the Italian communist won 48 percent of the vote and the French communist 46 percent of the vote, when in 1947 Europeans were still starving, necessitating the Marshall Plan that there was civil war in Greece and civil conflict in Turkey. In 1948 the Berlin Crisis split Germany. Czechoslovakia fell to a communist coup. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon five years ahead of schedule. The Chinese communist won. And in 1950 the Korean War broke out.

Now, suppose in any of those years, or for that matter in 1960 or 1970 or 1980, I had told you the following: Guess what's going to happen? On November 9, 1989, the Berlin Wall is going to come down. And Germany is going to be unified completely on western terms. And then in December — December 25, 1991, the hammer and sickle is going to come down from the Kremlin for the last time. Seventy-five years of communism — never mind. And, oh by the way, in 2006, the President of the United States is going to attend a NATO summit in Latvia. If I'd said that in '60 or '70 or '80, you might have had me committed. What one-day seems impossible seems inevitable in retrospect. That is what we need to say to the people of the Middle East. That is what we need to say to the people of America, and then we need to make it so.

Thank you very much.

Ambassador
Jim Glassman:

Thank you, Dr. Rice, for that absolutely inspirational and powerful and informative talk. We have some time for questions, so if you have a question, raise your hand and wait for the microphone.

Okay, here's some questions over here, and identify yourself.

Jacob Attend:

Thank you so much. Can you hear me? My name is Jacob Attend [phonetic 21:39] and I'm from Sudan. And first of all, I just want to thank President Bush. A demonstration — of course I'm one of the lost boys of Sudan, and I know we're talking about the Middle East and what does it mean about the freedom. Sorry, I'm getting a little emotional, but I hope Mr. President you realize what you have done for the lost boys of Sudan. And on July 9th, we're going to be the 193rd country — that freedom you can understand.

[Applause]

So my question would be just to what — you work a lot with — Dr. Rice, you work a lot with Sudan issues and I know it's not part of the Middle East, but now is a very sensitive time. How does that affect the Middle East too, and also the issue of Abyei recently is very unfortunate. But I just want to thank you all. You give me the chance to have American freedom and I don't know how to describe it, but I voted for the first time for my country, and thank you for the freedom.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice:

Well, thank you for that beautiful testimony to freedom. And indeed the people of Sudan can finally exercise their beliefs, and that is something to be applauded and witnessed. I do think that what has happened to Abyei recently is a very unfortunate circumstance, and I hope that someone is saying to the Bashir government that this is unacceptable. This is still an issue of negotiation. Precisely how the proceeds will be handled from that very oil rich area, and I understand that and the territorial issues, but the people of Sudan are going to go ahead and they're going to form their country. And I hope that we are going to be there in massive support of southern Sudan, as it becomes the 193rd country. It is a place that after many, many years of civil war finally has found a modicum of peace, but it has no infrastructure. It has very little in the way of educational institutions for its people. When people have lived in conflict for decades, there isn't much to work with except the spirit of the people. And the one thing that I do know about the Sudanese people — the southern Sudanese is they have magnificent spirit. And so with just a little help, not just from the United States, but hopefully from the African Union, and from the European Union, the people of Sudan, of southern Sudan, are going to be given a new chance. It is a place that can contribute dramatically to stability on the continent as well as to the betterment of some people. And it stands, I think, as a very important symbol of what freedom can mean.

Ambassador
Jim Glassman:

Right. The gentleman right here.

Kirk Johnson:

Thank you, madam Secretary. Kirk Johnson. Some of the worst regimes in the world are here in the United States own hemisphere. How do you see the oppressed people of Cuba or Venezuela responding to the Arab Spring?

Dr. Condoleezza Rice:

Yes. Well, if I were Hugo Chavez, who has wrecked his country, or the Castro's who've never even gotten to first base in helping their country, I would be worried about what's happening in the Middle East, because it is — even if the people of Cuba or Venezuela can't act in the same way, you can believe that there's a stirring within them to be a part of this great freedom movement. And I do think that particularly in Cuba when Fidel Castro dies, and he will eventually, that his brother is going to find that he is not just going to be able to appropriate Fidel Castro's authority to himself. And I would hope that by then the international community would have said to Cuba, you need a way to a transition to democracy. Rather than hoping that Raul Castro somehow is going to be a reformer, state the principals, start to put into place a transition for a democratic transition. It may take a while, because there are no institutions in Cuba, but particularly the Organization of American States, where Cuba is the only country that cannot take up its seat at the Organization of American States, because it doesn't have an elected president. And the European Union needs to be speaking out for the right for the Cubans for that transition.

As to Chavez, as I've said, he's destroyed his own country. And there we tried something every interesting. When President Bush went to Latin America in 2007, we actually didn't say Chavez's name. And by the time we got to about the third country, he was running around saying, "Why don't they say something about me? Why don't they say something about me?" To a certain extent, you're better off to concentrate on what are dramatically improved conditions for democracy in most of Latin America. Colombia, which was brought back from the brink of being a failed state by Alvarez Uribe. A place like Chile, which has now had a couple of stable transitions. Brazil, which is a huge multiethnic democracy that functions very, very well. Strong places in Central America. And to emphasize them and to do good works for them is one reason the Colombian Free Trade Agreement ought to be passed. This is a place that is a democratic friend of America, and it deserves a free trade agreement with us, not to mention that economically it's good for both countries. So, yes, the region has some bad actors, but the region has far more in the way of stable democracies that are friends of the United States. And I think by emphasizing those we diminish what the bad actors can do.

Ambassador
Jim Glassman:

Other questions? There's a question over here, and another one — and while we go hear those questions, we asked on our Facebook page if there were questions for Dr. Rice, and actually there were quite a few, so we've just chosen a couple here.

Now, one of them you've certainly touched on it, but I wanted to ask it anyway. This is from Darra Noib [phonetic 28:23]. "Madam Secretary, how does the reflection of your own life experience influence your view of human freedom today?" And she also says, "Thank you for your service. Loved your book." And you have another book that's coming out soon as well. "What a wonderful family you have. God bless you."

Dr. Condoleezza Rice:

Well, my upbringing obviously made me optimistic about what human beings can achieve even under difficult circumstances. I was born in 1954 in segregated Birmingham, Alabama. The largest segregated city in America — a place where Jim Crow was alive and well. Bull Connor the police commissioner was the fist of Jim Crow, and George Wallace was its soul in the state house in Montgomery. And so it was a pretty tough place to be black and American. But I was also fortunate to be brought up in a family where my parents always said, "You may not be able to control your circumstances, but you can control your response to your circumstances. And always remember, there are no victims." The minute you start to believe yourself a victim, you have lost control. And then you give into the aggrievement. Well, they aren't doing enough for

me, and then entitlement, aggrievement's twin brother. And now you've completely lost control of your life. And that was the way that we were brought up in Birmingham. And I see a reflection of that in so many people that are searching for freedom. They are responding to their circumstances. They are taking control of their lives. They have impatient patriots as we did in people like Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks who are helping to lead them.

But ultimately my childhood also taught me that it's important for those voices to be heard and acknowledged. And so when the United States of America finally started to acknowledge the need to do something in the south, those impatient patriots were able to do more. And when the people in the Middle East or in Africa or in Latin America or in Burma, who are still waiting to hear those voice here — the voice of America — it empowers them further. And so it tells me you really do have to take control of your circumstances, but you also need the voice of the powerful with you. And there's no more powerful voice than the United States.

Matthew Wilson:

Dr. Rice, I'm Matthew Wilson. I'm a member of the Political Science Department here at SMU. And thank you for being with us today. My question deals with something that we hear very often from leaders and pundits and commentators in the west when we say that what we want to see in the Middle East is the emergence of secular democracies. And that word secular troubles me in this context, because I think it fosters the belief that somehow Islam and democracy are incompatible, and that if we want to see democracy emerge in the Middle East, that Islam has got to be pushed to the margins or something like that. How can we convince people in the Middle East that a transition to democracy doesn't mean an abandonment or a marginalization of their faith or of the role of Islam in their society?

Dr. Condoleezza Rice:

Thank you for an absolutely excellent question. And in fact the word secular, when we use it we generally simply mean not the opposition of religious beliefs. But we can't mean the absence of religion and a place for religious people. And you're seeing this play out very dramatically in Turkey right now where Turkey had held on to secularism through the Kamalist doctrine in a way that basically said religious people have no place in the public square in Turkey, to put it very bluntly. And then as democracy flourished in Turkey, you have in the AK party a religious party. A party that professes Islam that is trying to democratize and says, no, religious people need to have a place. It's not that we want to make people who are not religious or people who profess some other religion uncomfortable in the public square, but we do want to make people who do profess religion comfortable in the public square.

And you're seeing in Turkey, for instance Abdullah Gul who is now the president of Turkey, used to be my foreign minister colleague. And I can remember discussing this with him. There was a lot of outrage that his wife covered. And he said, "I have several female relatives. Some cover and some don't." He said, "This is a matter of choice." And so we ought to be talking about democracy in the Middle East where people can chose their religious affiliations, exercise their religious beliefs, where a wide range of religious beliefs are not just tolerated, but encouraged. That's really the Middle East that we're looking for. And it's not one, certainly, where Islam is somehow pushed to the side. Islam and democracy are doing very well thankfully in Indonesia. They're doing very well in India. They're doing well in Turkey, and I think they will do well in the Middle East — throughout the Middle East. Because there is nothing in the tenets of Islam that suggest that you can't have democracy and Islam in the same body. So thank you. It's a very, very wise point, and one that we need to be careful about our language.

Akmar Sallah:

Akmar Sallah [phonetic 34:01] from Egypt. It is, of course, a great honor to be here in the presence of Mr. President and Madam Secretary. I believe that we owe you a lot, because you helped us start our movement back in 2004, 2005, but also there is something that I have to say. It was very hard for us when you let us down at that time. Most of us went to jail. I went to jail, and I got almost killed inside. And I really believed I would never come out alive. I was prepared for my death. And this — we were hoping that there would be some change, that things would improve. And we've been waiting for this and this didn't happen until the end of the term of President Bush. And I really all of this time had this question. Why? And I really

want just to hear an answer now if you could just tell us why did you let us down after already things were starting to move? After we had so great hopes, and we were on the path that could have liberated Egypt and probably many other countries in the Arab world, even back, you know, in the year 2005, 2006. Thank you very much.

Dr. Condoleezza Rice: Thank you. Well, let me say that if we let you down, it was not for a lack of trying to hold you up. The United States is not able always immediately to push events in the direction that we would want them to go. In a place like Iraq where we overthrew a brutal dictator who was a threat to peace and international security we had direct means to insist up and to structure and help the Iraqi people get directly to democracy. In places where there are still regimes in power as in Egypt where we dealt with the Mubarak regime on matters like trying to create a democratic Palestinian state, or trying to keep Hamas at bay, or trying to deal with the Iranian nuclear program, we didn't have those direct means. And so we tried, first and foremost, to speak for our values and continue to speak for our values throughout that entire period. We tried to give the Egyptian people the tools that they needed to speak for their own freedom. I was talking earlier to my good friend Lorne Craner, who's a warrior in this area, and one of the things that we did for instance was to give 50 percent of all American assistance for democracy promotion to groups that were not registered by the Egyptian government. That was right in the face, frankly, of the Egyptian government. And it may — I don't want to embarrass my former boss, President Bush, but there's a reason that Hosni Mubarak never came back to the United States after 2004. Imagine that. The American president cannot get the Egyptian president to come to the United States. There's a reason, and it didn't have to do with the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It had to do with how we were dealing with the Egyptian revolution.

And so we used the tools that we had. Just to give you one example of how much this is a double edged sword though, one of the things that we did is we took the free trade agreement with Egypt off the table in response to the crack down on democratic forces in Egypt. It was one of the few tools we had, and it was probably the right thing to do. But did we disempower some of the forces that might have been forces for change through economic change by doing that? And so whenever you use these tools, there's a downside to using the leverage that you have, in that you can sometimes empower the wrong forces. And I think I questioned myself every day, and I know President Bush did, about — and I see Eliot there. Eliot Abrams who was a part of this. Are we doing enough? Is there more we can do? And frankly in 2006 we were trying to sustain Lebanon. We were trying to sustain more democratic forces in Palestine. We were trying to sustain more democratic forces in places like Egypt and like. And we were trying to give the Iraqi's a chance.

And so if in doing all of that, we didn't succeed completely, I hope that we at least laid the foundation for people like you who are the brave and patient patriots to build on so that today we are indeed seeing the realization of some of those goals.

Ambassador
Jim Glassman:

Well take one more question.

Raymond Turmanie:

My name is Raymond Turmanie [phonetic 39:16]. I would like to ask a question about the events that are going on in the Middle East, and the effect that you think it may have on the Israeli Palestinian conflict. It seems like every president over the last 30 years has attempted with greater and lesser degree of success being able to try to bring a resolution to these issues. I won't ask you the question that I'd love to ask you and President Bush about what you would do, but I'll respect the fact that you don't want to take that — don't want to answer that and second guess the administration, but do you think the moves toward freedom in the Middle East will have a positive effect on what President Obama is trying to accomplish?

Dr. Condoleezza Rice:

Well, thank you. I do think that the Israeli Palestinian conflict both has an effect on what's going on in the Middle East, and what's going on in the Middle East can have an affect on the conflict. It goes both ways. I've never believed, by the way, that until we solve the Israeli Palestinian issue we can't have freedom throughout the Middle East. That was a conceit by

authoritarian regimes that used the Israeli Palestinian conflict as a kind of talisman against their own decline. And so we finally said to them, “No, really, your people are your problem, not just the Palestinian problem.” But that said, we did try. President Bush made an important change in the way that we thought about what we were trying to do with the Israeli Palestinian conflict. And that was to not just worry about the borders, although obviously you have to worry about the borders, but about what the content of the Palestinian state would be. And to speak for a democratic Palestine, not just any old Palestine. For a Palestine that would not be corrupt, that would not hide terrorists, as Yasser Arafat’s Palestine did. But that would be a place where you could have democratic forces that were peace loving, and that would be the basis for an agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. And in the person of Salam Fayyad, the Prime Minister for Mahmoud Abbas, you began to see glimpses of that in the West Bank where corruption was being routed out, where the security forces were being strengthened with our help, where the West Bank economy was growing at nine or ten percent because foreign investment was coming back in.

And so I thought we were on to something, frankly. And then in 2008, Ehud Olmert, then the Prime Minister, actually offered the Palestinian’s a pretty amazing deal including a solution for Jerusalem. And for a variety of reasons, I’ve sometimes said this is the world’s unluckiest process. Olmert was already in some political and indeed legal trouble, and the Palestinian’s decided not to take up the deal. And now we really are back to square one. That said, you just have to keep trying, because there really isn’t another answer to the Israeli Palestinian conflict but the two state solution, but two democratic states. The democratic Jewish state of Israel, and the democratic state of Palestine, living side by side in peace and security is the answer. Perhaps when some of the dust settles, when, as I believe will happen, Fatah and President Abbas realize that yet again they’re not going to be able to exist in the same body with the terrorists Hamas, there will be another chance.

And at that point, the inviolable friendship between Israel and the United States that recognizes that even though Israel is a strong state, it is still a vulnerable state and a democracy, that inviolable friendship will help the Israeli’s, I think, come to recognize that they can take some risks.

Ariel Sharon, who was a tough little tank driver, and really not known to be a man of peace, sat in the oval office with President Bush not long after we had been in office, and a press person threw a question at President Bush out of the blue. “Do you think Sharon is a man of peace?” And if you were at the point the National Security Advisor, every bone in your body freezes, because oh, my goodness, there is no good answer to this question. And President Bush said, “I believe he’s a man of peace.” Now, this is as the Israeli’s are just laying waste to Palestine in response to the anti-Fatah. And my first reaction, like you know all good specialists at international security was to say, “Oh, now we’ve done it.” Right? But in fact, that moment was very important for Ariel Sharon. It meant confidence in him by the American President. He went on to say, “It’s painful for me to say so, but the Jews have to divide the land. There has to be a two state solution.” He withdrew Israeli forces and settlers from the Gaza, and four settlements in the north. He launched Kadima, a new party that basically took as its premise ending the conflict between Israeli’s and Palestinian’s. It says to me that when the Israeli’s feel confident with their relationship with the United States, when the Israeli’s see that there really is somebody on the other side that’s trying to build a partnership for peace, and when the Palestinian’s see that the American President really does believe in their ability to be free, not to have to live under corruption, and expresses that, that you’ve got the basis for a solution to the conflict. Those conditions will come around again, and this time I hope we can deliver.

Thank you very much.