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Zero Tolerance Policy

Moderator. Final question. Steve Holland, Reuters.

Q. Mr. President, you've said that you have a zero tolerance attitude toward Iraqi violations. Secretary Rumsfeld and Kofi Annan say they're looking for a pattern of behavior over time. Which is right? How do you reconcile these two?

President Bush. Well, I think there is—we were talking about whether or not Saddam Hussein, you know, shooting at our airplanes, what that means—we'll deal with that. The United States will take appropriate action.

The thing that's important to—for people to understand is what we want to see is whether or not he's going to cooperate, whether or not he's heard what the world has said—whether or not he's heard what the world has said through the U.N. Security Council resolution.

See, what happens is people tend to focus on the inspectors as if the inspectors are the end. The final—the thing that's important, the final point of determination is whether or not he is disarmed.

So, what we're going to be looking for, and I hope the world joins us, is whether or not this man is cooperating with the will of the world. See, the world has recognized—many members of NATO have recognized that a Saddam Hussein and Iraq which possesses weapons of mass destruction is dangerous. Imagine a Saddam Hussein with a nuclear weapon. It's important for the Czech people to understand this is guy who has poisoned his own people. He's got such hate in his heart he's willing to use a weapon of mass destruction not only on his neighborhood but on the people of his country.

He is a danger. And so, therefore, what we're looking for is to determine whether or not he is willing to cooperate, whether or not he has got the message that he must disarm.

The United Nations has said 16 different times, "You must disarm." And 16 times, he's said, "Oh, of course, I will," but never did. And so, the game's over with. We're through with that. And now he's going to disarm, one way or the other. In the name of peace, he will be disarmed.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 9:35 a.m. at Prague Castle. President Havel spoke in Czech, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. Some reporters asked their questions in Czech, and the questions were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Bush referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A reporter referred to Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations.

Remarks to the Prague Atlantic Student Summit in Prague

November 20, 2002

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. It's an honor to be here in Prague, home to so much of Europe's history and culture and the scene of so much courage in the service of freedom. After the recent floods, I know it's been tough on the citizens of the Czech Republic to not only recover, but to host this important gathering. So, on behalf of all the American delegation and all the Americans who are here, I express our gratitude for the fantastic hospitality we received. We thank the Czech people and their leadership for working hard to make sure this summit is a successful summit, and we wish them all the very best.

I want to thank Jimmy for his kind words. Really proud of Jimmy, and we're proud to have him at West Point. He's a credit to the Academy; he's a credit to the people of Lithuania. And we wish him all the very best.

I want to thank Alan Lee Williams, Antonio Borges Carvalho, for their tremendous work at the Atlantic Treaty Association. I'm grateful to Christopher Makins, who's the president of the Atlantic Council of the United States, for organizing this event. I want to thank Tom Dine, president of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, for joining us. I want to thank all the good folks who work there for joining us as well. I appreciate your service.

Dwight Eisenhower said this of Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty: "The simplest and clearest charter in the world is what you have, which is to tell the truth." And for more than 50 years, the charter has been

faithfully executed, and it's the truth that sets this continent free.

I'm honored to be traveling with members of my senior staff: the Secretary of State of the United States Colin Powell, who's done such a fantastic job for our country and for world peace; Condoleezza Rice, who's my National Security Advisor, is here; Chief of Staff Andy Card, Ambassador Nick Burns to NATO; a few others who I don't particularly want to recognize for fear of damaging my reputation—[*laughter*]—but all of them doing a great job. Thank you all for coming.

I also want to recognize Members of the Congress who are here. I'm thrilled to see Members of the Senate. I thought you were voting. [*Laughter*] But Senators Frist and Voinovich and their wives are with us. I see Lantos—yes—Gallegly—Elton, good to see you, buddy, from California. Who else? That's it—two Members of the House, two members of the Senate. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored you're here.

This NATO summit that convenes tomorrow will be the first ever held at the capital of a Warsaw Pact. The days of the Warsaw Pact seem distant—they must seem to you. After all, the Warsaw Pact ended a half a lifetime ago for you. It was a dark and distant era. The years since have brought great challenge and great hope to all of the countries on this continent. And tomorrow in Prague we will have reached a decisive moment, an historic moment, for tomorrow we will invite new members into our Alliance. It's a bold decision, to guarantee the freedom of millions of people.

At the summit, we'll make the most significant reforms in NATO since 1949, reforms which will allow our Alliance to effectively confront new dangers. And in the years to come, all of the nations of Europe will determine their place in world events. They will take up global responsibilities or choose to live in isolation from the challenges of our time.

As for America, we made our choice. We are committed to work toward world peace, and we're committed to a close and permanent partnership with the nations of Europe. The Atlantic Alliance is America's most important global relationship. We're tied to Europe by history. We are tied to Europe by the wars of liberty we have fought and won together. We're joined by broad ties of trade. And America is bound to Europe by the deepest convictions of our common culture, our belief in the dignity of every life and our belief in the power of conscience to move history.

In this city and town squares across the Czech Republic are monuments to Jan Hus who said this: "Stand in the truth you have learned, for it conquers all and is mighty to eternity." That ideal has given life to the Czech Republic, and it is shared by the Republic I lead.

America believes that a strong, confident Europe is good for the world. We welcome the economic integration of Europe. We believe that integration will extend prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic. We welcome a democratic Russia as part of this new Europe, because a free and peaceful Russia will add to the security of this continent. We welcome the growing unity of Europe in commerce and currency and military cooperation, which is closing a long history of rivalry and violence. This continent, wounded by nazism and communism, is becoming peaceful and secure and democratic for the first time. And now that the countries of Europe are united in freedom, they will no longer fight each other and bring war to the rest of the world.

Because America supports a more united Europe, we strongly support the enlargement of NATO, now and in the future. Every European democracy that seeks NATO membership and is ready to share in NATO's responsibilities should be welcome in our Alliance. The enlargement of NATO is good for all who join us. The standards for membership are high, and they encourage the hard work of political and economic and military reform.

And nations in the family of NATO, old or new, know this: Anyone who would choose you for an enemy also chooses us for an enemy. Never again in the face of aggression will you stand alone.

A larger NATO is good for Russia as well. Later this week I will visit St. Petersburg. I will tell my friend Vladimir Putin and the Russian people that they too will gain from

the security and stability of nations to Russia's west. Russia does not require a buffer zone of protection. It needs peaceful and prosperous neighbors who are also friends. We need a strong and democratic Russia as our friend and partner to face the next century's new challenges. Through the NATO-Russia Council we must increase our cooperation with Russia for the security of all of us.

Expansion of NATO also brings many advantages to the Alliance, itself. Every new member contributes military capabilities that add to our common security. We see this already in Afghanistan, for forces from Romania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia, and others have joined with 16 NATO Allies to help defeat global terror.

And every new member of our Alliance makes a contribution of character. Tomorrow NATO grows larger. Tomorrow the soul of Europe grows stronger. Members recently added to NATO and those invited to join bring greater clarity to purposes of our Alliance, because they understand the lessons of the last century. Those with fresh memories of tyranny know the value of freedom. Those who have lived through a struggle of good against evil are never neutral between them. Czechs and Slovaks learned through the harsh experience of 1938 that when great democracies fail to confront danger, greater dangers follow. And the people of the Baltics learned that aggression left unchecked by the great democracies can rob millions of their liberty and their lives.

In Central and Eastern Europe the courage and moral vision of prisoners and exiles and priests and playwrights caused tyrants to fall. This spirit now sustains these nations through difficult reforms. And this spirit is needed in the councils of a new Europe.

Our NATO Alliance faces dangers very different from those it was formed to confront, yet never has our need for collective defense been more urgent. The Soviet Union is gone, but freedom still has enemies. We're threatened by terrorism. Bred within failed states, it's present within our own cities. We're threatened by the spread of chemical and biological and nuclear weapons which are produced by outlaw regimes and could be delivered either by missile or terrorist cell. For terrorists and terrorist states, every free nation—every free nation—is a potential target, including the free nations of Europe.

We're making progress on this, the first war of the 21st century. Today, more than 90 nations are joined in a global coalition to defeat terror. We're sharing intelligence. We're freezing the assets of terror groups. We're pursuing the terrorists wherever they plot and train. And we're finding them and bringing them to justice, one person at a time.

Today, the world is also uniting to answer the unique and urgent threat posed by Iraq. A dictator who has used weapons of mass destruction on his own people must not be allowed to produce or possess those weapons. We will not permit Saddam Hussein to blackmail and/or terrorize nations which love freedom.

Last week Saddam Hussein accepted U.N. inspectors. We've heard those pledges before and seen them violated time and time again. We now call an end to that game of deception and deceit and denial. Saddam Hussein has been given a very short time to declare completely and truthfully his arsenal of terror. Should he again deny that this arsenal exists, he will have entered his final stage with a lie. And deception this time will not be tolerated. Delay and defiance will invite the severest of consequences.

America's goal, the world's goal is more than the return of inspectors to Iraq. Our goal is to secure the peace through the comprehensive and verified disarmament of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. Voluntary or by force, that goal will be achieved.

To meet all of this century's emerging threats, from terror camps in remote regions to hidden laboratories of outlaw regimes, NATO must develop new military capabilities. NATO forces must become better able to fight side by side. Those forces must be more mobile and more swiftly deployed. The Allies need more special operations forces, better precision strike capabilities, and more modern command structures.

Few NATO members will have state-of-the-art capabilities in all of these areas. I recognize that. But every nation should develop some. Ours is a military alliance, and every member must make a military contribution

to that alliance. For some Allies, this will require higher defense spending. For all of us, it will require more effective defense spending, with each nation adding the tools and technologies to fight and win a new kind of war.

And because many threats to the NATO members come from outside of Europe, NATO forces must be organized to operate outside of Europe. When forces were needed quickly in Afghanistan, NATO's options were limited. We must build new capabilities, and we must strengthen our will to use those capabilities.

The United States proposes the creation of a NATO response force that will bring together well-equipped, highly ready air, ground, and sea forces from NATO Allies, old and new. This force will be prepared to deploy on short notice wherever it is needed. A NATO response force will take time to create, and we should begin that effort here in Prague.

Yet, security against new threats requires more than just new capabilities. Free nations must accept our shared obligations to keep the peace. The world needs the nations of this continent to be active in the defense of freedom, not inward-looking or isolated by indifference. Ignoring dangers or excusing aggression may temporarily avert conflict, but they don't bring true peace.

International stability must be actively defended, and all nations that benefit from that stability have a duty to help. In this noble work, America and the strong democracies of Europe need each other, each playing our full and responsible role. The good we can do together is far greater than the good we can do apart.

Great evil is stirring in the world. Many of the young here are coming up in a different world, different era, a different time, a different series of threats. We face perils we've never thought about, perils we've never seen before. But they're dangerous. They're just as dangerous as those perils that your fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers faced.

The hopes of all mankind depend on the courage and the unity of great democracies. In this hour of challenge, NATO will do what it has done before: We will stand firm against the enemies of freedom, and we'll prevail.

The transatlantic ties of Europe and America have met every test of history, and we intend to again. U-boats could not divide us. The threats and standoffs of the cold war did not make us weary. The commitment of my Nation to Europe is found in the carefully tended graves of young Americans who died for this continent's freedom. That commitment is shown by the thousands in uniforms still serving here, from the Balkans to Bavaria, still willing to make the ultimate sacrifice for this continent's future.

For 100 years, place names of Europe have often stood for conflict and tragedy and loss. Single words evoke sad and bitter experience: Verdun, Munich, Stalingrad, Dresden, Nuremberg, and Yalta. We have no power to rewrite history. We do have the power to write a different story for our time.

When future generations look back at this moment and speak of Prague and what we did here, that name will stand for hope. In Prague, young democracies will gain new security; a grand alliance will gather its strength and find new purpose. And America and Europe will renew the historic friendship that still keeps the peace of the world.

Thank you for your interest. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:40 p.m. at the Hilton Prague. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Military Academy cadet Gedrimas "Jimmy" Jaglinskas, who introduced the President; Alan Lee Williams, chairman, and Antonio Borges Carvalho, secretary general, Atlantic Treaty Association; Karen Frist, wife of Senator Bill Frist; Janet Voinovich, wife of Senator George V. Voinovich; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Interview With Russia's NTV

November 18, 2002

Chechnya

Q. Mr. President, did the October hostage crisis in Moscow change the U.S. position on Chechnya?

The President. No, our position on Chechnya is, we hope this can get solved peacefully, that this is an issue within Russia,