Wider Europe and the Transatlantic Link

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Introduction:

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Lunch and Keynote Address: American Perspectives

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Janusz Bugajski: We have about forty, forty-five minutes all together, and I'm not going to spend long at all introducing Dan, who we're very honored to have and is obviously very well-known to everybody that deals with Europe: west, central, and east. Let me just say that throughout his career, Dan has been one of the most far-sighted policy-makers in promoting and expanding transatlantic relations and he's proved to be a true friend of Europe's new democracies, in central Europe, southeast Europe, and now what's called eastern Europe. So I think without further ado, to maximize our time -- Dan, podium's yours.

Daniel Fried: Thank you, Janusz, for giving me the benefit of the doubt and that warm introduction and thank you all for coming today. There are a lot of friends and colleagues I see in the room, so thank you for this opportunity.

I gather the topic of the day is a wider Europe, or wider Europe and the transatlantic link. Now to have, and to speak of, an effective transatlantic approach to wider Europe, we must start as a presumption, with an effective transatlantic link. And of course, the past three years, since the brittle and emotional debate over the Iraq war, that has not been a condition which everyone took for granted, but it is happily a condition which is rapidly re-emerging as the essential pre-condition for transatlantic efforts in the wider Europe.

President Bush made strengthening and deepening the transatlantic strategic concensus a signature goal of this, his second term. And as our

Russian colleagues used to say, it was no accident that President Bush's first trip, first overseas trip of his second term was to Brussels, where he met not only with NATO, but he also met with the European Council, in an extended and very useful session.

In his second Inaugural Address, President Bush gave us in his administration our marching orders, and it was an elaboration of what has become known as the Freedom Agenda. He put it in a sentence, "the best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world." This is very much the orientation of this administration. It is also the orientation of many people with whom I worked in the Clinton administration. It is a policy which is as bipartisan in its potential as it is bold. Now, Europe is the key partner in this strategy of advancing freedom and addressing common challenges.

We are working together, and we must work together to make the world a better and a safer place. Again, quoting my president, all that we seek to achieve in the world requires that America and Europe remain close partners. America and Europe form a single civilization. I do not, by the way, believe or even intend to waste much time dismissing the views of a civilizational divorce between Europe and America. Our common civilization is anchored in the values of freedom, democracy, free markets, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and human dignity.

As a single democratic civilization, we face common challenges, which we can manage and overcome only as we face them together. When the United States and Europe are divided, not only is our ability to act much less, but we create an intellectual and moral fog over our actions and those of our adversaries. When we are united, we clarify who are the friends of freedom and the enemies of freedom, and we give inspiration to the friends of freedom even in the most repressed societies around the world.

In the last decade, we have seen a shift in the focus of the U.S.-European relationship. For forty-five years after 1945, the U.S.-European relationship was principally, not exclusively but principally, about Europe itself. Now it is no longer about Europe itself, but about what the United States and a Europe whole, free, and at peace, can do together in the world.

As I said, during the Cold War, our focus was Europe. In the 1990's, the immediate Cold War period, we had two principal agendas. One, defining what Europe whole, free and at peace meant, defining how far the institutions of Europe should extend, and dealing with the conflict in the Balkans. It is really quite astonishing for me to think back at the debates about NATO enlargement which consumed so many of us ten years ago. It seems now so natural to have Poland, Lithuania, Romania, and other new NATO members at the NATO table that I can scarcely believe there was a time when they weren't sitting there, much less a time when most of official Washington thought it was a dangerous, radical idea to have them invited at all. Which tells us something about the nature of Washington debates, I'm not quite sure what.

It is also amazing to think that we wasted -- that we devoted a lot of time, debating out of area for NATO, in the days when NATO action in the Balkans seemed rather exotic. Now, I'm getting daily reports on NATO relief flights bringing humanitarian supplies to Pakistan. I'm talking with the

Hungarian government about their contributions in Afghanistan. We talk about the arrangements for the NATO training mission in Iraq. And we think we've had a good week's work when we straighten out NATO and EU arrangements for supporting the African Union in Darfur.

You know where you are by what problems you're dealing with, and we have come a very long way in ten years. The European-American agenda together is no longer about Europe, it is about how Europe and America work together to face common challenges. It is what we should be doing. Now, the focus is not simply on U.S. and Europe in the wider world, the focus today is on wider Europe, and it's this that I want to discuss in a little more detail.

Our priority, that is the United States and Europe working through NATO, working in the U.S.-European Union relationship, is to advance the frontiers of freedom in Europe, to Europe's periphery and beyond; that is, to continue the process that began in 1989 and has continued so successfully through the present.

I was recently in Tbilisi, last week, and I was struck by the comments of a senior Georgian official. There was a time, he said -- and I'm paraphrasing rather than quoting -- there was a time when democracy was considered to be right and appropriate for Poland and the Czech Republic, and we Georgians weren't even in the picture at all. The Baltics were barely in the picture. Then the thought of democracy in Georgia and Ukraine became a thought, but now, our democracy is accepted, and countries like Kazakhstan are in the picture. Again, that's a paraphrase, but I think I've got it right, and I think he has it right. The South Caucasus, Central Asia, are the Eurasian frontiers of freedom, and part of what the United States and Europe need to do together is help consolidate the new democracies on Europe's periphery, and help support the forces of reform in the South Caucasus and Central Asia.

Now as I say this, I am aware that there are some who consider this to be a provocative policy, there are some in Russia who consider it to be an anti-Russian policy. I consider it to be neither. I don't believe in zero-sum calculations with our Russian friends. It is surely in Russia's interest that its neighbors be democracies, rather than dysfunctional dictatorships. Now during my trips to Central Asia, and especially the South Caucasus, I did observe a disconnect which I'd like to share with you. Journalists and think-tankers in Washington, in the United States, often take us, the administration, to task, suggesting we are giving countries a pass on democracy because we're interested in basing or oil or something else. In the region, however, we are often taken to task, we the American administration, are often taken to task for supposedly being too aggressive in supporting democracy, in supporting orange or colored revolutions. In fact, neither accusation is true, and of course both cannot be true at the same time.

We have an obligation to stand for our ideals of freedom and democracy. We do not believe in the export of revolution, for God sakes. The Bush administration has been accused of many things, but neo-Trotskyism I hope will not be one of them. To quote President Bush, "We want to support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world." Yes, that does have a visionary ring to it, but of course, twenty years ago, if one spoke of the fall of the Berlin wall, of democracy in Poland, one was accused of not being

serious.

We are committed and determined to work with Europe to advance this democratic agenda. We are not going to impose our values or our system, but we will work with reformers in their own countries in support of democratic change. Every country has its own path to freedom, but there are elements in common in every country's democracy. Now having said that, we also need to be realistic about how we operationalize this goal. We have to bold, we have to ambitious, in what we seek to do, and we have to be realistic about what we can achieve in any given day, in any given election, and in any given year.

I was in Kazakhstan three and a half weeks ago; I was in Azerbaijan last week. Both countries have elections coming up. We must speak clearly about the need for both countries to have free elections, and we must help these countries find their way forward. We must work with them, work with reform, work for reform, and work with reformers wherever we can, and be quick to take advantage of the opportunities to advance reform, and careful about what we can achieve in every day. Free and fair parliamentary elections this fall are possible in Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan. Both countries must take steps to realize this potential, and it is our belief, and we have said so, including to the rulers of these countries, that through democratic elections comes lasting stability.

And I hope, whatever the election results, and however imperfect they may be, we will be in a position to stand for freedom, and move forward step by step as fast as we can, as far as we can.

Now let's step back a little bit, and talk about what wider Europe means. In the last decade, the expansion of NATO, and the expansion of the European Union, was the great incentive that our Euro-Atlantic community had to offer states in transition. It prompted countries to carry out difficult internal reforms, reconcile with their neighbors, and secure the freedom, democracy and prosperity that they started to win in 1989.

Now I don't want to dwell on EU enlargement. That's an issue to be decided by Europeans, although my country has occasionally spoken out about this, and has been accused of speaking out about this, but I do wish to applaud the efforts that the European Union have undertaken, and applaud also the results of enlargement which have been highly laudatory. I know that the European Union is now debating the timing of the accession of Romania and Bulgaria, and it is true for all the work that still needs to be done in these countries, they are much farther, and their prospects are much brighter, for the opportunity that the European Union has given them, and I think they will be as good members of the European Union as they have been good members of NATO.

We do believe the NATO enlargement should continue. We do believe that the current group of aspirants to NATO in the Balkans and beyond, need to know that their efforts are taken seriously, and that the deal that NATO offered the then-East Europeans, the Poles, Czechs, Hungarians, ten years ago, is available to them if they do the work. The heavy lifting is theirs to do, but the open door is ours to maintain. We don't think the aspirants are ready for NATO membership today, but neither were the first group of new members ready for membership ten years ago.

If they do their part we should do ours, and if they have not met NATO

standards, we won't compromise. Enlargement of the NATO alliance remains performance-based. I won't speak of the future of European Union enlargement except to say that I think that some of the same principles hold. The standards should be maintained, and the door should be open to those who meet the standards. Timing, countries -- these are all things for Europeans to debate, hopefully when the climate is better to have this kind of debate.

Now a final thought, and then if it's proper I'd be happy to take questions. The topic of this seminar is a testament to our success. Twenty years ago, the concept of a wider Europe did not exist. The agenda of advancing freedom, democracy, prosperity, stability in wider Europe would have not been on the agenda, and here we are, talking about the details. As I said, you know where you are by the problems you're dealing with every day, the ones that cross your desk. I'd rather have the problems that cross my desk today than the problems that crossed the desk of my predecessors twenty years ago. It makes for a better workday and a lot happier time when you think back on your time in government, so, thank you very much.

Janusz Bugajski: We have about twenty minutes for questions, so, please.

Daniel Fried: Sure. Well, we need a volunteer. Yes.

Question: A quick question, and then --

Daniel Fried: And who are you?

Female voice: Turkish news agency (inaudible). Sir, I'm lucky that (inaudible) begins with (inaudible) I don't know if you have an opinion or not about Turkey so, my question's about Turkey (inaudible), you know the debate's going on in Europe whether Europe should spread its borders to Turkey, or what the European Union (inaudible) about Turkey in the next ten years, what is your prospect about it?

Daniel Fried: Well, the European Union made a decision, and the accession negotiations have begun, so the debate is no longer the operational debate it was. The European Union did its part, Turkey did its part, to fulfill the criteria sufficiently to get to this point. Now it's up to Turkey to meet the European Union standards. And I believe Turkey will succeed. I don't think this will happen overnight, I think it will take a number of years. You mentioned ten years, others have mentioned ten to fifteen years, and although I'm not a prophet, I suspect it will take something of that magnitude. And what the European Union has done, and I applaud it, is to start the process, which it had to do, but also now allow Turkey and the European Union to make progress through the negotiations, and as Turkey's reforms continue, I suspect that that fact will ease the debate in Europe.

That's certainly my hope. Our view is that this is a very good thing. We understand the debate, we understand that this is difficult, but it is the kind of correct decision that turns out to be profoundly wise in retrospect.

Question: Margarita Assenova, Institute for New Democracies. My question is about how the United States administration works with the new allies in Eastern Europe to push the idea for freedom in the Caucasus and Central Asia. It might make sense to have a closer cooperation with Eastern European not only governments but NGOs who are better accepted in this

part of the world. They are accepted as ours in Central Asia and the Caucasus. They are considered to be a successful example of building democracy within ten years, they can prove that. So are there plans to enhance the cooperation with Eastern European organizations and governments to push for this agenda?

Daniel Fried: Well, I'll work with anybody who comes in the door ready to work with me on a common agenda. It's not as if we go around thinking all right, this country is better than that country. It is true that there are some countries in Central and Eastern Europe who have a particular expertise. The Poles and Ukraine, obviously the most dramatic example, what Kwasniewski did in negotiating the rerun second round election, was just brilliant. And who else could have understood, who else but Kwasniewski and the Polish delegation could have understood both sides of the debate in Ukraine? It was just brilliant.

In other cases, there may be countries that have particularly strong ties with one or another country. And I welcome that. Obviously the Central and Eastern Europeans have a knowledge base that we don't have, they have a sensitivity about post-Communist dynamics that we Americans may have learned, but it isn't in our bones as much. But, the Central and East Europeans can't carry the full load. The European Union, the Commission has, well, it has the money for a lot of the programs, it has the institutional clout. What other organization except the European Union could have put border monitors into Georgia after the OSCE was forced out? No individual country would have been able to do that. Maybe they would have been able to, but a lot harder. The European Union has the institutional base to do that.

There isn't any question that we value the European Union as such, as a partner. Then there are individual countries in Western Europe, some of whom have knowledge or commitment or resources and can contribute a lot to the solution to these questions. We'd be fools not to work with the best available countries with something to offer.

Question: Dan, you made a good case about reconnecting with Europe. This is the policy of the administration in this term. And they have reached out, and the European governments in many cases are reaching back. The problem as I see it from my trips to Europe and the opinion polls over there is that while the governments over there are interested in reaching out, public opinion is still enormously sour on the United States. They show the publics admire China much more than the United States, in major countries including the UK, France and Germany.

There's a tendency for the publics to admire Mr. Putin much more than our president, and this constricts, to some extent, the governments over there in dealing with us on third country issues. I don't know -- you look skeptical -- whether this is true, maybe we're making progress that I don't see, but the opinion polls that I see don't show that, and the anecdotal information given me, but my point is while Karen Hughes is busy trying to change our image in the Middle East, are we gearing up for a bigger program in Europe, because those governments that we're working with in Europe need the public opinion behind them, in working closely with the United States.

Daniel Fried: Well look, everybody's read the Pew polls, the Pew German Marshall Fund polls. So obviously I'm not going to argue that we

have secret numbers that are better than those numbers, those numbers are the numbers. My skepticism is two parts. No doubt there is a tremendous body of skepticism in Europe about the United States and about this administration. I doubt very much whether we should take at face value assertions that China is more admired than the United States. If something goes wrong in the world, I don't see European publics, much less governments, asking for China to help out with, you know, relief in Darfur, and I don't think that's very likely. I think that's a reflection of the general skepticism and a just kind-of a protest vote, I'll say that I'm mad by saying yeah, I like the Chinese, I like Putin more.

I don't think that it constrains European governments' ability to work with us. That was my skepticism, and I don't think that that's true, in fact quite the opposite. We have found European governments have been very willing to respond. We reached out and as you said, they reached back and things are quite a bit better. But dig a little bit deeper into the polls. The skepticism is there, but also, if the German Marshall Fund Pew poll also demonstrated the Europeans want to work with the United States -- substantial body of opinion, I think majority opinion, wants to work with the United States for the sake of promoting freedom and democracy abroad -- the substance of cooperation is there, and it is accepted. That poll is not completely bad news.

It's also true that that poll, compared to the poll last year, suggests that the bottoming out has occurred. It's also true, and this is without evidence but it's my suspicion, that as our relations with governments improve, and as our policy is seen to be one which is Euro-Atlantic and not, dare I say the word, unilateralist, that this will change. So it's leading indicators and lagging indicators.

I don't minimize the difficulties, but of course then there's the other question of, well, "and then what?" Are we supposed to, in the administration, say, 'well, they're mad at us, so we shouldn't promote freedom?' I'm being arch, but-- we should not attempt to work with Europe? European publics have been mad at the United States before. This is not the first time. Think of the mid-1980's. Think of the 1970's. Think of the 1950's -- every generation gets mad at the United States, and then smart people write obituaries for the transatlantic relationship, and just dust out all the stuff written in the 1970's after Vietnam.

I don't minimize it, it's a problem, but we have to do what we have to do, which is to speak to European publics, work with European governments, make clear what we stand for.

Question: My name is Dragos Seuleanu, I'm from the Foundation for Culture, Liberty and Democracy in Romania. Sir, I want to ask you about a frozen conflict in Europe, Transnistria. We had a debate with two former Moldavian Prime Ministers, and one of them said that to save Moldova from this frozen conflict, it is necessary to have a sort of Marshall Plan. What is the attitude of your government about Transnistria?

Daniel Fried: Well, I don't know how a Marshall -- you know -- people trot out Marshall Plans when they want to do something big but they're not sure what. Well, in fact Ambassador Steve Mann, the State Department's negotiator for Eurasian conflicts, is headed out this afternoon, to Chisinau. We take all the frozen conflicts very seriously. I've been in Transnistria, I've been

in Tiraspol. We want to see a solution which restores the territorial integrity of Moldova, which recognizes the rights of the Transnistrian people, and is not a vengeful settlement in any way, and which advances the rule of law and democracy in Transnistria, where there is some work, let me put it this way, some work to be done.

And we hope very much that Russia will play a constructive role. I think our advice to Moldova has been, A) work with us, as we work with you; and B) advance your reforms in Moldova so that you are an increasingly attractive country for the people of Transnistria, so that they look across the river and they see a prospering, democratizing state clearly on its way to Europe, and then look around and think, hmmm, how do I get some of that? And I know that Romania is prepared to play a helpful role in that regard. So it's going to take a while, it's going to take patience, but there is no substitute for the will of a sitting government to advance reforms. Sir.

Question: Andrew Pierre, Georgetown University. I was struck in the past week by two sets of sores in the newspapers. One was that Ramstein Air Force base was being abandoned, or we were taking our planes out of there and so on, turned back to German authorities. And secondly of course, the airlift to Pakistan, on the part of NATO. This raises I think a kind of a fundamental question of, what will NATO look like, institutionally, in five, ten years' time? Seems to me in Iraq, I assume that the situation in Iraq will continue for quite some time, yet we don't have a, despite training forces and so on in and out of Iraq, we don't have a real NATO-wide policy that I see. So my question is, are we still of the view that the mission defines the coalition, or is the coalition moving back into play as defining the mission? And what do you personally see, I doubt the U.S. government has a settled view on this, as the institutional structure and task of NATO in the years ahead?

Daniel Fried: We believe in NATO as an institution. And we believe that NATO as an institution has to evolve to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. Mentally, conceptually, NATO is about half to two-thirds to where it needs to be, that is, NATO countries are getting their minds around the increasing reach of NATO and the increasing strategic distance at which NATO must operate. This process has gone on despite the difficult disagreements about Iraq.

NATO is taking over progressively more responsibility for security in Afghanistan. Well that's just astonishing. If you think about it, that's been obscured, because most observers focus on the difficulty in Iraq. But NATO is intellectually getting its mind around its new missions. It has not, and you hinted at this in your question, prepared physically yet to do this. NATO needs more expeditionary capability, it doesn't need a lot of heavy tank battalions that can't operate where they may be needed to operate. It needs expeditionary forces, it needs more air transport, it needs more helicopters, and it needs this at a time when defense budgets are pretty flat in most countries.

It is possible through military reform to get more of the expeditionary capability without massive or really any increases but it takes a while and it takes a lot of will. How will NATO look? I think NATO will look increasingly expeditionary. We want to see NATO also increasingly an element of strategic consultations between the United States and Europe. And we've started to do

that this fall. We've revived, for you NATO-niks in the room, we've revived the venerable institution of the reinforced NAC, which is a NATO council meeting at which senior experts or policy-level people come out from capitals and have a much more in-depth discussion, sort of one step down from a Ministerial and two steps up from a regular NATO ambassadors' meeting.

Which also answers your question about the mission and the coalition, whatever that was. Haven't heard that phrase in a while, which should tell you something. As the U.S.-European relationship continues to re-coalesce around the twenty-first century tasks, I think it will be easier for NATO to make the changes and evolve as it needs to evolve. And Jim, I saw your hand up there.

Question: Jim Goldgeier, thanks for your presentation. You mentioned that you don't view relations with Russia in zero sum terms. But unfortunately on a lot of the issues that are being discussed today in the workshop, Russians, many in the Russian elite have viewed these issues in zero sum terms, and just wondering if you see any evolution in the Russian approach to these issues or whether there's been a largely continued view of issues like Ukraine or the frozen conflicts, issues related to Ukraine and Georgia's relationship with the West, other kinds of revolutions that might take place in that context.

Daniel Fried: Fair question, to which I don't have an easy answer. I'm obviously very aware of what you're talking about, I read the Russian press, I listen to the Russians. Part of my answer is we have to look at the past ten to fifteen years. The Russians furiously opposed Poland's NATO membership, furiously opposed Baltic membership in NATO, predicting all kinds of dire things if these dangerous developments came to pass. Well, they came to pass, dire things did not happen, and the Baltic/Russian/Polish relations have their ups and downs, but we don't look at these places as flash points, not any more. We have to work with Russia wherever we can, and there's a large -- on these issues, whether it's South_Ossetia or Abkhazia with respect to Georgia, whether it's Nagorno Karabakh in the South Caucasus, whether it's counter-narcotics cooperation in Central Asia, we have to work with Russia because we have overlapping interests. And where we have to, we will support democracy, as we did in Ukraine, or as we want to do in Belarus, where they're having elections, so-called elections next year, at all times being ready to work with Russia, but being prepared to work ourselves and with our allies. That's not a wholly satisfactory answer but I can't give you a truthful, informed answer about Russian thinking because I think it is evolving. I can give you an answer about Russian rhetoric, but you have that answer already, as we all do at this table. Sir.

Question: My name's (?), and I'm with the Turkish Business (inaudible) My question is, given the good relations between the two governments, the United States and Turkey, how concerned are you with the rise of Turkish nationalism, beyond the issue of the Kurdish issue in the country, and (inaudible) public perception of the United States. Thank you.

Daniel Fried: Well, I have been concerned about the strong and negative views in much of the Turkish population about the United States, it's much more acute in Turkey than it is in Western Europe. I'm pleased that relations between United States and Turkey, which went through a rough

patch over Iraq, are now in much better shape. I think that Turkey is in the middle of a profound and very hopeful transformation. I think that Turkey is deepening its democratic reforms, it is opening up its society, it's opening up its economy. I think as that process continues, there will be a vigorous, and sometimes to the outsider, complicated debate as Turkish society develops, and like all social transformations, it takes place in an uneven fashion, at different speeds in different parts of the country. But our cooperation with Turkey has improved across the board, and the Turkish press, even the very skeptical Turkish press, has reported progress we've made in discussions on even the most difficult single issue which is probably the PKK, and the Turkish press is acknowledging that there is progress being made, and I welcome that, I hope that continues.

The United States and Turkey have been friends for a long time. I think that Turkey is going to come out of this process in very good shape, and I suspect that that alliance will continue.

Question: Hi, Borut Grgic, Institute for Strategic Studies, Ljubljana. While we're on path of transformation of organizations, let me ask you, what do you think is the future of the OSCE within Central Asia in the context of how America views the recent suggestions by the panel of (?)7 on reform of the organization. And then the second part to that question, Obviously the OSCE has been a very successful organization in terms of democracy reform and election monitoring, which is something that sticks a needle into the Russian eye, and something that they don't necessarily see eye to eye with the Americans or the Europeans. So how to resolve those tensions, and how to promote some of the great work that the OSCE has done in strengthening Central Asian democracies?

Daniel Fried: Funny you should ask that, because I'm giving testimony this afternoon to the Helsinki Commission on some of these very topics, so I'll have ample opportunity and probably shouldn't go into it in much detail now. The OSCE, though, has a unique comparative advantage in the promotion of democracy, and it has been very successful. The organizational brilliance of the OSCE, and whether this was by design or happenstance I'm not quite sure, is its decentralization. The fact that, oh dear, the Office of Democratic Institutions and Human Rights, the election monitoring arm of the OSCE does its thing. They go out and monitor elections. And then they state, they characterize elections. And this is a powerful and very useful tool. And I hope the OSCE continues to perform as it has been. I think it's done a very good job, and I think our job is to help the institution strengthen itself. Reforms where needed, but not reforms which would hamper its ability to do right what it's been doing right.

Question: Leonard Oberlander In the region of Central Asia and the Caucasus that we were discussing a little while ago, areas that Russia calls the (?) territories that formed the Soviet Union (inaudible). They have a significant advantage in business, commerce and finance with those countries for cultural reasons and networks and personal relationships and knowing the system. For how long can the countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus do you think progress democratically as we optimistically view this, without the trade and commerce and investment from the U.S. and European Union countries and others that we call West, but with commerce and trade and investment from and with Russia's government-owned and oligarchic

businesses?

Daniel Fried: Well. That's a -- there's a lot in that question. The countries of Central Asia are all different, and they shouldn't be put into a category called Central Asia. Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are radically different, both in their prospects, their economic structures, and the levels of democracy. Kyrgyzstan has gone through its so-called Tulip Revolution, what they call in Bishkek the March Events, and everyone knows what that means. The United States is the number one investor in Kazakhstan. In other countries the economy is just recovering, as in Tajikistan from years of civil war. It is probably fruitless to seek as an objective, and we do not seek as an objective, the diminution of Russia's presence in these countries. Russia is a huge presence, there are large Russian minorities in many of these countries; it has got, as you said, economic ties, personal ties. We are not engaged in some sort of great game. We're engaged in an effort to promote reform, to advance our security interests, to advance our economic interests, and to do so in a context where these countries are advancing their own reforms.

We will urge them to do what they need to do to create the conditions for American investment, and again the countries vary rather widely. We will do what we can to urge them to democratize and to reform their systems, and we will point out that democracy ultimately brings stability, and democracy actually strengthens sovereignty, because democratic countries have sovereignty because they have power from within, they don't need outside patrons. That's what we can do, and we are not going to worry about Russian influence, this isn't the Cold War, and we will advance our agenda as best we can, work with the Russians where it's possible to do so, where we have overlapping interests and those areas are considerable. I think I've got time for one more question. Sir?

Question: Thank you, sir. Mihai Constantin from the Romanian Television. President Basescu last year made very clear statements about Romanians involvement in a special partnership with the U.S. and Great Britain, also made some statements about the role in (inaudible) Romania in promoting democracy and stability in those Black Sea regions (inaudible). What is the part that the U.S. plays in backing foreign policies of (inaudible) Romania in that region?

Daniel Fried: Well, we welcome the strategic vision of the Romanian government, and in particular welcome the fact that Romania is not simply inward-looking, but is looking beyond its borders, working with us in Afghanistan and Iraq and interested in what it calls the Black Sea region and in promoting security and reform in the Black Sea region. Now, there are a number of efforts being simultaneously discussed in the region. The Ukranians have some ideas, the Romanians have some ideas, the Georgians have some ideas, there are a lot of ideas floating around the region for cooperation between countries for the sake of reforms and security.

All of these ideas have merit, and our interest is seeing the reformist leaders of the region are able to work together so that there is a common theme. We look forward to working with Romania to advance a common agenda of support for reform and security in the region. Steve Hadley, the National Security advisor, was in Bucharest in the last couple of days, I think over the weekend, I think he left, he arrived there Saturday, so four days ago.

I haven't had a full read-out, but I would be surprised if he didn't discuss some of these issues. So our partnership is developing very well and I welcome Romania's contributions. So. Thank you very much. (applause)