

**NEW AMERICAN STRATEGIES FOR SECURITY AND PEACE  
OCTOBER 28-29, 2003 - WASHINGTON, DC  
SENATOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON**

MR. JOHN PODESTA: ... your attention. Thank you. Thank you for being here early this morning. And we went late into the evening late night. But I think that ... first of all, I'm John Podesta from the Center for American Progress.

I would like to welcome you all back. I saw you all yesterday. But on behalf of the Center and the Century Foundation and the American Prospect, we had a tremendous day yesterday and what promises to be another tremendous day today.

Yesterday in my opening comments, he said that we hoped that you would take away from here a strong sense that there are serious people who have concrete and we believe better ideas about how to protect Americans and advance our national interest in the ideas or should I say ideology which prepares ... propels our foreign policy today.

I think we delivered on that promise. I think that the vast wealth of experience which we'll talk about later in

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our wrap up session of the people who appeared yesterday, both in the keynotes and on the panels, provided a tremendous opportunity to see the fact that there is in fact a coherent alternative strategy to the course that we've embarked upon as a nation.

I want to welcome Governor Warner who's with us this morning and we'll be speaking shortly. We're on a little bit of a forced march here today. We're going to work the program right through to the conclusion with Senator Hagel's remarks. But it is a distinct pleasure that I have this morning to introduce a great friend of mine and a great friend of every American.

When I worked as the Chief of Staff in the White House, then First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was probably the finest ambassador we ever had around the world. If you think about the comments that Zbigniew Brzezinski made last night about the way people are viewing Americans today.

And you think back to the days when Senator Clinton, then

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First Lady Clinton, traveled the world and talked about the most important issues that were facing the world, especially the role of women in development and the need to bring girls into schools, et cetera, and think about the reaction that that got and the positive image that it created for the United States.

We can ... working with Madeline Albright in that regard, her efforts I think pointed the way not only to the fact that that was a course for economic development, but it was a needed strategy to bring women into the body politic to increase democracy, to increase the social value in life.

One of the pieces of work that she did at the White House which is less well known -- but I just want to mention here briefly this morning because I think that it's relevant to the remarks that she's going to make -- was her unflagging devotion to try to work on the issue of Gulf War Syndrome, Gulf War illness.

She worked with the Pentagon and developed a program with

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the White House to make sure that the facts were known, that the records were uncovered, that people were taken care of and that as one of our speakers said yesterday, policy was driven by facts rather than the other way around.

She, of course, was the first First Lady elected to the Senate in the year 2000 and I think has served with such great distinction there. In the three years that she's been there, she's won the admiration of people on both sides of the aisle. She serves on the Armed Services committee.

She has emerged as one of the most powerful and effective voices I think first and foremost for the people of New York in her advocacy of the issues that effect them the most, but also for the people of the country as a whole. She has just been one of the most outstanding leaders I think that we have today in the Senate.

She's a great friend of mine. And she's a great friend of the Center for America Progress. I introduce Senator

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Hillary Clinton.

SENATOR HILLARY CLINTON: Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, very much. And good morning. Thanks to my friend John Podesta for that very kind introduction. As I stand here looking out at all of you, I appreciate greatly your commitment to this conference and to the larger goals that it seeks to discuss with the America people.

And I especially want to complement the Center for American Progress and the work that John Podesta has done in creating this important institution that I believe will be and is already a tremendous force in engaging in the war of ideas that is so critical, not only to our nation's future, but because of our position, indeed to the future of the world.

There is no better leader for that effort than John. He has the warrior spirit and the strategic mind that is needed for such an endeavor. And I want to thank also Bob Kuttner from the American Prospect and Dick Leone from the

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Century Foundation for their work on this conference.

Today's conference, New American Strategies for Security and Peace, just about in that title sums it up. We clearly need new strategies. What we are doing is not working. And usually when people are in a hole, they stop digging. This administration just asks for bigger shovels.

And the fact is that we are now confronting some of the most dangerous challenges that we have seen in quite some time. And we are ill-prepared either to confront them or to explain the strategies we are pursuing. So I commend the Center for American Progress, *The American Prospect* and The Century Foundation for this very timely program.

There will be many speakers, as there have been yesterday and today, who will go in detail to critique the specifics of the policies that the administration is pursuing. I particularly commend this very good piece of work by Bill Perry and others that I think is on your table and on your chairs for much of the specifics of that critique.

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I want to focus on a slightly different part of our American security policy, because it affects one of the most fundamental concerns. And that is the involvement of the American people in pursuing strategies for our security and our peace and the importance of doing so consistent with our democratic values in order to sustain support at home and to regain confidence, trust and support abroad.

Because today, we are at a critical moment, not just in our history, but in the history of democracy. And as we seek to build democratic institutions in Iraq and elsewhere, we have to reach out to global partners in that endeavor. And we have to remember the tenets of the democratic process we advocate at home as well.

The issue I intend to explore briefly this morning is whether we are applying the fundamental principles of democracy, rule of law, transparency and accountability, informed consent, not only to what we do at home, but to what we do in the world.

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There can be no real question in my view that we must do this. Because foreign policy involves the most critical decisions any democracy can make: going to war, our relations with the world and our use of power in that world.

But the fact is that new doctrines and actions by the Bush administration undermine these core democratic principles, both at home and abroad. And I believe they do so at a severe cost. In our efforts abroad, we now go to war as a first resort against perceived threats, not as a necessary final resort.

Preemption is an option. It is not a doctrine. And it is an option that every president since George Washington has had and many have used. But to elevate it to the organizing principle of American strategic policy at the outset of the 21st century is to grant legitimacy to every nation to make war on their enemies before their enemies make war on them.

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It is a giant step backwards. In our dealings abroad, we claim to champion the rule of law. Yet, we too often have turned our backs on international agreements. The Kyoto Treaty, for example, which represented an attempt by the international community to address in a meaningful way a real problem, the global problem of climate change and global warming, was short circuited.

The biological weapons enforcement protocol, the comprehensive test ban treaty. This unwillingness to engage the international community on problems that do require international cooperation ... it is not as though we can turn our backs and solve these problems all by ourselves ... sends a clear signal to other nations that we may believe in the rule of law in principle if it is our law and we get to interpret it. That is the antithesis of the rule of law.

The administration argues that international agreements like the Kyoto Treaty are flawed. And the fact is I agree that there are flaws in such treaties. And when the Clinton Administration signed the Kyoto protocol, it said

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that working inside the tent, it would try to make further improvements.

But rather than try to do that from inside the process, the Bush administration basically knocked the tent down. That is not a prudent exercise of power. It is a petulant exercise of ideology.

In our dealings abroad, we more often than not have promoted not the principles of international cooperation, but the propensity for an aggressive unilateralism that alienates our allies and undermines our own tenets.

It deeply saddens me as I speak with friends and colleagues from around the world that the friends of America from my generation tell me painfully that for the first time in their lives, they are on the defensive when it comes to explaining to their own children that America truly is a good and benign nation.

Because too often the images that have been seen in a quick changing panoply of visual and verbal images that

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have marked our presence on the world scene over the last two and a half plus years is of an America that disregards anyone else's concerns, insists that you are with us or against us on every possible position, and forces even our close friends around the world to worry about our intentions and motivations.

Our Declaration of Independence calls for a decent respect for the opinions of mankind. Yet, this administration simply doesn't listen. From our most important alliances in Europe to our relations with our neighbors in this hemisphere, the administration has spanned the range of emotions from dismissive to indifferent.

Ask President Vicente Fox who staked his presidency on a political alliance with Mexico's historically controversial ally to the north, only to discover that he got no further north than Crawford, Texas.

If we are to lead this world commensurate with the power we possess, the ideals we proclaim, into a free and hopefully democratic future, we must first be consistent

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in the principles we champion and pursue. Nowhere is this more important than in the transparency of government decisions.

Without such transparency, how can leaders be accountable?

How can people be informed? And without such transparency, the openness and information that is required for the lifeblood of a democracy to be healthy and strong, the pillars of that democracy are shaken.

Now, I would be the first to admit that in our democracy or in any democracy, there is always tension between the information that the Executive Branch needs and their opinion to keep secret any information that must and should be provided to the public in order to have a informed citizenry who can participate in the decisions that are necessary to sustain support for difficult and controversial involvements.

But we must always be vigilant against letting our desire to keep information confidential to be used as a pretext for classifying information that is more about political

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embarrassment than national security.

Let me be absolutely clear. This is not a propensity that is confined to one party or another. It is a propensity of power that must be guarded against. Because when that happens, we move away from the bedrock principle of informed consent that should govern all state actions in a democracy.

Harkening back once again to our founders who I think were not only extraordinary statesmen but brilliant psychologists, they understood profoundly the dangers and temptations of power. The balance of power that they enshrined in our constitution and in our system of government was a check on all of our human natures.

And the propensity for anyone, no matter how well meaning, no matter how convinced of the righteousness of one's cause and view of the world to be held in a check and a balance by other institutions.

Since September 11th, this question about transparency,

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about adequacy of information and informed consent of the public has become even more salient. The war on terror will be, as it is now, being fought in the darkness, outside the public limelight, new doctrines of pre-emption and a commitment to secrecy raise profound questions about the democratic oversight of decisions effecting war and peace.

They also raise profound questions about the quality of the intelligence information that is not open to public scrutiny. I won't go into that this morning, but one of the most critical issues we confront is what is wrong with our intelligence? The gathering and the analysis and the use.

And as any of you who follow what is going on on Capitol Hill are well aware, we are locked into a partisan conflict over how far to go in analyzing the intelligence with respect to Iraq. With the other side claiming that we can look at the intelligence community, but we can't look at the decision makers. We can't look at the usage to which the intelligence was put. We can't look at the

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particular viewpoints that were brought to that analysis. I think that is a profound error and undermining of our democratic institutions.

The American people, and indeed I would argue the entire international community, needs to have confidence that when the United States government acts, it is acting in good faith, sharing information where appropriate and developing mechanisms to ensure that power is not abused.

A perception that our government is not providing honest assessments for the rationale for war or is unwilling to admit error will diminish the support for United States' foreign policy, not only in the international community but among the American people.

I believe, having had a lot of experience now in watching and listening to the American people, that they are far more willing to accept the administration's statements about what is going right in Iraq if they believe that the administration is more forthright about what is going wrong. It is difficult to convince people that everything

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is fine. And in fact as the violence level goes up, it gets even better. When we are therefore asking people essentially to just shelve their common sense and human experience.

There are a couple of examples of this that hit very close to home for me. One is in the administration's approach to the investigations surrounding 9/11. Not only as a Senator from New York, but as an American, I don't think there is any more searing event in my personal experience than what happened to us on September 11th.

I feel absolutely without doubt that our citizens, particularly my constituents, deserve to know all the facts of how the government was prepared or not. Yet, over this weekend, we learned that the 9/11 commission, an independent commission, charged with the important task of investigating how 9/11 happened, complains that it is not getting access to all the documents it needs.

This is a hugely important issue. And it's not just important for this commission, but for these larger

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questions about access to information and how this government maintains the trust of the American people.

The lack of transparency on the part of the Bush administration has forced Governor King, former Republican Governor of New Jersey, to threaten subpoenas. This should not be happening.

As bad as it was for Vice President Cheney to keep secret how the administration developed its energy policy, this is far worse. The 9/11 commission is not trying to embarrass this president or any former president or anyone else. It is trying to learn what happened, what went wrong. In hopes that we can be better prepared to protect ourselves from any future attacks.

In taking their action to evade or avoid providing information, the administration unnecessarily raises the suspicion that it has something to hide, that it might use the claim of national security to hide mistakes that are literally questions of life and death for Americans.

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Similarly, with respect to the prior report about intelligence and the administration's continuing refusal to release to the American public the 28 pages that concern the involvements of foreign governments with the hijackers, the administration is drawing a line that should not be drawing. There is no legitimate basis for denying the American public this information.

Meanwhile, on Iraq, the Bush administration describes progress on many fronts in direct contravention to what we are hearing and seeing everyday. Everyone should admit there are undoubtedly many instances where our efforts are succeeding.

I personally know of the reports that I get back from people whom I know, people who are serving from New York about good relations developing between the United States military and local officials, schools being built. I think that is absolutely part of the story.

But what is going right should not delude us about what is going wrong. There is too much at stake to treat war as a

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political spin zone. So we need to level with the American people, the good, the bad, the ugly. For the simple fact is we cannot afford to fail in Iraq.

On that fundamental principle, I am in full and profound agreement with the President. The stakes simply are too high. That means we need to improve our transparency and credibility in Iraq. That means we need to internationalize the military presence in Iraq. That means that the recent \$87 billion supplemental appropriations bill needs to continue to include an amendment that I offered which was included in the final bill to require GAO audits of these opaque supplemental appropriations.

On a related point with respect to transparency and democratic principles, there has come to be a quite defensive posture in the Senate and the House where the majority party no longer wants to negotiate with or share information with the minority party.

So, for example, when there is a conference on a bill,

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whether it be Medicare or energy, the Democrats are usually not even invited. With respect to the conference on the supplemental appropriation, the information provided to the minority was not sufficient. And the conference had to be recessed.

This is all so unnecessary. And it raises suspicions. And it increases the intensity of concern among fair minded Americans. Whatever one's position on whether or not we should have ever gone into Iraq, whether or not there ever were weapons of mass destruction, we are there now. And as a result, we need to have American support in order to make the tough decisions that we are facing.

Another amendment that I co-sponsored with Senator Harkin would require the GAO to examine the level of profits being made by U.S. contractors in Iraq. This is a historic mission that government, our government, has encouraged going back to George Washington to make sure that no private company profited off the spoils of war.

And we need to assure the American people that their money

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is being spent wisely and assure the Iraqi people it is being spent in their interest and assure the world that it is not being spent for profiteering by American companies.

I understand both of these amendments, my amendment and the one I co-sponsored with Senator Harkin, are the subject of some dispute by the administration. And in fact, I understand that the majority party has been advised to ensure that the final package doesn't include those amendments.

I can only hope that they have a change of mind. They are creating a level of mistrust of our government by our citizens that we will reap the consequences of for years to come. [applause]

So, as we discuss and debate these issues, we have to recognize that we are engaged in a very difficult conflict that is certainly not lost on the men and women stationed in Iraq or on their families who are worrying about their well-being. And it should not lead to trying to avoid the site of caskets coming home. And it should not lead to

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the administration refusing to release injury figures.

We should be willing to admit the price that is being paid by these brave young men and women to pursue this policy.

Because I do believe the Executive Branch has a strong prerogative on national security. And as a Senator, I have supported that prerogative.

But in my two and a half years in the Congress, I've also come to believe that the men and women elected to serve in Congress have a great deal of wisdom to bear as well. And as we look at what is going wrong as well as what is going right in Iraq, I don't think we have a single mind to waste. And we ought to be reaching out to include the ideas from people who have some expertise to bring to bear.

Now, recent articles that I've read report that many Republicans share my frustration. That there is in fact a lack of genuine consultation, a failure to construct a genuine bipartisan consensus for the sacrifice that Americans are making.

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My Republican colleagues, Senator McCain and Senator Hagel -- who will be speaking at this conference later today -- have cautioned the administration of the dangers of a failure to be open and honest with the American people on the situation in Iraq.

As Senator Hagel and others have suggested, Congress needs to be more than just a rubber stamp for the administration's policy. It's hard to think of a war that America has won without seeking, achieving and maintaining a bipartisan consensus.

One thinks of the partnership between President Truman and Senator Vandenberg after World War II to secure U.S. support for the United Nations. Or President George H. Bush's close consultation with Democratic leaders during the first Gulf War. Or my husband's close consultation with Senator Dole and other Republican leaders during the military actions in Bosnia and Kosova.

We also should be looking to give Iraqis more of a say and

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also in making transactions and contracting more open. We can't just preach the habits of democracy, inclusion, empowerment, openness. We have to model them.

So, fundamentally, this is about trust, winning an ensuring the trust of the Iraqi people who we will eventually leave to govern themselves and keeping the trust of the American people.

I cannot stress strongly enough how significant it is that the American people across the board are beginning to ask such serious questions about our direction in our efforts to not only pursue a course in Iraq, but from the Middle East to North Korea as well.

An unwillingness of this administration to be more forthright can undermine the greatest capital we have, the capital of human trust between a government and the governed.

I think we are on the edge of losing both the confidence of the Iraqi people and of the American people. We can

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prevent that from happening with a heavy dose of straight talk. And then we can pursue building a free and democratic society in Iraq by abiding with the principles that we hold dear and demonstrating that we are willing to be open and have partnerships and build coalitions that are more than just in name.

I think this moment in American history is fraught with danger and challenge. And if you look back at our security goals in World War II, they were clear. The Cold War was clear. The post Cold War era prior to 9/11 was a little more muddled. Because it wasn't as obvious what our strategic objectives were and how we would achieve them.

Now we do have once again a very clear adversarial relationship between us and those who would do us harm and who would pervert religion and attempt to obtain power for their own purposes.

But just proclaiming the evil of our adversary is not a strategy. Just assuming that everyone will understand

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that we are well motivated and people to be trusted is beyond the range of human experience as I understand it.

This administration is in danger of squandering not just our surplus, which is already gone in financial terms, but the surplus of good feeling and hopefulness that they inherited and that we had in almost global unanimity over after 9/11.

We are a resilient, optimistic, and effective people. And I'm confident we can regain our footing. But it needs to be the first order of business, not only for the administration, but for the Congress and for the American public. And it's my hope that this conference will provide more ammunition and more support for those of us who are trying to get back on the right track and to give America a chance to lead consistent with our values and ideals. Thank you, very much. [applause]

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