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REMARKS BY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER JONES AT 45<sup>TH</sup> MUNICH  
CONFERENCE ON SECURITY POLICY

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February 8, 2009

Thank you for that wonderful tribute to Henry Kissinger yesterday. Congratulations. As the most recent National Security Advisor of the United States, I take my daily orders from Dr. Kissinger, filtered down through General Brent Scowcroft and Sandy Berger, who is also here. We have a chain of command in the National Security Council that exists today.

I think my role today is a little bit different than you might expect. Following the speech of the Vice President and the presence of our distinguished members from the U.S. House of Representatives, I thought that I would spend my time talking to you about how taking the President's guidance and the Vice President's comments yesterday, I would spend a few moments trying to discuss how the U.S. National Security Council intends to reorganize itself in order to be supportive. For decades, this conference in Munich has provided a truly exceptional forum for the kind of open dialogue and candid discussions that can only take place among close friends and allies. The Vice President's attendance and his speech yesterday should send I think a very strong and sincere signal about the seriousness of our purpose when it comes to listening, engaging and building stronger partnerships with all of our friends and allies because the President feels that the transatlantic alliance is a cornerstone to our collective security.

As many of you know, I have been here coming to this conference since 1980 and I have been privileged to work and know many of you here. I would like to salute my military colleagues with whom I have not only a deep friendship but shared many of the issues that we are discussing in a positive way today. And I am delighted to be back in an altered state, so to speak.

I know there is great curiosity about President Obama among many here. And there has been wonderful enthusiasm and new energy with regard to his election from people all over the world. I would like to take just a moment to speak to you about his approach to national security and in fact international security and the role that I see the National Security Council playing. First and foremost the President's strategic approach will be grounded in the real understanding of the challenges we face in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. We must simply better understand the environment that we are in. The President, if nothing else, is a pragmatist. He knows that we must deal with the world as it is. And he knows that the world is a very different place than it was just a few years ago. As he said in his inaugural address, the world

has changed and we must change with it. And we certainly agree that the world is a multipolar place in the time frame of the moments we are in.

It is hard to overstate the differences between the 20<sup>th</sup> and the 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. We have already experienced many, many differences in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. When this conference first met, everything was viewed through the prism of the Cold War. And in retrospect, life was simpler then. It was certainly more organized. It was certainly more symmetric. Year in and year out, the strategic environment was fairly consistent and predictable. Threats were “conventional.” The transatlantic security partnership was largely designed to meet the threats of a very symmetric world. It was reactive. The NATO partnership was conceived to be a defensive and fairly static alliance. And I spent a good deal of my career in uniform serving within this framework. But to move forward, we must understand the terms national security and international security are no longer limited to the ministries of defense and foreign ministries; in fact, it encompasses the economic aspects of our societies. It encompasses energy. It encompasses new threats, asymmetric threats involving proliferation, involving the illegal shipment of arms and narco-terrorism, and the like. Borders are no longer recognized and the simultaneity of the threats that face us are occurring at a more rapid pace.

And as the President has detailed, a comprehensive approach to our national security and international security in the 21<sup>st</sup> century must identify and understand that the wider array of existing threats that threaten us. To name a few:

- Terror and extremism has taken many lives and on many continents across the globe.
- The ongoing struggle in Afghanistan and the activity along the Pakistani border is an international security challenge of the highest order.
- The spread of nuclear and chemical biological and cyber-technologies that could upset the global order and cause catastrophe on an unimaginable scale is real. It is pressing and it is time that we dealt with it.
- The overdependence on fossil fuels that endangers our security, our economies, and the health of the planet.
- Protracted tribal, ethnic, and religious conflicts.
- Poverty, corruption, and disease stands in the way of progress and causes great suffering in many parts of the world.
- Narco-terrorism that provides the economic fuel for insurgencies.
- And an economic crisis that serves as the foundation of our strength.

This list is by no means exhaustive. The challenges that we face are broader and more diverse than we ever imagined, even after the terrible events of 9/11. And our capacity to meet these challenges in my view does not yet match the urgency of what is required. To be blunt, the institutions and approaches that we forged together through the 20<sup>th</sup> century are still adjusting to meet the realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. And the world has definitely changed, but we have not changed with it. But it is not too late, and this is the good news.

In our country, one of the institutions that is changing is the National Security Council, which like so much of our national and international security architecture was formed in the wake of World War II and during the Cold War. So let me say a few words about what the National Security Council does and how President Obama has asked that I approach my job as National Security Adviser. The President has made clear that to succeed against 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges, the United States must use, balance, and integrate all elements of national

influence: our military and our diplomacy, our economy and our intelligence, and law enforcement capacity, our cultural outreach, and as was mentioned yesterday, the power of our moral example, in short, our values. Given this role, the NSC is by definition at the nexus of that effort. It integrates on a strategic sense all elements of our national security community towards the development of effective policy development and interagency cooperation. But to better carry out the president's priorities, the National Security Council must respond to the world the way it is and not as we wish it were. And it must consider the fusion of our national priorities within the broader international context and interest. The NSC's mission is relatively simple. It should perform the functions that it alone can perform and serve as a strategic center – and the word strategic is operative here – for the President's priorities.

To achieve those goals we will be guided by several principles. As one of our great comedians in the United States, Groucho Marx, once said, "These are our principles. And if you don't like them, we have others."

First, the NSC must be strategic, as I mentioned. It is easy to get bogged down in the tactical concerns that consume the day-to-day conduct. As a matter of fact, it is much more enjoyable to be involved at the tactical level. But we won't effectively advance the priorities if we spend our time reacting to events, instead of shaping them. And that requires strategic thinking. The National Security Council I think is unique in its ability to step back and take a longer and wider view of our American national security and our role in the shared context of our international security as well.

Second, the NSC must manage coordination across different agencies of the government – increasing numbers of agencies. We have learned the hard way that this has real implications, both in terms of how policy has developed in Washington and how it is in fact executed. The NSC must therefore function as a strategic integrator by doing several things. One, by ensuring that dissenting views are heard and considered throughout the policy-making process. Two, by monitoring policy implementation to ensure that agencies are coordinating effectively in the field, and that the President's priorities are being carried out in practice. Third, the NSC must be transparent. We serve the President. We also serve other principal agencies of our government. And that's why I am committed to managing a process that is as open as possible so that we forge policies that are widely understood throughout our government by our people and by our partners around the world. Fourth, the National Security Council must be agile. We face nimble adversaries and all of us will have to confront fast-moving crises – from conflict and terrorism to new diseases and environmental disasters. To keep pace, we will have to move faster in developing policy and priorities than did our predecessors. The world is a smaller place. Communications is more rapid. And therefore our reactions must be swifter. And we must be able to communicate rapidly throughout the government and around the world in order to effectively respond.

And finally, the National Security Council must adapt to evolving challenges. There are traditional priorities that we will manage. But we must also update our outlook and sometimes our organization to keep pace with the changing world. To give you just a few examples, the NSC today works very closely with President Obama's National Economic Council, which is led by Mr. Larry Summers, so that our response to the economic crisis is coordinated with our global partners and our national security needs. The NSC has worked closely with the White House Counsel's office as we implement the President's orders to ban torture and close the detention center at Guantanamo Bay. The National Security Council is

undertaking a review to determine how best to unify our efforts to combat terrorism around the world while protecting our homeland. And this effort will be led by Mr. John Brennan.

The National Security Council will be at the table as our government forges a new approach to energy security and climate change that demand broad cooperation across the U.S. Government and more persistent American leadership around the world. And the NSC is evaluating how to update our capacity to combat the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction while also placing a far higher priority on cyber security.

There is no fixed model that can capture the world in all of its complexity. What's right today will have to be different four years from now or eight years from now. And that's precisely the point. The NSC's comparatively small size gives it a unique capacity to reinvent itself as required and to pivot on the key priorities of our time.

Just as we change our ways at home, so too must we change our international partnerships in order to adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Minister Jung just pointed out some very good examples of how NATO could change. If there is one overriding characteristic to the world we face, it is the truth that security is shared. And as President Obama has said time and again, we are strongest when we act alongside our partners.

I know there will be much discussion over the next few months as to the future of NATO, so I am not going to dwell on the topic, although I am passionate about it. I do know that the President looks forward to addressing the future of the alliance at the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary summit in April. I have been a fan and a participant in NATO since I was a child, watching NATO during the Cold War as I was growing up and as a military commander, watching NATO troops patrol the streets of Kabul and elsewhere in Afghanistan and the Balkans and the skies and in the Mediterranean. And I can tell you this. NATO is as relevant to our common security in the first half of the 21<sup>st</sup> century as it was to our common defense in the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. We know that NATO is a strong alliance, perhaps the strongest the world has ever known. Its capacity does not just come from the strength of its arms but from the enduring democratic values that bind our nations together. And from the iron-clad commitment that ensures our collective security. But I also know this. NATO must also change. It needs to become less reactive and more proactive. I think it needs to become less rigid and more flexible. It needs to become less stationary and more expeditionary. And it needs to become more, not less, essential to our collective security. Our Secretary-General has been a strong voice for developing a new strategic vision for the alliance; and judging from this conference, this has been one of the finest conferences I have attended in Munich; and judging from this conference, the time has come to do so.

There is no doubt that NATO's involvement in Afghanistan poses an enormous task for NATO, but not just NATO, for indeed all international institutions located on the ground in an effort to bring this to a happy and satisfactory conclusion. Given the nexus of terror and extremism, drugs and proliferation, we cannot afford failure in Afghanistan. And that's why the Obama Administration will work closely with NATO and with the Afghan and Pakistani Governments to forge a new comprehensive strategy to meet achievable goals. This will be a shared effort with our allies. Afghanistan is not simply an American problem, it is an international problem. And as we work to meet these short-term tests, we must show the same strategic vision that mark NATO's founding six decades ago. Our predecessors had the vision to build institutions that were durable, that could meet the challenges of the day while adapting over the course of several decades. Now the world has changed, and history has

called on us to change once more – and this, we must do. President Obama is committed to pursuing a national security strategy that is fully responsive to the challenges that we face. That means facing down current threats, while forging the lasting structures and capabilities that will protect our people and advance our interests well into the future. As part of that effort, we will take steps that I have outlined to be stronger at home and we will seek stronger partnerships with our friends abroad. Those partnerships will require continuous and rapid consultation. As part of that consultation, the Obama Administration will listen closely, be clear about what we are doing, and work hard to find common ground and develop common capabilities. I have no doubt that we are at another crossroads in history. Together we have fought wars and torn down walls of division and together I know that we can meet the challenges of this moment in history if we have the courage and the commitment to change with the times.

Thank you very much.