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SECRETARY ALBRIGHT: Thank you, Professor Giddens, for the introduction. Ambassador Lader and other Excellencies from the diplomatic corps; faculty and students of the London School of Economics, special guests, colleagues and friends, good morning. I really am very pleased to be here though the weather is not quite as nice as Florence. (laughter) London is one of my favorite cities. It is where I have my earliest memories of life, from when I was a little girl. I have traveled the world since, but there is still no place like England, this sceptered isle of glorious heritage, where Shakespeare's poetry and Churchill's oratory echo across the ages--and even Prime Ministers change nappies. (laughter)

I am also honored to be offered a chance to address this school, and flattered to see so many students in the audience. Or at least I was until I learned that, this time of year, your only alternative is studying for exams. (laughter)

Before I became a diplomat, I used to teach, which I love, in part because of the interactions I had with students, and in part because there is no better place than academia from which to criticize the government, and there is no greater fun than that. (laughter)

And now my perspective of course has changed but my admiration for institutions such as this has not. The LSE is a grand laboratory for the development and testing of ideas; a place where the world's most creative thinkers can come together and forge friendships at a young age; and a university deeply committed to confronting real world problems and enriching people's lives.

I'm also pleased to be here because of the experience I've had in the past few years working with your nation's leaders on expanding and modernizing NATO; supporting peace in Northern Ireland and the Middle East; ending the war in Bosnia; and halting ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

Throughout, the US and the UK have stood shoulder to shoulder, and I've been deeply impressed by the vision of Prime Minister Blair, the wisdom of Foreign Secretary Cook and the tenacity of Lord Robertson, in his assignments both here and in Brussels.

Our common purpose has been to realize the long-denied dream of a Europe whole and free. This morning, I would like to focus on a very vital part of that effort, which is to build on the progress made during the past decade towards a truly comprehensive partnership between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic Community.

This is timely, because Russia has arrived at a pivotal moment both internally and in its relations with the West. The Russian people have turned to a new generation of leaders, who come to office with welcome energy and an ambitious agenda; but whose capacity to implement needed reforms is yet unproved; and whose commitment to democratic values and human rights is still to be measured.

In response, we would do well to heed the warning of London's most famous sleuth, "It is a capital mistake," said Holmes, "to theorize before one has data."

And certainly, it would be premature to theorize about the direction Russian President Vladimir Putin and his new government will take. But we have entered a very promising period for gathering more information.

Prime Minister Blair held productive meetings with President Putin last month. Next week, the EU-Russian Summit will take place. Early next month, President Clinton will visit Moscow. And there will be several other opportunities later in the year for leaders in Russia and the West to exchange views directly and personally.

Underlying many of our specific concerns will be a more basic one. And that is how, as we begin a new century, Russia will define its European identity. This fundamental question was first broached more than 400 years ago, when Peter the Great sought to open Russia to the West. But it is not until our time that the Russian people have had a chance to complete the journey they began when St. Petersburg first rose on the Neva River.

It is significant that President Gorbachev, who could see the failures of the Communist system even if he could not fully envision a replacement, often referred to his country's place in our "common European home." And now, Russia's new leaders have been explicit in stating that Russia's future is in and with Europe. The United States strongly supports this.

But we are under no illusion that Russia's full integration will happen overnight, nor do we underestimate the obstacles that exist.

Nine years ago, when I still was an academic, I participated in a survey of attitudes towards democracy and free markets in Russia. It was around the time that the Soviet Union broke up. We found the Russian people eager for change in the abstract, but uncertain about what democracy would mean.

They seemed poorly prepared for free enterprise. The idea of rewarding more productive work with higher pay was alien. Dependence on the state was deeply ingrained. People had no experience with competitive markets. And they were deeply divided not only by ethnicity, but also by age, gender and level of education.

I, sometimes in describing this, compare it to one of those personality tests where on the first page you are asked "are you an introvert or an extrovert?" And you say, "extrovert." And then on the third page they ask you whether you like people and you say "no." And that poses a certain dilemma. (laughter)

My conclusion at the time of this study was that transforming Russia into a functioning pluralist society with a market system would be indeed a "Herculean task." Today, we hear some say the job is not only Herculean, but hopeless. I do not agree with that.

Since the Soviet Union broke apart, a flood of forces have been unleashed in Russia. Many of these are in direct opposition to each other. Impulses toward integration and openness vie with tendencies toward isolation and alienation. Eagerness to prepare for the future competes with rose-tinted nostalgia for the past. It's a little hard to envision Brezhnev nostalgia, but it exists. And the love of freedom coexists with a desire for less disorder. Time will tell where these swirling currents will ultimately lead.

But it is cause for encouragement that the Russian people have, at every opportunity, made clear their rejection both of the Soviet past and a dictatorial future. They have not fully realized, but neither have they abandoned, democracy's promise.

The policy of Western democracies should be based on our own interest in seeing that promise fulfilled because we have a big stake in the success of Russian democracy. And we should never forget why.

For some of us, the Cold War is already a fading memory. For many, it is not even a memory at all. Today's high school graduates were six when the Berlin Wall fell.

But we must remember and learn. The Cold War was not just a useful background for spy fiction. It was a time of relentless and institutionalized tragedy; of proxy wars that destroyed lives on every continent; of barbed wire stretched across Europe's heart; of gulags and forced confessions; and of countless thousands killed while trying to escape.

Above all, it was a time of fear--of showdowns in Korea, Berlin and Cuba and children taught to hide beneath their desks.

Leaders in Moscow and the West have no greater responsibility than to ensure that we do not return to that time or any variation of it.

That is why, when President Clinton visits Moscow next month, he will reiterate America's desire to see a Russia that is defining its greatness in 21st Century terms: democratic in governance, market-oriented in its economic development, ruled by law, at peace with itself, and working with others for a more secure and prosperous world.

We want to welcome Russia to its rightful place both as a part of Europe and as a partner of the entire transatlantic community.

The question we will be exploring in depth in weeks to come is how fully Russia is prepared to work with us.

On the economic side, as Prime Minister Blair has said, President Putin certainly knows how to talk our language. He understands well that no country can prosper if outside money is scared away and inside money is shipped out.

He talks frankly about the reforms needed for Russia to be able to attract and retain investment; about the need to protect rights and enforce contracts, curb corruption and increase accountability.

And he is in the final stages of preparing an economic reform plan that he hopes will enable Russia to grow its economy on a sustained basis. And just yesterday he has proposed an entirely new tax system.

All this is good. But contemplating the promise of economic reform in Russia is a little like sitting down to read one of those traditional English mystery novels. There is a sense of anticipation, but also a nagging feeling that you may have read the book before--albeit with a different cover.
(laughter)

Doubts will dissipate only after the first chapters have been read, and we know whether Russia is prepared to make the kind of strategic breakthrough in the economy that has enabled key countries in Central Europe, for example, to move ahead. And that, in turn, will require answers to some very basic questions.

Will the Russian Government give priority to the very substantial reforms required for accession to the WTO?

Will the new Duma do what the old would not, and approve the anti-money laundering legislation that has long been promised?

Will it approve the bilateral investment treaty pending with the United States?

Will it finally finish work on a tax code, and on the legislation governing Production Sharing Agreements so as to open the door to large-scale investments in the energy and natural resources sector?

Will Russia reform and make more uniform its licensing and permitting practices?

And perhaps above all, will the government stand up to the kleptocrats and inside traders who have been bleeding Russia's economy dry and holding Russia back?

The incentives for Russia to reply to each of these queries with a resounding "Da" are strong. The country has paid an enormous price during the past decade as a result of unbridled speculation, influence peddling, and half-implemented reforms. Clearly, the Russian people are looking for a leader who will begin to transform democracy's promise into the coin of a better life for the many, not just for the few.

Russia has a chance for a fresh start. And as President Clinton will make clear at the Summit: If its new leaders back their promises with performance, we will enthusiastically support Russia's

efforts to integrate itself into the world economy and encourage appropriate investment on Russian soil.

The new leaders in Russia also have an opportunity to take security cooperation with the West to a new level.

It is significant that President Putin has spoken favorably about NATO, seeming to understand that the new NATO is no threat to a new Russia. And he has resumed Russia's broad cooperation with the Alliance through its Permanent Joint Council, where I met with Foreign Minister Ivanov two days ago.

The new leaders have also shown support for continued Russian participation in peacekeeping missions in Bosnia and Kosovo.

And after years of delay, the Duma recently approved the Start II nuclear arms reduction agreement and the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty -- thereby showing the United States up.

In their upcoming summit, Presidents Clinton and Putin will review the full range of foreign policy and security issues between our two countries. To be productive, these conversations must be frank, which I am certain will be the case. This means that in addition to the many moments of agreement there are sure to be some of contention.

For example, the United States has joined the UK and others around the world in condemning Moscow's recent hosting of Serbia's Defense Minister, a man indicted for war crimes by the Hague Tribunal.

It is vital that such an incident not be repeated, and Russian Foreign Minister Ivanov has said it will not. We expect that to be true, and hope that Russia will use its influence to aid the democratic aspirations of the Serb people, not the repressive policies of Serbia's discredited leadership.

The latest incident is a reminder that cooperation between Russia and the West has been threatened on several occasions in recent years over issues such as NATO enlargement, Iraq, and the Balkans. Each time, we have found a way to move forward, not always in full agreement, but through pragmatic steps that enable us to advance our shared interests.

This is evidence that the zero-sum world of the Cold War really is gone. The Euro-Atlantic Community and Russia both benefit from stability in Europe and both are threatened by strife. Both have incentives to cooperate in responding to the global threats of international terror, drug trafficking and crime. And both are endangered by the spread of weapons of mass destruction and the advanced missile technologies that can deliver them.

Responding to this last danger has been America's first priority with Russia over the past decade, and a major focus of our assistance.

Since 1992, our support has helped to deactivate almost 5000 nuclear warheads in the former Soviet Union; eliminate nuclear weapons from three former Soviet Republics; strengthen the security of nuclear weapons and materials at more than 100 sites; and purchase more than sixty tons of highly enriched uranium that could have been used by terrorists or outlaw states to build nuclear weapons.

Currently, our Expanded Threat Reduction Initiative is helping Russia to tighten export controls, improve security over its arsenals, and provide opportunities for more than 25,000 former Soviet weapons scientists to participate in peaceful commercial and research ventures.

For example, we helped transform the State Research Center known once as the "crown jewel of Soviet germ warfare"--a place so secret it was not even shown on maps--into a facility for fighting disease.

We are also seeking Russia's cooperation in responding to the potential new dangers posed by long-range missiles. For decades, we viewed this threat primarily through a Cold War lens. But the spread of ballistic missile technology to a number of potentially hostile states has created a new strategic environment, to which we must respond.

That is why we are developing and testing a limited National Missile Defense system. President Clinton has said he will make a decision on deployment later this year. That decision will take into account cost, threat, technological feasibility, and a range of other national security factors, including the impact on arms control, our Allies, Russia and China.

We have had constructive consultations on this subject within the Alliance and with Moscow, and will continue them at the upcoming US-Russia Summit, and thereafter.

We hope to have Allied support in persuading Russia of the reality that a ballistic missile defense of the type we are planning will not threaten its deterrent; that the modest changes we are proposing in the ABM Treaty provide the best path for meeting 21st Century dangers within the framework of sound arms control; and that our strategy will make it easier for our two countries to agree on further reductions in our nuclear arsenals, down to 80 percent below Cold War peaks.

We do not expect Presidents Clinton and Putin to resolve these issues fully during the Moscow Summit. Our differences are still too wide. But this is the first of several meetings between the two leaders this year.

At this stage, our goal must be to clear up misunderstandings, establish common ground and avoid an atmosphere of confrontation that could push agreement further from reach.

The approach of Russia's new leaders to economic and security issues will do much to determine the nature of future relations with the Euro-Atlantic Community. But there is a third unanswered question, and that is whether Russia's new leaders will be willing and able to carry forward their nation's full transition to political democracy.

Some say we should not care about this, because it is Russia's internal affair. And that democracy and human rights do not belong on the international agenda.

I couldn't disagree more. Because there is often a strong connection between how a regime acts towards its own citizens, and whether it respects the rights of other nations. There is a connection between the rise and fall of democracy and the survival of our own freedoms. And there is a connection between international support for victims of repression and the growth of democratic trends around the globe.

If you doubt all of this, ask Vaclav Havel, who told me often that Western solidarity with those struggling for freedom did much to bring down the Berlin Wall.

Ask Kim Dae-jung whose life was saved by international pressure, and who is now leading an effort to bring lasting stability and peace to the Korean Peninsula.

Ask Nelson Mandela, who delivered an eloquent address to the LSE last month, and who transformed his own nation from a symbol of shame and strife into an example of reconciliation and hope for people everywhere.

So there shouldn't be any doubt that the international community should care deeply about the evolution and success of democratic institutions in Russia. But as we know from our own experience, building democracy is hard.

It has been especially hard in Russia, whose people--unlike some of their neighbors--have no living memory of political and economic freedom to guide them. They are creating something new, not regaining something they had. This has made it more difficult for them to identify and unite around shared goals.

But if anything unites Russians it's the desire to see their country respected. This is wholly legitimate, given Russia's history and achievements. The question Russians must deal with now is how to fulfill their country's greatness in the 21st Century.

Certainly, success cannot come through a return to some version of the failed systems of the past. It cannot come at the expense of Russia's neighbors or through isolation. It can only come through Russia's ability, over time, to build a vibrant democratic society at home and play an honored role in the world.

Fortunately, democratic habits are among the world's most benign addictions, and have spread surprisingly quickly in Russia.

We need to remember that little more than a decade ago, Russia had no real elections, no legal political opposition, no free press, no independent judiciary, no freedom of religion, and virtually no civil society. Today, it has at least some of all of the above.

In a short time, the Russians have grown accustomed to voting regularly, speaking freely and making up their own minds about what is or is not true. Surveys indicate they value these rights highly, and that they want to exercise them in a society characterized by order and the rule of law.

In fact, order has become a big buzzword in Moscow these days. And Russia's new leaders are trying to instill a greater sense of it in Russian society.

The big question is whether they have in mind order with a small "o", which is needed to make the society function. Or order with a big "O" which translates into autocracy.

Our hope--and it is only a hope--is that Moscow will choose to strengthen order by bolstering democratic rights and practices, rather than by undermining them.

For example, the growth of independent media in Russia is a great asset in the effort to enhance government accountability and expose corruption. That is why the recent intrusion of heavily-armed federal officers into the headquarters of one independent media outlet is highly disturbing. Many Russians see it as part of a broader effort to intimidate the press. We take their concerns very seriously.

In addition, the ongoing war in Chechnya remains an obstacle to Russia's integration, and a danger to Russian democracy. No one questions the right of Moscow to take strong measures to combat terrorism. But there is neither sense nor right in destroying the lives of large numbers of innocent civilians in the process.

Claims of "victory" in this conflict ring hollow as body counts continue to rise, and fighting flares up in one area as soon as it stops in another.

The EU in its Summit, and President Clinton in his, will reinforce our earlier advice to President Putin: Investigate allegations of human rights abuses quickly and credibly. Implement promises made to the OSCE. Do not threaten bordering states. And start a political process that will break the cycle of violence and build a foundation for peace.

The tools at our disposal for encouraging Russian democracy and integration with the West include no magic wands. We cannot impose our approach on Russia.

But we can help by expressing our support for Moscow to join with us in building a healthy economic and security environment both within and beyond Europe.

We can provide cooperation and share information in the fight against international terror, narcotics trafficking, and crime.

We can continue to expand people-to-people contacts, which are blossoming.

More than a quarter million Russian entrepreneurs have benefited from U.S. training, consulting or small loans.

We have aided independent trade unions in seeking to establish their legal rights.

And USAID has worked directly with more than 15 percent of the 65,000 NGOs that have begun operating in Russia during the past ten years.

Some might say that our modest programs cannot affect much in a nation as large as Russia. But I believe that the ongoing surge in nongovernmental organizations in Russia is a big deal. As Sergei Kovalyov, the eminent human rights advocate has said, "the quality of democracy depends on the quality of democrats. We have to wait for a critical mass of people with democratic principles to accumulate. It's like a nuclear explosion: the critical mass has to accrue."

No one can predict when, or if, that day will come. Certainly, it will not come immediately. Probably, it will not come suddenly, but rather in fits and starts. But it most assuredly will not come at all if we, who championed liberty through five decades of Cold War, desert liberty's cause in Russia now.

On both sides of the Atlantic, we may be proud of our efforts to help equip Russians with the tools they need to build a future rich in prosperity and freedom.

We may be proud, as well, of our equally important efforts to assist all of the former Soviet Republics, including Ukraine, and those in the Caucasus and Central Asia, to make that difficult transition from centralized rule to real democracy and national independence.

We take pride, too, in our efforts to resolve conflicts within and among these states—between Armenia and Azerbaijan, in Georgia and Moldova—that threaten their democratic development and regional peace. These issues, too, will be on our agenda for the Moscow Summit.

We know that dream of a united and democratic Europe has been elusive. That reality could not be better illustrated than in a speech delivered more than half a century ago by Prime Minister Winston Churchill. The aims he spoke of then bear a striking resemblance to our engagement with the new Russia and other former Soviet Republics now.

"It is not our task to draw frontier lines," he said, "but rather to smooth them away....We seek to exclude no state whose territory lies in Europe and which assures to its people those fundamental...liberties on which our democratic civilization has been created. Some countries will feel able to come into our circle sooner and others later, [but] they can all be sure that, whenever they are able to join, a place and a welcome will be waiting for them at the European...table."

It is neither our prerogative, nor within our power, to determine Russia's future. But we can continue to encourage Russia's integration with the West, engaging with its new leaders in friendship when we can, with firmness when we must.

We can fulfill our joint responsibility with Russia to safeguard the world from nuclear war.

We can extend our hand to the Russian people as they strive to consolidate the institutions of freedom.

And we can help Russia to complete its four hundred year long journey to its rightful place in a new Europe without walls, wholly at peace and fully free.

That is frankly work worthy of us all. And a task I hope everyone in this hall, and throughout the Euro-Atlantic Community, will continue to support.

Thank you all very much for being here.

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