SECRETARY POWELL DELIVERS REMARKS AT EARTH OBSERVATION SUMMIT SPEAKERS: COLIN L. POWELL

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U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE
SPENCER ABRAHAM U.S. SECRETARY OF ENERGY
DON EVANS U.S. SECRETARY OF COMMERCE

(Vice Admiral Conrad C. Lautenbacher Jr. USN (Ret.): Good morning, and welcome to each and every one of you, our delegates from the nations of the world and representatives from our international organizations. It's indeed a great honor and a pleasure to be at the podium today to open this historic occasion and to welcome each one of you on behalf of our co-hosts, the secretary of state, the secretary of commerce, and the secretary of energy of the United States of America.

And also, in addition to welcoming each of you this very important occasion where we have an opportunity to work together to benefit the peoples of the world, I'm most delighted and thrilled to be able to introduce our first speaker and the senior co-host of today's event.

A professional soldier and a professional diplomat and a public servant for many, many years, well-known to all of you in this room, I believe, who's been dedicated to not only working for the good of the United States but for the good of the world in many different areas of disciplines and interests that all of you share and we all share today. And also, a former boss of mine and just a great individual all around. It's my pleasure to introduce the secretary of state of the United States of America, Colin Powell.

(APPLAUSE)

POWELL: Well, thank you very much, Admiral, out in back there, Connie(ph), it's a great pleasure to be here and especially to be introduced by Connie(ph), somebody that I've worked with very closely in my days as a soldier. Connie(ph) was an important member of my staff when I was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, we went through some challenging times together and many of you will remember the Gulf War and he was on my staff at that time.

And I'm so pleased to see him still in government and in this important position that he now holds. And I'm very pleased to co-host this event with Spence Abraham and Don Evans and my other colleagues who are here at the table.

And especially to welcome all of you to the Department of State. It is unique that you would get three American Cabinet officers hosting an event like this, but it is that important to us and for us. And the leadership of my two colleagues, Spence and Don, have been instrumental in advancing President Bush's forward-looking climate research and energy strategy.

And it is a special pleasure to greet and welcome so many distinguished guests who

have gathered for this conference. All one has to do is look around the room to see the importance that you all have attached to this gathering. I'm very pleased that so many ministers, heads of international organizations, heads of development banks and other funding agencies and leading scientists from around the world have assembled for this conference.

And we are all here because we share a deep interest in increasing human knowledge about our planet and we want to act on that knowledge to address the compelling environmental and development concerns we face together. The future of countries -- large and small, developed and developing -- depends upon the global ecosystem that embraces and sustains us all. Whether we are talking about geophysics or geopolitics, our 21st century world is profoundly interconnected.

President Bush knows that these complex interdependencies hold far-reaching implications for well-being here at home and in the world at large. In such a world, the strong partnership between science and statecraft is critical to meeting a range of global challenges from sustainable development to preventing the spread of infectious disease and to protecting the environment.

POWELL: I cannot claim any extraordinary powers of foresight, only happy coincidence, when I say that the interrelationships we increasingly find between science and state craft, between geophysics and geopolitics, validate my very untraditional career path that bring me here today.

Last year, I amused and probably alarmed and shocked our good neighbors across the street at the National Academy of Sciences by revealing that I am a scientist. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in geology from the City College of New York, and my great contribution to the field of geology is that I never entered it upon graduation.

(LAUGHTER)

The City College of New York gratefully saw me leave the doors with not only a Bachelor of Science in geology, but, thank heavens, also a commission as a 2nd Lieutenant in the United States Army. And they were pleased it was that career I followed and not geology.

But as one final tilt to all the education I received at CCNY in the field of geology, I became an infantry officer and acquainted myself with various rock formations -- dirt, jungles, deserts

(LAUGHTER)

and rivers around the world pursuing the national security of my nation. Luckily for everyone, I did go straight into the Army. But you know, you don't need to have a geology degree or to be secretary of state to survey the contours of our 21st-century world and see that science and technology must inform and increasingly inform and support good decision making by political leaders, corporate executives, and civicminded nations and citizens. We all need a better understanding of the earth and its systems. Such an understanding must begin with earth observations. With the development of groundbased and satellite-based systems that can document environmental changes in our land, rivers, forests, atmosphere and climate. We need to

be able to see, hear, taste, smell and measure the blue orb we have been given and that we call earth. Already we reap daily benefits from earth observations in weather predictions, improved agricultural production and natural disaster management.
But much more can be done and much more must be done. Earth observations can better the lives of ordinary people in every land. Just think how a farmer in East Africa or a forest manager in the southwestern United States could benefit from access to improved forecasting of rains or drought conditions.

POWELL: The world meteorological organization estimates that farmers get $15 of value out of every dollar spent on forecasting the weather, a 15-to-1 cost-benefit ratio. Think also of the misery and the lives that could be saved and the misery avoided if disaster managers in earthquake-, flood- or hurricane-prone regions could have many days or even weeks of advance warning. Or if we could better predict malarial outbreaks and other sources of infectious disease outbreaks that threatens the world being of citizens around the world.

A more systematic, open, and timely sharing of existing earth observations information would greatly improve responses to natural hazards or disasters. We would gain even more dramatic benefits if we put in place a comprehensive earth observation system that will give us a complete picture of what is happening on our planet.
Consider the impact a coordinated earth observation system could have in just one crucial sphere alone -- development. In this area alone, development, statecraft and science can combine to unlock enormous human potential and help millions of people lift themselves out of poverty onto a path to prosperity.

Over the past several years, the international community has built a new consensus on how best to approach the challenge of development. Last September at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, South Africa, governmental and non-governmental representatives all agreed that wise economic management, investment in people and care for the environment are inextricably linked. They are essential elements for successful development.

The summit participants recognized that sound science must underpin decision making in each of these key areas. They also recognized that developmental challenges are much too big for governments to tackle alone. Strong public, private partnerships are essential. They are vitally needed. The Congo Basin Forest Development Initiative launched by the United States in South Africa last year is just such a public, private partnership. So too, is the White Water to Blue Water Partnership, which promotes integrated watershed and marine management and includes the establishment of an oceans observation system for the Caribbean region.

POWELL: The Geographic Information For Sustainable Development Initiative is another example of an innovative private-public partnership. This initiative makes satellite imagery available via the Internet to people around the world. Just imagine the power of that system so that anybody with access to this marvelous Internet can get information that just a few years ago would only have been found in scientific circles or in the tightest circles where people did not make maximum use of this kind of information.

Policy-makers, users, scientists, any citizen can now get instant access to satellite photography and data, and can apply this information to map watersheds, to plan

agricultural strategies and to trace urbanization trends. This initiative brings the power of technology to the most distant corners of the world, to people who just a few years ago we would have considered totally isolated from the information age.
Beyond international partnerships that promote sustainable development, the United States is engaged in a host of other environmental and economic partnerships with governments, and nongovernmental actors as well, around the world. I will just mention two of them. One is the International Partnership for the Hydrogen Economy; a way to foster worldwide coordination of the research, development and application of hydrogen and fuel cell technologies.

The other is the Carbon Sequestration Leadership Forum. It is designed to develop technologies to capture, separate, transport and store carbon emitted by the combustion of fossil fuels before that carbon can enter the atmosphere.
We hope that these kinds of initiatives and so many other things you'll be talking about at this earth observation summit will trigger you to think of other ideas and other productive partnerships that might be entered into. And particularly, we hope that this summit will take critical first steps toward creating an integrated earth observation system. Such a system would bring together national and multinational surface, airborne and space-based measurements of the Earth into a cooperative network of systems. We could build on already established partnerships and platforms to build a powerful system of systems. An integrated earth observation system would vastly increase our store of knowledge and leverage billions of dollars of worldwide investment.

So there is much for you to do here over the next two days. And I encourage you to take full advantage of this opportunity to exchange experience, ideas and insight. It is now my honor to introduce your next speaker, a man who is committed to understanding our Earth and turning that knowledge into human well-being.

POWELL: Under the leadership of Spence Abraham, the Department of Energy has been a recognized leader in science for the service of mankind. My buddy, Spence, is a man of vision and creativity. He is an effective and passionate advocate at home and abroad for cooperation for the private and public sectors in the field of energy. And it has been a genuine pleasure for me to work side by side with him over the past two years.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for being here. And it is now my pleasure to introduce my colleague and my friend, the secretary of energy, Spence Abraham. Thank you so much.

(APPLAUSE)