

NATIONAL PRESS CLUB LUNCHEON WITH BRENT SCOWCROFT, NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

SUBJECT: GERALD R. FORD PRESIDENTIAL FOUNDATION JOURNALISM AWARDS

MODERATOR: MARK HAMRICK, PRESIDENT, NATIONAL PRESS CLUB

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**MARK HAMRICK:** (Sounds gavel.) Good afternoon, and welcome to the National Press Club. My name is Mark Hamrick with the Associated Press, and I'm 104<sup>th</sup> President of the Press club. We are the world's leading professional organization for journalists, committed to our profession's future through our programming, events such as this, while also working to foster a free press worldwide. For more information about the National Press Club, please visit our website at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org). And, to donate to programs offered to the public through our Eric Friedheim National Journalism Library, website there, [www.press.org/library](http://www.press.org/library).

So, on behalf of our members worldwide, I'd like to welcome our speakers, as well as those of you attending today's event. Our head table includes guests of the speaker, as well as working journalists who are also Club members. And so, if you hear applause in our audience, we would like to note that members of the general public are attending. So it's not necessarily evidence of the lack of journalistic objectivity [laughter] which we are here to celebrate today, by the way.

I'd also like to welcome our C-SPAN and Public Radio audiences. Our luncheons are also featured in our member-produced weekly podcast from the National Press Club, available for free iTunes download. You can also follow the action on Twitter, using the hash-tag #NPCLUNCH. After our guest speech concludes, we'll have Q and A, and I will ask as many questions as time permits.

Now it's time to introduce our head table guests. And I would ask each of you here to stand up briefly as your name is announced. So we'll begin from your right. Richard Sammon is Senior Associate Editor of the Kiplinger Washington Editors and a former President of the National Press Club. Jane Hampton Cook is a book author and Presidential historian. Donna Leinwand is a reporter for *USA Today*. And she also is a former President of the National Press Club. Ann Roosevelt is Deputy Editor of *Defense Daily*. Steven Tomma, White House reporter from McClatchy Newspapers, and the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation Journalism Award Winner for Coverage of the Presidency. Joe Calvaruso, Executive Director of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation and a guest of our speaker.

We'll skip over the podium. Melissa Charbonneau, Chair of the NPC Speakers Committee with News Hook Media. Skip over the speaker for a moment. And Ken Dalecki is Freelance Editor and member of the Speakers Committee, who helped arrange today's luncheon. Thank you for your work, Ken. Steven Ford, Chairman of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation, son of President Ford, and one of our guest speakers today. Shane Harris is Senior writer for *Washingtonian Magazine*. And he is the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation Journalism Award Winner for coverage of national defense. Viola Gienger is Pentagon Defense Policy Reporter for *Bloomberg News*. And Mark Schanz is Senior Editor for *Air Force Magazine*. And he's a new member of the National Press Club. And please, now, give them your round of applause.

[applause]

The National Press Club is once again honored to host the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation for presentation of its annual awards for outstanding reporting on the presidency and national defense. It just so happens that our Club has enjoyed a long association with the 38<sup>th</sup> President of the United States and with the Foundation which carries on his legacy.

Gerald Ford spoke at this podium a record 18 times, appearing before, during and after his Presidency. This is one example how he enjoyed a cordial but appropriate relationship with the press. It is a tribute to President Ford that many of you at this luncheon today have personal recollections of his brief but historic Presidency and his long public service.

He has many loyal friends and associates, which says a great deal about the kind of person that he was. We also send special greetings, today, out to former First Lady Betty Ford, who we trust is viewing this event via CSPAN in Rancho Mirage, California.

Reporters who knew President Ford admired his dedication to a free and unfettered press, even though the press was not always kind to him. The late Hugh Sidey, who covered many Presidents and was a distinguished member of our Club, said that Ford was the only President he knew who genuinely liked reporters. Apparently, the others just faked it. [laughter]

Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, a member of the Ford Presidential Foundation Board of Trustees, has known a few Presidents over the years, during his long career. He once told us that Gerald Ford was probably the most normal person ever to assume the office, perhaps because he did not seek that office in the first place.

The awards being presented today were established to further President Ford's support for a free press and the vital role that it plays in informing our citizenry and preserving our democracy.

Steven Ford, one of the President's sons, and Chairman of the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Foundation, will now make this year's awards and presentation, assisted by Joe Calvaruso, Executive Director of the Foundation. Mr. Ford.

[applause]

**STEVEN FORD:** Well, it is an honor to be here. I want to thank the National Press Club and the Ford Presidential Foundation. We have some of our trustees here today. Carla Hill, Jim Cannon, Rod Hills. I saw Red Cavin(?), he was somewhere. But a fine group of trustees. And I want to thank them. I want to thank the panel of judges that selected our winners. And I had a chance to read all the articles. And we've got some great, great winners here today.

So General, I want to thank you. Thanks for coming and being our speaker. I have to tell you, I was a young kid when dad was President. I was 18 years old. And I used to go back and forth between the main residence and the Oval Office. And I always told dad we got pretty good government housing. [laughter]

And I can remember going back, that there was a lot of business going on in the corridors of that White House. But, one of the friendliest people to the kids and the members of the family, General Scowcroft, you always stopped, you always talked, you always asked how our day was going. And we appreciated that as young people. And it was a long time ago. [laughter]

You know, we've heard a little bit. Dad had a special relationship with the press. He loved the press. And he had-- He told all of us that, you know, "You shouldn't go into politics if you have thin skin." He listened to what was written about him, what was said about him. He appreciated the job they performed.

I can remember sitting at the dinner table, and dad talking about why-- why a good democracy works so well. And it's because they had an educated public. And the press played such a role in educating the citizens of the country to make that democracy work. And he felt very strongly about that.

I had to laugh, because one of the articles written, Steve told me, was talking about the bubble around the Presidency, and Obama today. And, you know, ours was back in 1974. And it was a different world, there's no doubt about it.

And, when we got to the White House-- Well, the relationship with the press was different, too. I remember when dad was the Vice-President, we used to go to Vail, Colorado in the wintertime. And mom and dad had bought a small condominium there. And we skied when he was a congressman.

And, when he became Vice-President, dad still wanted to do that. So we would go out. And our first Christmas in Vail, Colorado, after he became President-- I mean Vice-President, there was a young photographer, a guy named David Kennerly, at that time, worked for *Time Magazine*. Many of you in this room know David Kennerly.

And David showed up in Vail, Colorado for *Time Magazine* at Christmas without a hotel reservation, right. And that's something David would do, thinking that was a bright idea, that he was going to find a hotel room in Christmas in Vail, Colorado. And somehow, dad found out David didn't have a bed to sleep in.

And think about this. This is 1973. Dad invited David to come and stay with us for the holiday. He slept on our couch, literally [laughter] in our condominium in Vail, Colorado. I remember waking up, and I said, "Dad, who's the guy on the couch?" "You know, that's a Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer David Kennerly," who ended up becoming like a member of our family. But I don't think you would see that sort of thing happen today in the way the world is today.

Dad was-- We were talking at the reception. And I was saying, dad was a-- He encouraged us kids, taught us kids to be readers, and readers of newspapers. And I can tell you what our breakfast was like every morning growing up as a kid and high school. Came down, it was very quiet. Everybody grabbed a section of the newspaper. And you studied-- you read in the morning. You might grab sports, check the box scores so you could debate that night. But breakfast was very quiet, because you wanted to absorb your facts and figures so you would have a good debate that night. And you could defend your position. So, that was how dad looked at it.

And, even up to before he passed away, 93 years old, the image of him walking over to his office, he always had five, six, seven, eight newspapers under his arm that he was going to read that day. He read four or five journals. And, you know, he always had the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*, *L.A. Times* and *Washington Post*. And the last paper he read every day, I think, spoke great volumes about who he was. He read the *Grand Rapids Press*, his local newspaper, where he had been a congressman for 25 years.

And he used to say to us, "Steve, policies, laws, at the federal level, are made in Washington. But you have to read your local newspaper to find out if they get down to the people and really work on the local level." And that was the importance, he thought, of the local press, was he could find out whether the policies that he worked on, whether in the Capitol or the White House or the Executive Branch or Congress got down to the

local level in Grand Rapids, Michigan and served the people. So newspapers and the press were very important to him.

We need to get on here. And I want to just have the judging panel-- We've just got some of the judging panel here today. And I want to thank them for being judges for us. We have two categories, the Presidency and Defense. And our defense panel, we've got Deborah Van Ostrum,(?) Eric Peterson, David Olive, Karen Scowcroft, Rob Holtser(?), and Michael Champness(?). And if we can just give them a round of applause.

[applause]

For the Presidency, our fine trustee, Jim Cannon, who is a great public servant himself, he chairs this committee and these awards. And he is, for the Presidency Award, he's over that. We've got John McConnell, Professor Candy Nelson, Professor Mark Rozell(?), and Hal Bruno, who couldn't be with us today. So let's give a round of applause for them.

[applause]

We're going to hand out the awards in just a second. I'm reading the stories on the bubble around the Presidency and the White House. Again, it will remind you how different it was. When dad became President, when he became Vice-President, we lived in a little house across the river, here, in Alexandria, Virginia. There was no Vice-President's mansion or anything like that, where we lived in the suburbs. Dad commuted to the office every day.

And, when he assumed the Presidency on that day in August, 1974, you know, the helicopter left with Nixon, and we went in. Dad got sworn into office. We took the picture in the Oval Office. And the interesting thing, we didn't get to move into the White House. [laughter] I thought you got a chance to move into the White House. And Nixon had left so quickly, so unexpectedly when he resigned, that they weren't able to pack up all their belongings. So it took six, seven days.

So that night, after dad took the Oath of Office, boy, we went back to our little three-bedroom house in Alexandria, Virginia. And I will never forget my mother, standing over the stove that night, cooking. [laughter] And thinking, you know-- She said, "Gerry, something is wrong here." [laughter] "You just became President of the United States and I'm still cooking." [laughter] So the bubble around the President's life back in 1974 was a little different than it is today.

Well, let me hand out these citations and awards, and we'll get on to our keynote speaker, General Scowcroft. Our first award, here, is reporting on the Presidency. This is the Gerald R. Ford Journalism Prize Distinguished Reporting on the Presidency in 2010, Steve Tomma. Let me read the citation.

The judges for the Presidency have selected Steve Tomma of the McClatchy Newspapers as the winner of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gerald R. Ford Prize for Distinguished Reporting on the Presidency. In his reporting, Steve Tomma demonstrates a clear understanding that not the first year, but the second year in office for a new President is a more accurate measure of his leadership, his management of the complexities of the Federal Executive Office, his exercising of the Constitutional powers, his ways of communicating to the American people, and his standing in the public mind.

Tomma not only met the important criteria of timeliness, clarity and presentation insights, and concise writing, but he also made excellent use of expert sources to provide a layer of analysis and stood out among his competition. His writing is clear, based on solid facts, enlightened with engaging inventiveness, in every respect. The judges found Tomma's reporting on the Presidency in 2010 outstanding. We have a citation here that I would like to give you. And we also have a check.

[presentation]

[applause]

**STEVE TOMMA:** Thank you. Steve Ford and I were talking before the luncheon a little bit about how much things have changed. As he noted, I wrote extensively about the bubble that's grown up around the Presidency and the White House and some of the other things that have changed.

And I just want to take a minute to talk a little bit about that, particularly the changes in relationship with the press. As he points out, his father had a far different relationship with the White House Press Corps than a lot of Presidents or politicians have had.

What we see, I think today, is the White House increasingly-- and this is not just through this incumbent, but everyone since, is trying to bypass us, using all the new technology at their disposal-- digital media, their own video, their own photographers, try to tell their story directly to the people, and bypass the press.

At the same time, the technology is changing what we do. We see these very short bursts of information tweaks, a few characters, just quick Internet hits. Yet I think the Presidency is worth a lot more exploration than that, and continues to be a vital and important thing for us to do, to tell what the insiders are doing and thinking, but also to run that by outside experts, by the people who study the Presidency, and then put it through the critical eye of the journalists.

For that, and on behalf of all of us who cover the White House, I thank the Ford Foundation for honoring this kind of work. And especially for me and my colleagues at McClatchy, I thank you for honoring us this year. Thank you.

[applause]

**STEPHEN FORD:** Our second award is the Gerald R. Ford Journalism Prize Distinguished Reporting on National Defense in 2010. Our winner is Shane Harris. The judges for National Defense have selected Shane Harris of the Washingtonian as winner of the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gerald R. Ford Prize for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense. The judges felt that the body of work submitted by Mr. Harris showcased some of the most important crosscutting challenges of our times, often writing about issues with which the nation is still coming to grips.

His story on the laws of war raised important questions about standards of warfare in the age of new technology. The judges noted that his article anticipated issues that are, today, being raised in the conflict in Libya. In *Hacking The Bad Guys*, he highlighted America's struggle to cope with a new type of warfare that will impact the nation's security, as well as its economic competitiveness.

His gripping tale of waste and delay highlighted a decades-long struggle to purchase a new generation of fuel tankers, noting that today's tanker pilots are flying airplanes first flown by their grandfathers, and the pilots who will fly the next generation of tanker haven't been born yet.

His article on the national counterterrorism center described the nation's struggle to manage the information needed to prevent future terrorist attacks. The judges were particularly impressed by Mr. Harris's ability to illuminate complex policy issues while maintaining a fair and balanced approach on topics that are often highly polarized.

Shane, if you come up, we'd like to present you with this award and a check.

[presentation]

[applause]

**SHANE HARRIS:** Thank you very much for this honor. This is truly, in our profession, one of the highest honors we can receive. And it's just a thrill to be standing up here and to be included in such terrific company of previous winners, many of whom I've had the great pleasure to work with over the years.

I did not get to this point alone. And I want to sort of take a moment to really thank the editors and the publishers that I've had the benefit of working with for the past ten years. I've had the rare opportunity, in this day and age, to work at magazines that continue to devote tremendous resources and support to long-form journalism, to narrative, to investing in reporting, to the kinds of stories that take weeks, sometimes months to really bring to life. And, if it were not for that kind of support, I would not have had the resources and the time to do this work. And I wouldn't be standing here.

Just briefly, at National Journal, I want to thank David Bradley, John Fox Sullivan, who I don't think could be here today, Charlie Green, and my former editor, Patrick Pexton now the ombudsman of the *Washington Post*, where he's doing terrific

work. Patrick really was just sort of a partner with me for five years in reporting so many of these stories and was a constant companion and advocate. So thank you.

And now, my new home at Washingtonian, I want to thank Cathy Merrill Williams, our President and publisher, and my very dear friend, and now my boss, Garrett Graff(?), who has charted an ambitious course for our publication, and about a year ago, asked me if I would like to come over and write really big, good magazine stories, and have that be my full-time job. And I said, "That's great. I'm really glad that job still exists." So thank you very much for setting a high standard for all of us to follow and for being there to support with me. So I share this award with all of you. Thank you very much.

[applause]

**STEVEN FORD:** We have-- This is a new thing we're doing this year. And our panel on defense asked that we do this. And it's kind of an honorable mention for a group that really stood out. And this year, we want to just recognize them, ask them to stand up. And they did such fine work.

Gerald R. Ford Journalism Prize Distinguished Reporting on National Defense, in 2010, a special mention the judges for the national defense have selected Andrew Kilman(?) and Brendan McGarry,(?) staff writers for the *Military Times*, a special mention for the 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Gerald R. Ford Prize for Distinguished Reporting on National Defense. And I know one of them is in the room here. I don't know if Brendon is-- If you guys could stand up, we'll give you a round of applause.

[applause]

Thank you very much. Mark.

**MARK HAMRICK:** Thank you, Steve, and congratulations again to this year's winners. Our guest speaker today served President Ford as National Security Advisor, former Lieutenant General in the U.S. Air Force, has been a trusted advisor to Presidents, stretching from Richard Nixon to Barack Obama.

He is a graduate of West Point and earned his PhD at Columbia University. Brent Scowcroft is willing to publicly oppose Presidential policies with which he strongly disagrees. Although he served as Chairman of the Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board for President George W. Bush, he openly opposed the President's plans to invade Iraq in 2003. He predicted the U.S. would be seen as an occupying power in a hostile environment.

He served as Military Assistant to President Nixon, Deputy Assistant for National Security Affairs for Presidents Nixon and Ford, and National Security Advisor for Ford and George H.W. Bush. During his long association with Republican administrations, he was also tapped by President-elect Obama to help select his National Security team.



Our guest speaker keeps a close watch on international affairs as an academic, as well as an international business consultant. He has served on numerous advisory councils involving military and national security issues. So we look forward to hearing his unique perspective and ability to provide us with a timely overview of the difficult foreign policy challenges facing our nation today.

Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm National Press Club welcome to General Brent Scowcroft.

[applause]

**BRENT SCOWCROFT:** Thank you very much, Mark. Steve, it's very nice to be with you today, and it's great to see this nice turnout. I'm a little surprised, since I said everything I know last year. [laughter] But, on the other hand, though, since my remarks were first listed as "Brent Scowcroft to Criticize Obama Foreign Policy Challenges at the National Press Club," maybe that's why you're all here. [laughter]

No red meat, I hesitate to say. I'd like to congratulate Steven Tomma and Shane Harris. Since my daughter was one of the judges for Shane, I am well aware how distinguished their writing really is. I want to follow, despite what Press Club billed my remarks, I want to follow Steve's comments with just a few about President Ford, before I talk about the foreign policy challenges.

A few of the things that President Ford felt strongly about, relative to our current situation now, you know, it's not being dramatic to say that the current political debate, especially here in Washington, is acrimonious. You know, it's been acrimonious before. As a matter of fact, when President Ford came to office, he not only had around his neck a bitter debate about Vietnam, but also the first resignation of a President. So he really understood that sort of thing. But his personality was such that, a little over two years later, we had largely forgotten what he did for us in the short time he was President to heal the wounds of the country.

But one other thing President Ford was-- I would call him an apostle of cooperation and compromise. And those two words, I think, some in Washington, now, refuse even to use as being denigrating from what they're supposed to do. President Ford would have been shocked by that. He knew that those characteristics, cooperation and compromise, was what made this country work, indeed what it was based on.

Our Constitution is not a model for efficient government. It's a model to protect the individual against a government that tries to overstep itself. And it does that by setting up checks and balances everywhere. So it's easy to keep something from happening. To make it happen, you have to compromise. You have to cooperate. You have to work together.

And Gerald Ford knew that. I used to watch him when confronted with a new and complex problem. He'd sit there, and he'd dissect the problem. What are the elements that are absolutely crucial to making it a success? What are the elements that we can offer to others who have different perspectives, so that we end up all moving forward-- maybe not 100 percent, but 60 percent or 70 percent?

And the element I'd like to talk about was Ford and his pride in the federal civil service, or federal bureaucracy. And we've had a number of Presidents in recent years throw rocks at Washington and the bureaucracy as a bunch of self-serving diplomats who couldn't get a job anywhere-- or bureaucrats couldn't get a job anywhere else.

Our government is only as good as the people who work there. And I think we ought to be cheering them, rather than pretending that they're people who couldn't get a job anywhere else. Anyway, I think following on what Steve said, President Ford was somebody we could certainly use right now.

Now let me turn to my assigned task. Well, let me say one other thing, in terms of compromise. The Constitution, itself, is the basics of our system are fundamentally compromised. How did we deal with giant states like New York and Virginia and itty bitty states like Rhode Island and Delaware? We set up a Senate where each state, big, small, had two representatives. And we set up a House where each state had representatives proportionate to the population. If that's not compromise, I don't know what it is. That's what we're built on, and that's where we should go.

Now, let me focus-- How am I doing-- for a few minutes on some of the security challenges we face. A few minutes can't possibly cover all the challenges we face, and don't really want to. But let me begin with a sort of a backdrop about what's going on in the world, a backdrop against which these challenges are being played out.

We're sort of living through what I would call a discontinuity of history, a change in historical patterns from one sort of system to another. Our present system, the nation-state system, was really formalized in the Treaty of Westphalia in 1453. It set up the nation-state as the independent sovereign unit of which international community would be made. And that replaced the feudal period when there were some monarchies and were some individual power holders, there was religion, all different kinds-- Sovereignty was obscure.

The Westphalian system reached, I think, probably its apogee in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with two World Wars. Now we're entering a new period. And, for lack of a better word, let me call it the Era of Globalization. And that's an overworked word in many respects. But it's true, and it is happening. And, what globalization is doing is reducing the freedom of action of the nation-state and eroding the borders of the nation-state.

Because more and more of the problems that we all have to deal with, whether it's financial, movements, whether it's health, whether it's climate change, whether it's information technology, all of these things require reaching across borders to cooperate in

order to solve problems. And that is changing the nature of what our system is. I like to compare it with the period 250 years ago of industrialization, which really created the modern nation-state. Because to harness these great corporations that were building all this economic power, the nation-state had to be more powerful.

Globalization is having the same effect, but in the opposite direction. As industrialization empowered the nation-state, globalization is eroding the power of the nation-state. And, well, two points about this. The financial crisis of 2008 certainly demonstrated to us that we have a single world economy. The reaction to the crisis also demonstrated we don't have a single way to solve the problem. We fell back on the nation-state system in a sort of half-hearted G-20 to try to deal with it.

The other thing which illustrates it, which gets me into the current situation, is what we endearingly call the Arab Spring. This is an explosion of people, popular sentiment, which sprang, really, from the self-emolition of a fruit peddler in Tunisia, who was humiliated by the police. Now, this is something new. And it goes to the heart of globalization.

Because, for most of mankind's existence, the average person didn't know much about anything that was going on beyond his village or maybe the next village. He lived like his father did. He expected his children to live like-- History was on timeless, seamless continuity.

Now, virtually everyone in the world is within earshot of radio, eyesight of television, and they're politicized by it. They see what's happening outside. And they see, "Why am I not like that? How can they say this about my country?" And they're energized by it. And that's what happened throughout the region. And not only the region, around the world. Look at the Chinese reaction, one of acute concern that it could reach China. So that's the first thing.

The second thing is, when you do have discontent, one of the hardest things traditionally to do is to register that discontent by going out and demonstrating in the streets. Because, to organize a demonstration, you had to go around and get people, tell them what to do, and this, that and the other, so you were a target for the police.

Not anymore. You push a button on Twitter, push a button on-- whatever the others are-- [laughter] And a million people immediately hear you say, you know, "Turn out Tahrir Square at ten o'clock in the morning." It's easy. It's automatic. And I think that's what we're seeing.

This presents enormous complication for policymaking. First of all, it is a challenge since it covers a whole region of the world acutely, between what I would call our interests and our values. Our interests are in what value we have in a relationship that helps the United States and its problems. Our values are our innate sympathy for democracy, for modernization, for those kinds of things. But fundamentally, democracy.

And those are under challenge. And how do you decide which ones we should pursue? And we've done a little bit of both. And it makes it very, very difficult-- not that foreign policy always has to be consistent. But it creates problems for us, almost whatever we do.

And, in addition, each one of the countries affected by the Arab Spring has its own individual set of problems. They're not all the same. And some of what we call semi-repressive dictatorships in the region are what they are, partly to suppress the kind of internal struggles and divisions that otherwise would tear the country apart.

So, it's been a very difficult time for us. And the President has been criticized, from both sides, about doing too much, about doing too little. And the outcome is not yet in sight. But I think we should be cautious about interpreting what's going on in these countries as the upsurge of an innate instinct for democracy.

I think the urge is more basically, as it was for the fruit peddler, for dignity than for democracy as we know it. Democracy-represented government is a very complicated notion. And to feel that that filled 100,000 people's breasts in Tahrir Square in Cairo is probably an exaggeration. So I think it's fair to say the difficult job is really ahead of us.

How do you take what has happened and model it so it moves in a productive, rather than destructive direction? We've taken first steps in what I would call a cornerstone country of the Middle East, that is Egypt, the most populous country and, certainly, at the epicenter of what happened.

And that is, we are now pushing hard for an economic program for Egypt. Because, if we cannot rescue Egypt for the chaos into which it's fallen economically, tourism is nonexistent in Egypt now. Remittances from Egyptians working abroad are down to virtually zero. Foreign-direct investment has just about zeroed out. Egypt is in desperate economic shape. What do you think will happen if the economy collapses to any hope for a system which will broaden participation?

Different countries have different problems. Libya is a case of, really, almost entirely our values. What interest do we have in Libya? A million and a half barrels of oil a day, easily compensated for. Gaddafi is a guy everybody loves to hate. And there certainly is a split in Libya. It's not a new split. East Libya and West Libya have a history of tribal antagonism.

Take another extreme, Syria. Syria is a very complicated country, where our interests are intense, not only Syria and its relationship to Israel, Syria and its relationship to Lebanon, Syria and its relationship to Iran on the one hand-- Hezbollah, Hamas, intense interest.

But, what about Syria? Syria is run by an allied-- a tiny minority of the Shiite form of Islam. But Syria, as a whole, is a majority Sunni country. It also has a tradition, over the last 40 or so years, of secularism being run by the Ba'athist party. So, if Bashar

gets overthrown, who replaces him? And, is it a step forward or backward? It's hard to say.

Yemen is a very different case. Yemen is a very tribal society. Before President Saleh managed to consolidate, there was a North Lebanon and a South Lebanon. And, at one time, the Soviet Union supported South Lebanon-- I mean Yemen, and we supported North Yemen. So each one of these situations is different and complicated.

Let me move on just very quickly. I've already talked 15 minutes. Just for a little bit about Afghanistan and Pakistan. And I think you cannot discuss them separately. We have a huge dilemma with growing pressure, now. Osama bin Laden is dead. We have terrible budget pressures on defense and so on. It's time to cut our losses.

Well, it may be. But we should also worry about cutting our gains. It has been a difficult struggle in Afghanistan. We have changed strategies at least once. We now are in a telling year, where the surge in troops is beginning to show. We are beginning to reach out to Afghanistan's neighbors, the Chinese, the Russians, Iranians, to see if there is some help here.

We don't need an Afghanistan that is a highly centralized, efficient nation-state. We simply need an Afghanistan that is not a breeding ground for attacks on outside civilization. It is a very difficult issue for the President, who I think very skillfully maneuvered his first declaration, we're going to start drawing down in July of this year, to pushing it gradually off to 2014. So I'm mildly optimistic there.

The other things I would have talked about, if I were not to be dragged off the stage, would be a little bit about China, North Korea, Russia, Iran. But I understand we have a few moments for questions. And I'll be happy to deal with any of those the questioners are interested in. Thank you very much for your attention.

[applause]

**HAMRICK:** Thank you. People are eager to tap your vast intellectual resources, and also give you a chance to hydrate. [laughter]

**SCOWCROFT:** I like that.

**HAMRICK:** So we're glad to have that opportunity. So there are several questions that seized immediately upon some of the topics you were talking about. And, on the issue of the nation-state, whether we should be in the business of helping to build that. One person asked, can the U.S. continue to proclaim support for democracy while also backing repressive regimes like that in Saudi Arabia?

**SCOWCROFT:** Well, that-- That's been one of the President's real problems. There are few countries where our interest-- few countries in the region where our interest is stronger than in Saudi Arabia. And yet, Saudi Arabia is-- is its own-- has its

own uniqueness. It is an alliance between the Saudi family and the tribal wars of the Arab Peninsula there, with the Wahabi religious branch of Islam, that the Wahabi religious would bless the Saudis to be the governance of the region, in return for which the monarchy would support Wahabism.

And that's really how Saudi Arabia got started today. When King Abdullah was Crown Prince, he had a reputation of being a modernizer. And, when he came in, he started a consultative council which could easily have been the birthplace of a legislature. He did a lot on education. And he also made some changes in the succession from being the prerogative of the monarch to a royal family sort of council. That has not gone very far recently.

But, what do we do about Saudi Arabia? Or, the other monarchies? They did not suffer so much in the Arab Spring, partly because of their wealth. There is not economic deprivation which added to some of the others, like in Libya or in Tunisia and Egypt, in particular.

So, these are the kinds of problems we need to deal with. And it's not just Saudi Arabia, it's Bahrain. Bahrain is run by a Sunni monarchy, with a strong majority of Shi'as for their citizenship. So each one of these countries has its own particular problem. And we need to say, you know, there's not necessarily "one size fits all." And we're not trying to impose an American solution. What we want is to help all of these countries to the extent we can work their way through their problems to the benefit of everyone.

**HAMRICK:** A questioner asked, what do you think about the expanded use of predator drones to attack suspected terrorists? And what restrictions should apply to those?

**SCOWCROFT:** Well, I mentioned strategy changes in Afghanistan. And what we've had is a debate going back and forth between a strategy of counterterrorism and counterinsurgency. And the counterterrorism strategy is, you find the bad guy, you take him out. If you happen to kill some civilians, it's too bad, but it's collateral damage.

In counterinsurgency, you say, "No. You have to build confidence in your security mission and in the local security around you, so that you have-- so that you develop stability. So, if you see the bad guy, and he's surrounded by civilians, you don't take him out, because you do more damage to your strategy by taking out the civilians than you get in a strategy.

And we've gone back and forth a little bit on that. And some people say we've gone too far in one direction or another. I think, right now, we have it about right. But it's a judgment.

**HAMRICK:** That's what we're here for. How would you define victory in Afghanistan? And how sharp do you think the draw-down of troops should be?

**SCOWCROFT:** Well, if you look back at the Halcyon days of Afghanistan, if there ever were any, add a king. And the king sort of presided. And everybody nodded to the king. And then, they went about and did their own business, tribal groups, ethnic groups, and so on and so forth. That's the kind of Afghanistan we could be very comfortable with.

And so could most of Afghan's neighbors. It is the punitive change of Afghanistan into the training place for al Qaeda to attack the Trade Towers, which transformed the whole thing. So, we don't need to recreate Afghanistan. All we need is some assurance that the old, very informal structure can sustain itself.

**HAMRICK:** You said you'd like to talk about China. Here is a question. You referenced China's concern about the Arab uprising. What is the risk facing Beijing? And, by extension, the U.S. relationship with it?

**SCOWCROFT:** Well, I think I would venture to say that the most successful American foreign policy in the last 50 years or so has been the China policy. Because, starting with Richard Nixon, from a position of total hostility between the two powers, we have gone through, I think, eight Presidents, now, of both parties, some of them starting out with some pretty harsh views about China. And they've all come to the conclusion that broadening and deepening our relationship with China is in the national interest of the United States.

And we have made enormous progress. Now, there have been some rough spots recently. And I think, for understandable reasons. The Chinese have always, especially in economic matters, and international finance, have tended to defer to the United States as being the world experts. Well, who was it screwed up in 2008? It was the United States. So the Chinese think, "We don't have to pay any attention to you anymore." And there was a certain amount of hubris that went with that. And they began to make some changes which were, at the very least, irritating.

I think what we have to remember is that we and the Chinese are about as different as any two people could be, in terms of our history, our culture, our religions, everything. We, for example, back at my remarks, live in the world of the nation-state system.

The Chinese still mentally live in the world of the central kingdom. We think anybody can be an American, anybody. The Chinese, if you're not Chinese, you cannot become Chinese. The central kingdom is not just one sovereign state, it's the center of everything, so, until 200 years ago, when the nation-state system came in and raped China, in the eyes of the Chinese.

So, we have very different outlooks. But there isn't anything that I see that fates us to become enemies. We will have differences of opinion. We have different perspectives. And the Chinese are grappling with an economic system which has been very, very

successful, and a political system which has not evolved very significantly. So they have a lot of problems. We need to help them to the extent we can solve them.

**HAMRICK:** So we'll bring it back home for the next question, the last serious question, perhaps. And that is two questions getting to the fact that it seems as if a Presidential campaign season is already upon us, given the fact that debates are now being held. So the questioners asked-- and I'll sort of lump these together-- what are your thoughts on the state of the Republican party? Any predictions on the nominations so far out? And then, the other questioner says, with the current roster of Republican candidates having relatively little national security experience, how do you see the state of national security should one of them be elected?

**SCOWCROFT:** I'm not politically sophisticated, but I'm not stupid. [laughter]  
[applause]

**HAMRICK:** I guess the folks here were hoping that you might take the bait nevertheless. [laughter] Which U.S. President best anticipated his foreign-- or rather, best articulated his foreign policy to the American people?

**SCOWCROFT:** Oh, that's a tough one. That's a tough one. I don't know. Our Presidents have done pretty well. But it gets harder as our reasons for some of the things we do get more complex and obscure. And, you know, Harry Truman had a pretty easy job with the Korean War, because it was pretty obvious. But, of course, so did Bush 43 in going into Iraq, which was, in retrospect, not so obvious.

I think that we in this country have sometimes a tendency to get frustrated with the complexities of diplomacy, and think, "Why don't we just cut through all this drivel with a little force? And we'll clean everything up." One of the problems with that is that, when you use force, it inevitably changes the whole context of the world in which you use it. And it creates its own imperative. And so, when you've used force, you're no longer facing the world where you thought force was the thing to use. And I think we need to be more aware of that.

You know, if we were not in Afghanistan right now, we certainly wouldn't be talking about going in. So, these are the kinds of things we need to be more thoughtful about.

**HAMRICK:** We're almost out of time. But, before we ask the last question, a couple of housekeeping matters to take care of. I'd like to remind you about some of our upcoming Luncheon speakers. On June 24<sup>th</sup> the outgoing Chairman of the FDIC, Sheila Bair will reflect on her tenure during a tumultuous time for the nation's financial sector. On June 30<sup>th</sup> actor Gary Sinise will announce the foundation-- or rather the formation of his own foundation, a charity dedicated to raising funds for charities supporting the military. And, on the first of July, NASA administrator Charles Bolden will speak a week before the final scheduled space shuttle launch.



And secondly, but not least important, we'd like to present you with a token of our appreciation. And that is the traditional NPC coffee mug.

[applause]

**SCOWCROFT:** I love it. Thank you.

**HAMRICK:** And now I'd like to ask the last question. And typically, I like-- If you'll just stay up here for a moment, General-- [laughter]--

**SCOWCROFT:** I tried.

**HAMRICK:** Yeah. [laughter] Typically, I like to end on something of a brain teaser or something like that. But, given the fact that we are here to celebrate the legacy of President Ford, I just wonder if you could close with, perhaps, one of your favorite stories, one of your most cherished memories about him, that you might be able to share with our audience, whether it was a humorous moment, or something that you found quite endearing about President Ford.

**SCOWCROFT:** Well, one of the things that I had most fun with, but most difficulty coping with, was his golf swing. [laughter] And he was-- Well first of all, President Ford was a really very good athlete. He had this reputation of stumbling. And every time he stumbled, and the few times I seen him stumble, it was in front of a press camera. [laughter]

But he was a big man. He was a strong man. And he had a powerful golf swing. But he had no idea where the ball was going to go. [laughter] So every time he was out playing golf, there would be people lining the fairway to watch the President play golf. And boy, he hit a lot of people. [laughter]

[applause]

**HAMRICK:** How about a round of applause for our speaker today.

[applause]

**HAMRICK:** That's one thing they don't have to worry about this coming week of Congressional country club with the U.S. Open. Thank you all for coming today. I'd like to thank our National Press Club staff, including our Library and Broadcast Center for organizing today's event. And finally, a reminder that you can find more information about the National Press Club on our website. And, if you'd like to get a copy of today's program, please check that out at [www.press.org](http://www.press.org).

Thank you. And we're adjourned.

[gavel]

END OF LUNCHEON