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Press Release - Experts Praise Barack Obama on...

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ON CHANGING CONVENTIONAL FOREIGN POLICY THINKING

"We need a major realignment in our foreign policy, and Senator Obama shows he has the wisdom, judgment and vision to make these changes. This speech outlines a much-needed break with conventional Washington thinking, and it offers a new direction that Americans can unite behind in the fight against al-Qaeda and other terrorists." [Representative Adam Smith, (D-WA 9th District, 1997-)]

"National leadership requires decisive judgments ahead of -- and not years behind -- critical events. On Iraq, Obama was right, others were dead wrong. Those who were then wrong are now again opportunistically positioning themselves to repeat the same mistake regarding Iran." [Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Adviser for President Jimmy Carter]

"Five years ago, Barack Obama demonstrated his good judgment and strong character in opposing the war in Iraq while the 'experienced' politicians supported it. It is a reminder that 'experience' is not an end in itself: it offers the chance to develop judgment - the kind of judgment Obama has consistently shown.

"This campaign reminds me of the 1992 campaign, when I advised another candidate accused of lacking 'foreign policy experience,' Governor Bill Clinton—also extraordinarily talented, the same age or a little younger than Obama now, a new face. Indeed, beyond his service now on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Obama's extraordinary life experiences with real people and real problems abroad and at home give him a sense of the realities of the world that few, if any, presidential candidates have ever had. And never before has our own security depended so much on the attitudes and actions of other peoples as well as governments.

"But judgment and experience are not enough. At a time when we so urgently need a fresh start, we need a President, like Obama, who is committed to change and can bring the country together to accomplish it. Without that commitment to a new beginning, 'judgment' and 'experience' simply provide a conventional

caution that will not take us much beyond the failures and divisions of the past seven years." [Dr. Tony Lake; National Security Adviser (1993-1997); Director of Policy Planning, State Department (1977-1981)]

"As the Iraq war illustrates, conventional Washington thinking isn't enough to keep America strong in the 21st century. Senator Obama has shown the courage to question stale policy assumptions and propose new solutions to advance American security. His core principles -- consistency of word and deed, honest and open communication, and placing the national interest above partisan advantage -- are what we need to restore faith in American leadership both at home and abroad." [Sarah Sewall, Faculty Director of Harvard's Carr Center for Human Rights Policy, Lecturer in Public Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, and former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Assistance (1993-1996)]

"Barack Obama's speech today is not simply a reminder that he got Iraq right while others running for president got it wrong. It reminds us that he has the judgment and strength of character to be president. No politician likes to vote up or down on a war before knowing how it's going to come out; you're either going to be terribly wrong or incredibly right. In October 2002 Barack Obama was a state senator with aspirations for higher office. He knew he would have to live with whatever he said about Iraq that day, right or wrong, and he was prescient in predicting almost exactly what has happened there. Few others can say that.

"Judgment and strength of character are just as important as 'experience,' if not more so. Bush's national security team in 2002 was perhaps the most 'experienced' in history, but look at the arrogant miscalculations they made to get us in to the worst foreign policy mess of a generation." [Jeh Charles Johnson, former General Counsel, United States Air Force]

"This is an important speech because it defines what Barack Obama means when he talks about change in America's role in the world. He challenges the conventional wisdom that has dominated public policy in Washington, DC for too many years. He presents a different approach on a variety of important issues - military affairs, diplomacy and geo-politics. In this speech, Senator Obama calls upon the American people to embrace change and to reject the untested platitudes of the past." [Gregory Craig; White House Special Counsel and Assistant to the President (1998); Director of Policy Planning for Secretary of State, State Department (1997-1998)]

ON SECURING NUCLEAR THREATS

"I've been pleased by Senator Obama's effective leadership with Senator Lugar on strengthening and broadening the Nunn-Lugar Cooperative Threat Reduction concept. I'm also pleased with his commitment and dedication to getting nuclear materials secured and safeguarded globally." [Sam Nunn, Former United States Senator (D-GA, 1972-1997)]

"Barack Obama is once again showing why he is the right man for the times. He recognizes that we need a 21st century national security policy for a 21st century world - most importantly by insisting that America now lead the effort to deal with the gravest threat we face: the possibility that a nuclear weapon might fall into dangerous hands. His insistence that Washington's conventional thinking on nuclear weapons is wrong, and that we now chart a new and definitive course to reduce and ultimately eliminate the risks nuclear weapons pose is exactly what the times are calling for." [Dr. Ivo Daalder; Director for European Affairs, National Security Council (1995-1996)]

"It's clear Senator Obama has taken a fresh look at the dwindling role of a big nuclear arsenal in our national security policy -- and would stress exactly the right priority, which is to block the spread of nuclear weapons to terrorists and outlaw states. He would refocus from the marginal threats of the past to the real dangers we face now and in the future." [John Holum Director of the United States Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; Acting Undersecretary of State for Arms Control and International Security Affairs; Secretary of State for Arms Control, Nonproliferation and Disarmament]

"Senator Obama understands that the United States must lead the world to stop nuclear proliferation. His commitment to declare as President that America's goal is a world without nuclear weapons, and to back this up with a moratorium on building new nuclear weapons, will demonstrate to all nations the moral and political leadership essential to stop nuclear proliferation." [Jan Lodal; President, the Atlantic Council of the United States; Former Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy]

ON THE USE OF AMERICAN MILITARY POWER

"Today, Senator Obama outlined his ideas for trading Washington's conventional wisdom for a bold new approach for the use of American power across the globe. He was right when he opposed the war in Iraq five years ago. He is right when he says there is no military solution to Iraq's Civil War. He is right when he stands up to conventional thinking and says that while we have to use every tool at our disposal to fight terrorists, it doesn't make any strategic sense to threaten to use nuclear weapons on terrorist camps. Barack Obama's vision of American foreign policy will restore American leadership across the globe and make us a nation of influence once again. This speech demonstrated that Barack Obama has the sound judgment, the right experience, and the requisite leadership skills our country needs right now." [Major General Scott Gration (USAF-Ret); Commander, Operation Iraqi Freedom's Task Force West; Director Strategy Policy and Assessments, United States European Command]

"Senator Obama's speech today shows us—again—why he's the right guy to be in the Oval Office. Listen to it, read it, think about it. If you do, it will be obvious he has the experience, the judgment, and the leadership qualities we need in our next commander in chief." [General Merrill "Tony" McPeak; Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force (1990-1994)]

"Today Sen. Obama showed how effective he is in speaking out for a new strategy in Iraq, how he was right about the war in the past, and above all why he is the candidate most likely to grasp and make the changes needed to extricate us from this quagmire." [Dr. Richard Danzig; Secretary of the Navy (1998-2001)]

"I'm supporting Senator Barack Obama for president because he will bring strategic clarity to the White House. In October 2002, when official Washington was marching to war, Senator Obama had the foresight to read the available intelligence closely, and think carefully about the consequences of America's planned invasion of Iraq. Instead of going along with the Bush administration and supporting the war, as most Democrats did, Sen. Obama opposed it, calling it a strategic blunder. Today, he is using that same leadership and judgment to chart a new course, one that uses a responsible and forward-looking approach to the use of military power across the globe. I believe Obama will make the right decisions in the future about war and peace." [Phillip Carter; Former Army Captain and Iraq Veteran]

ON ENGAGING WITH THE WORLD

"Forty five years ago this month, President Kennedy resolved the Cuban missile crisis without firing a shot and without invading a country because he was willing to communicate and in a larger sense, negotiate with Soviet Chairman Khrushchev. Senator Obama is the one serious Democratic candidate for President who believes that the United States should have enough confidence in its values and diplomacy to meet and communicate with any foreign leader." [Ted Sorensen; Special Counsel, Adviser, and Speechwriter for President John F. Kennedy]

"Our new president will have only a brief window of opportunity to earn back the world's trust and respect and show we can lead in a far better fashion than we have in our recent past. Barack Obama is best positioned to gain that trust -- both by virtue of who he is and his vision for change that challenges conventional wisdom. Obama will not only lead America beyond the divisions and failures of the past but also work with others to implement effective policies to tackle the most pressing international challenges from nuclear proliferation to global poverty. Barack Obama is uniquely capable of leading America and the world to a place of greater hope, unity and security." [Dr. Susan Rice; Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs]

(1997-2001); Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for African Affairs, the National Security Council, the White House (1995-1997); Director for International Organizations and Peacekeeping, National Security Council (1993-1995)]

ON UNITING AMERICA AROUND OUR FOREIGN POLICY

"Senator Obama has outlined an important and effective agenda for making government more open and accountable. His proposals on creating a National Declassification Center, a fixed term for the Director of National Intelligence, and a bipartisan congressional Consultative Group should be applauded. These thoughtful reforms are urgently needed to assure that government is more open, that intelligence is not politicized, and that the President receives independent and bipartisan advice on key national security questions." [Lee Hamilton, former Democratic Congressman, Vice Chair of the 9/11 Commission, Co-Chair of the Iraq Study Group, Member of the Homeland Security Advisory Council]

"This speech serves as a reminder not only of why Barack Obama should be president, but why it is urgent that he be elected now. At a crossroads in our country's history, the unconventional challenges we face urgently demand an unconventional, nimble, pragmatic approach. We can not afford more gridlock at home, any more than we can afford to adopt a business-as-usual approach abroad. Obama makes clear he will leave ideology behind and unite the country behind a foreign policy tailored for the twenty-first century." [Samantha Power; author of *A Problem from Hell: America in the Age of Genocide*; Founding Executive Director, Harvard University Carr Center for Human Rights Policy]

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