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~~NOFORN~~

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HEADER

R 120631Z JUN 06

FM JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC (b)(2)

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TO RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC

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R 120244Z JUN 06

FM DIA WASHINGTON DC (b)(2), (b)(3):10  
USC 424

(b)(2), (b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(2)

(b)(2)

(b)(2), (b)(3):10 USC 424

(b)(2), (b)(3):10 USC 424

INFO RHEFLGX/SAFE WASHINGTON DC

XMT CNR ARLINGTON VA

BT

CONTROLS

~~SECRET NOFORN~~ (b)(2) SECTION 1 OF 5

/\*\*\*\*\* THIS IS A COMBINED MESSAGE \*\*\*\*\*/

(b)(2)

BODY

SUBJ: (U) DIA NMJIC INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY FOR 12 JUNE 2006

SUMMARY OF FEATURES

(b)(1)

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page 2

SOCOM AMNESTY/CCR 8



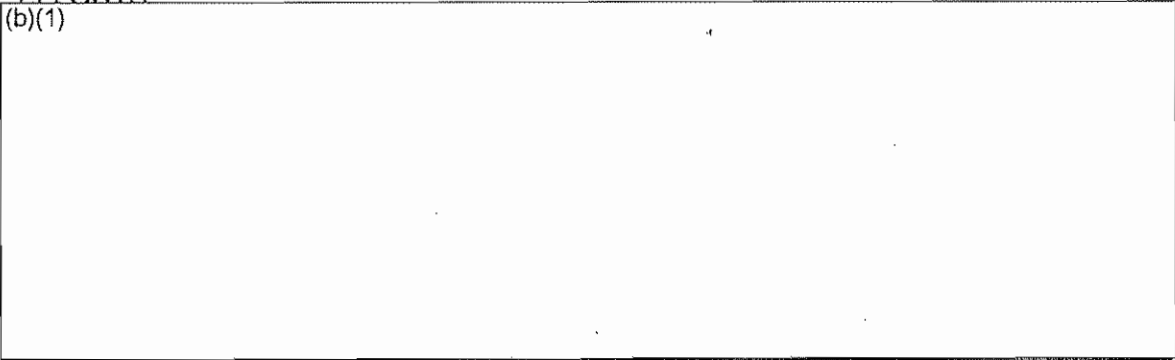
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(b)(1)



ROMANIA: (U) BUCHAREST REACTS TO RENDITION REPORT  
(U) ROMANIAN POLITICAL LEADERS REACTED STRONGLY AGAINST THE COUNCIL  
OF EUROPE REPORT ABOUT "RENDITIONS" AND **SECRET DETENTION** CENTERS THAT  
SOME FEAR COULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES IN ROMANIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP  
EFFORTS

(b)(1)



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ROMANIA: (U) BUCHAREST REACTS TO RENDITION REPORT

/\*\*\*\*\* BEGINNING OF SECTION 4 \*\*\*\*\*/

(U) ROMANIAN POLITICAL LEADERS REACTED STRONGLY AGAINST THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE (COE) REPORT DETAILING "RENDITIONS" ON ROMANIAN TERRITORY, WHICH SOME FEAR COULD CAUSE ROMANIA DIFFICULTIES IN ITS EU MEMBERSHIP EFFORTS. THE REPORT, WRITTEN BY SWISS "EUROPARIAMENTARIAN" DICK MARTY FOR THE COE, OFFICIALLY WAS RELEASED ON THE COE WEBSITE 7 JUNE. IN THE REPORT MARTY ACCUSES BUCHAREST OF COMPLICITY IN AIDING RENDITIONS (MOVING PEOPLE FROM ONE COUNTRY TO ANOTHER) AND THE RUNNING OF SECRET **CIA DETENTION** FACILITIES, EVEN THOUGH MARTY ADMITTED THAT HIS INVESTIGATION DOES NOT HAVE DEFINITIVE PROOF THAT

~~NOFORN~~

~~SECRET~~

page 10



**SECRET DETENTION CENTERS EXIST IN ROMANIA. THE REPORT LED TO A FIRESTORM OF REACTION FROM ROMANIAN POLITICAL LEADERS, WHO CHARGE THE REPORT IS WITHOUT MERIT.**

-- (U) PRIME MINISTER TARICEANU STATED ROMANIAN AUTHORITIES REPEATEDLY HAVE DENIED THE EXISTENCE OF **CIA DETENTION CENTERS** IN ROMANIA.

-- (U) SENATE VICE PRESIDENT TEODOR MELESCANU STATED THE REPORT CAUSES "SEVERE PREJUDICE TO ROMANIA'S INTERESTS" AND ACTS AS A "SMOKE SCREEN FOR HIDDEN INTERESTS."

-- (U) GOVERNMENT SPOKESPERSON OANA MARINESCU STATED THE CONCLUSIONS OF THE REPORT ARE BASED ON SPECULATION AND ARE "UNACCEPTABLE."

(S) (b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1), Sec. 1.4(b), Sec. 1.4(d)

(b)(1), 1.4  
(b), 1.4 (d)

-- (U) A SENIOR GERMAN MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT SUGGESTED THAT ROMANIA'S EU MEMBERSHIP SHOULD BE DELAYED IF THE ACCUSATIONS ARE CONFIRMED. ALTHOUGH THE RENDITION REPORT IS AT THE MOMENT SPECULATION, IT COULD CAUSE FURTHER DIFFICULTIES FOR BUCHAREST AS IT MOVES FORWARD IN EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS.

(b)(2), (b)(3): 10 USC 424

(b)(2), (b)(3): 10 USC 424

(b)(2), (b)(3): 10 USC 424

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- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E

From: (b)(6) OSD POLICY  
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2007 12:17 PM  
To: (b)(6) OSD-POLICY; Liotta, Alan, CIV, OSD-POLICY;  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY  
Cc: (b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD  
POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY  
Subject: RE: HOT HOT - CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's  
Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy  
Signed By: (b)(6)@osd.mil

Attachments: InstituteforNearEastPolicy21October2007#1.doc

(b)(6)

Here are several edits on page 6 that Detainee Affairs believes are essential in order to distinguish between the CIA detainee program and the DOD detainees.

Thx, (b)(6)

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6) OSD-POLICY  
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2007 10:56 AM  
To: Liotta, Alan, CIV, OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY;  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY  
Cc: (b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY;  
Henton, (b)(6) OSD POLICY  
Subject: FW: HOT HOT - CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's  
Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy  
Importance: High

Only thing in here I see for GSA is detainee related. Reply direct given the suspense.

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6) OSD POLICY  
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2007 10:40 AM  
To: (b)(6) OSD POLICY; (b)(6) OSD-POLICY;  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY;  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6)  
OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD-POLICY  
Cc: (b)(6) OSD-POLICY; Rand, Robin Briggen (USAF) OSD POLICY;  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; Liotta, Alan, CIV, OSD-POLICY; (b)(6)  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD POLICY; (b)(6)  
(b)(6) OSD-POLICY; (b)(6) OSD-POLICY  
Subject: HOT HOT - CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks  
to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy  
Importance: High

ISA-ME, SOLIC SOC, and GSA Detainee Affairs:

This is a HOT, SHORT suspense coordination request. Attached (and below) for your clearance is a close-hold Vice-Presidential speech on Middle East policy and the GWOT, with brief mention of GTMO/Detainee issues. The speech is to be delivered this Sunday, 21 October to the Washington Insitute. The SECDEF requested our clearance on this, and plans to personally review any edits submitted at 1600 today, so I need coordination on this soonest but NLT 1500 today. I apologize for this very short suspense.

ISA, please take the lead on this (consolidating all other DASD/ASD input) and coordinate with GSA and SOLIC. All - comment in the attached on any factual inaccuracies or sensitivities, and provide rationales for changes - each comment submitted is required to indicate the position of the highest level of clearance within each organization (i.e. DASD special Ops or AASD ISA). NOTE: The White House will not accept changes without rationales.

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USD(P) AMNESTY/CCR 101

- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E

Clearance should be at least at the DASD level, given secDef interest in our clearance on this speech. ISA, please provide a consolidated, cleared document to me NLT 1500 TODAY (10/18) and copy (b)(6) on the response.

Thank you and please feel free to call/email with any questions. Again, apologies for the short-suspense.

Regards,

(b)(6)

Policy Coordination Point for Presidential Speeches Support to Public Diplomacy

-----Original Message-----

From: (b)(6) OSD LA  
Sent: Thursday, October 18, 2007 10:08 AM  
To: (b)(6) OSD POLICY; (b)(6) JCS CJCS;  
(b)(6) JCS OCJCS  
Cc: (b)(6) OSD LA  
Subject: CLOSE HOLD - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy  
Importance: High

All,

The Secretary's staff would like the attached speech to be run through the "normal" channels. Please pass on to your folks and have them read through and return any comments/edits/suggestions by 1530 TODAY. The Secretary wants to personally go over any edits, and must have the remarks with DoD comments, in his hand by 1600 today. I know it's a tight deadline.

Many thanks,

(b)(6)

Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Lansdowne, Virginia

Sunday, October 21, 2007

Draft #1

Thank you very much. Roger, thanks for the very kind words, and thank all of you for the warm welcome. I've been looking forward to joining this conference.

It's been my privilege to address the Washington Institute a number of times over the years. In fact, most of you knew me long before anyone called me Darth Vader. I've been asked if that nickname bothers me, and the answer is no. After all, Darth Vader is one of the nicer things I've been called lately.

All of us do know each other well, and I see some good friends in  
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USD(P) AMNESTY/CCR 102



- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E  
the audience. In particular I want to thank your president, Howard  
Berkowitz . chairman Fred Lafer . your founding president, Barbi Weinberg .  
and chairman emeritus, Mike Stein.

I've gained much from the wisdom of many in the room today, as well as from  
the work of analysts and writers who've been affiliated with the Washington  
Institute. I'm proud to say that your former deputy director, John Hannah,  
is now my assistant for national security affairs. John and his staff are  
on duty night and day, and with his leadership they're doing a tremendous  
job for the United States of America.

I'm pleased to be among the many participants in this conference, a group  
that includes your keynoter, Walid Jumblatt from Lebanon. I've met with Mr.  
Jumblatt on a number of occasions, and I admire the courageous stand he's  
taking for freedom and democracy in his home country.

This is a period of great consequence for the Middle East - and, as always,  
the Washington Institute is providing a forum for calm, nonpartisan,  
rigorous discussion. For 22 years, you've brought clear and careful  
thinking to bear on some of the most complex and vital issues of the age.  
You've provided a venue for many fine scholars, and you've hosted countless  
forums for the sharing of ideas and discussion. It's an enormously  
productive enterprise, and your work is more relevant and useful today than  
ever before. All of us respect the Washington Institute for its high  
standards of research, study, and insight. And so, for both myself and  
President Bush, I want to congratulate the men and women of the Institute on  
the exceptional work you do each and every day.

You're focused on many of the same matters that take up a good deal of our  
time in the White House - starting with the intelligence briefing I have  
with the President early in the morning. In nearly every category of  
national interest, what happens in the Middle East is of direct concern to  
the people of the United States. The region is home to important allies,  
valued friends, and trading partners. Its resources and commercial routes  
are at the very heart of the global economy. Its history and its holy sites  
have deep meaning to hundreds of millions of people in many, many countries.  
And, of course, across the broader Middle East - from the Sinai Peninsula,  
to the Arabian Sea, to the Iraqi desert and the mountains of Afghanistan -  
many thousands of our fellow Americans are on military deployments.

As a nation of influence and ideals, the United States has been engaged in  
the Middle East for generations. Our goal is peace among its many nations,  
and a lasting stability that benefits all the world. And the stability we  
seek is not the kind that simply keeps a lid on things - the lid, of course,  
being held down by the heavy hand of a dictator. Real stability, long-term  
stability, depends on giving men and women the freedom to conduct their own  
affairs and choose their own leaders. This, we believe, offers the only  
real chance of resolving the underlying problems of the region, and lifting  
the hopes of all who live there. As President Bush has said, so long as the  
Middle East "remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain  
a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export."

The ideological struggle that's playing out in the Middle East today - the struggle between moderation and extremism - is going to concern America for the remainder of our Administration, and well into the future. On September 11th, 2001, we suffered a heavy blow, right here at home, at the hands of extremists who plotted the attacks from an outpost thousands of miles from our shores. Since that terrible morning, Americans have properly called this a war. For their part, the terrorists agree. The difference is that they began calling it a war a good many years prior to 9/11. And they have been waging that war with clear objectives, aggressive tactics, and a strategy they want to carry out at any cost.

They've stated their objectives. The terrorists want to end all American and Western influence in the Middle East. Their goal in that region is to seize control of a country, so they have a base from which to launch attacks and wage war against governments that do not meet their demands. Ultimately they seek to establish a totalitarian empire through the Middle East, and outward from there. They want to arm themselves with chemical, biological or even nuclear weapons; to destroy Israel; to intimidate all Western countries; and to cause mass death here in the United States.

The tactics, of course, are familiar to all the world - suicide attacks, car bombs, beheadings on the Internet, the hijackings of 9/11. And the strategy is clear as well: Through acts of stealth, and murder, and spectacular violence, they intend to frighten us and break our will - to hit us again and again until we run away. It's not easy for a civilized society to comprehend evil like that of a bin Laden or a Zawahiri. It shocks us to hear such men exhorting other people's sons to "join a caravan" of martyrs, proclaiming that heaven favors the merciless and murder is the path to paradise.

They've chosen this method because they believe it works, and they believe the history of the late 20th century proves the point. During the 1980s and 90s, as terror networks began to wage attacks against Americans, we usually responded, if at all, with subpoenas, indictments, and the occasional cruise missile. As time passed, the terrorists believed they'd exposed a certain weakness and lack of confidence in the West, particularly in America. Dr. Bernard Lewis explained the terrorists' reasoning this way. "During the Cold War," Dr. Lewis wrote, "two things came to be known and generally recognized in the Middle East concerning the two rival superpowers. If you did anything to annoy the Russians, punishment would be swift and dire. If you said or did anything against the Americans, not only would there be no punishment; there might even be some possibility of reward, as the usual anxious procession of diplomats and politicians, journalists and scholars and miscellaneous others came with their usual pleading inquiries: 'what have we done to offend you? what can we do to put it right?'" End quote.

Not surprisingly, the terrorists became more ambitious in their strikes against American interests, choosing bigger targets and racking up a higher body count. In Beirut in 1983, terrorists killed 241 of our servicemen. Thereafter, the U.S. withdrew from Beirut. In Mogadishu in 1993, terrorists killed 19 Americans; thereafter, the U.S. withdrew from Somalia. This emboldened them still further, confirming their belief that they could

- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E. strike America without paying a price. Indeed they did strike, and indeed they did not pay the price. We had the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York in 1993; the attack on U.S. facilities in Riyadh in 1995; the murder of U.S. servicemen at Khobar Towers in 1996; the attack on our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998; the attack on the USS Cole in 2000; and, ultimately, September 11th and the loss of nearly 3,000 lives inside the United States in the space of a few hours.

In a violent world, the safety of distance was suddenly gone. And with grave new dangers directly in view, the strategic situation changed fundamentally. From the morning of 9/11, we have assumed, correctly, that more strikes would be attempted against us. So we have made enormous changes to harden the targets and better prepare the nation to face this kind of emergency. We've reorganized the government to protect the homeland, and put good people in charge of big responsibilities. One of them is Judge Michael Mukasey, who presided over the trial of the blind sheikh and has a profound grasp of the work at hand. Judge Mukasey had his confirmation hearing this past week and he did a superb job. He'll be an outstanding attorney general of the United States.

But we can't protect our country, much less win a war, by simply bracing for another attack. The President made a decision to marshal all the elements of strategic power to confront the extremists, to deny them safe haven, and above all to deny them the means to wage catastrophic attacks. We've also made clear that in the post-9/11 era, regimes that harbor terror and defy the demands of the civilized world should be held to account - before it is too late.

One of the best weapons against terrorism is good intelligence - information that helps us figure out the movements of the enemy, the extent of the network, the location of the cells, the plans they're making, the methods they use, the targets they want to hit. Information of this kind is the hardest to obtain, but it's worth the effort in terms of the plots averted and the lives that are saved. So our government has taken careful but urgent steps to monitor the communications of enemies at large, and to get information from the ones apprehended.

In the days following 9/11, the President authorized the National Security Agency to intercept terrorist-linked international communications that have one end in the United States and the other end overseas. This is the very kind of communication that was going on prior to the attack on America - and the 9/11 commission was rightly critical of our government's inability to uncover links between terrorists at home and terrorists abroad. It's called connecting the dots - and in times like these, it's critical to protecting the American people. The program has been falsely referred to as domestic surveillance. It is international surveillance. It is limited in scope to surveillance associated with terrorists; it is carefully conducted; and the information obtained is used strictly for national security purposes. It's been carried out with the utmost regard for the civil liberties of the American citizens. Appropriate members of Congress have been briefed into the program from the beginning - indeed I have personally conducted many of those briefings. This program has, without question, helped to detect and prevent possible terrorist attacks in the United States.

We've also received help from Congress in updating the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. The law was written nearly 30 years ago, before the age of the Internet and disposable cell phones. And the statutory language seemed to require that legal protections meant only for people in the United States should now apply to terrorists overseas. That left a huge gap in the kinds of intelligence we could gather. We were missing a lot, so we asked Congress to fix the problem. Congress did the right thing - but they also wrote some fine print into the law. The FISA revisions are set to expire on the first of February - some 103 days from now. There's no good reason to sunset this vital legislation, and we're asking Congress to renew the FISA revisions as soon as possible.

Members of Congress are also well aware that some companies are now facing multi-billion dollar lawsuits - merely because they are believed to have assisted in the effort to defend the United States after 9/11. We're asking Congress to grant liability protection for those companies. Without that protection, the lawsuits carry the risk of laying state secrets in front of the enemy. That's not a risk we ought to be taking in the middle of a war.

It's worth remembering a few things that the President told Congress and the country in his speech on September 20th, 2001. He said, "The thousands of FBI agents who are now at work in this investigation may need your cooperation, and I ask you to give it." He asked Americans for patience in a long struggle. And he said the fight against terror would involve not "one battle, but a lengthy campaign," including perhaps "dramatic strikes, visible on TV, and covert operations, secret even in success."

Most everyone understood this when the memory of 9/11 was still fresh. Most everyone understood that it would be a luxury and a fantasy to suppose that we could answer terrorism without going on the offensive against the terrorists themselves. Because we've been focused, because we've refused to let down our guard, we've gone more than six years without another 9/11. No one can promise there won't be another attack; the terrorists hit us first, and they're hell-bent on doing it again.

We know this because of their public declarations, and because of the intelligence we've gathered through monitoring and, yes, interrogations. There's been a good deal of misinformation about the detainee program, and unfair comments have been made about America's intentions and the conduct of American agents. Many of the details are, understandably, classified. Yet the basic facts are these. A small number of high-value detainees have gone through the program, which is run by the CIA. This is different from Guantanamo Bay, where most of the captured terrorists are sent and interrogated according to the Army field manual. The CIA program involves tougher customers and tougher interrogations. The procedures are designed to be safe, legal, and in full compliance with the Constitution and treaty obligations. They've been carefully reviewed by the Department of Justice. The program is run by highly trained professionals who understand their obligations under the law. And the program has uncovered a wealth of information that has foiled specific attacks before they occurred - information that has on numerous occasions made the difference between life and death.

The United States is a country that takes human rights seriously. We don't torture, and we reject the degradation of human beings. We're proud of our country and what it stands for. We expect all who serve America to conduct themselves with honor. And we enforce the rules. Several years ago, when a few guards at Abu Ghraib committed abuses, Americans were mortified and rightly outraged. The wrongdoers were arrested, prosecuted, and sent to jail, as justice demanded. America is a fair and decent country, and President Bush has made it clear, both publicly and privately, that our duty to uphold the laws and standards of this nation admits no exceptions in wartime. As he put it, "we are in a fight for our principles, and our first responsibility is to live by them."

The war on terror is, after all, more than a contest of arms and more than a test of will. It is also a battle of ideas. To prevail in the long run, we have to remove the conditions that inspire such blind, prideful hatred that drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and come to kill us. Many have noted that we're in a struggle for the "hearts and minds" of people in a troubled region of the world. That is true and it should give us confidence. Outside a small and cruel circle, it's hard to imagine anybody being won over, intellectually or emotionally, by random violence, the beheading of bound men, or the desecration of a mosque. The extremists in the Middle East are not really trying to win hearts and minds, but to paralyze them . to seize power by force . to keep power by intimidation . and to build an empire of fear.

we offer a nobler alternative. We know from history that when people live in freedom, have their rights respected, and have real hope for the future, they will not be drawn in by ideologies that stir up hatreds and incite violence. We know, as well, that when men and women are given the chance, most by far will choose to live in freedom. That is the cause we serve today in Afghanistan and Iraq - helping the peoples of those two nations to achieve security, peace, and the right to chart their own destiny. Both peoples face attack from violent extremists who want to end democratic progress and pull them back toward tyranny. We are helping them fight back because it is the right thing to do - and because the outcome is important to our own long-term security.

When historians look back on the especially difficult struggle in Iraq, I think they'll regard recent events in Anbar Province to have been a crucial turning point. Local residents and tribal leaders are sick of the violence, and repulsed by the mindless brutality and bullying by al-Qaeda. They now see al-Qaeda as the enemy, and they've worked with Iraqi and American forces to drive the terrorists from Ramadi and other population centers in Anbar. It's still dangerous in the province, and the terrorists recently killed one of the sheikhs who had been in the fight against al-Qaeda. But that fight goes on, and America's support will not waver.

Our new offensive strategy in Iraq - led by General Petraeus and backed up by a surge in forces - is producing good results. Even though we have more troops carrying out more perilous missions, our casualty rates are way down. Many al-Qaeda sanctuaries have been wiped out. Our military has seized the initiative, and conditions in the country are getting better.

President Bush has made clear that America's word is good, and our nation will do its part to keep Iraq on the road of freedom, security, and progress. And we expect Iraq's national government to press much harder in the work of national reconciliation, to match the kind of cooperation now taking place at the local and provincial levels. We'll continue, as well, our intensive effort to train Iraqi security forces, so that over time Iraqis can take the lead in protecting their people. Progress has been uneven at times and the National Police especially need improvement. But Iraq's army is becoming more capable. And because there's a now greater degree of cooperation from local populations, Iraqi forces are better able to keep the peace in areas that have been cleared of extremists.

We have no illusions about the road ahead in Iraq. As Fouad Ajami said recently, it's not yet "a country at peace, and all its furies have not burned out, but a measure of order has begun to stick on the ground." Iraq won't become a perfect democracy overnight, but success will have an enormous positive impact on the future of the Middle East, and will have a direct effect on our own security as well. The only illusion to guard against is the notion that we don't have to care about what happens in that part of the world or to think that when we took down Saddam Hussein our job was done. America has no intention of abandoning our friends, permitting the overthrow of a democracy, and allowing a country of 170,000 square miles to be a staging area for further attacks against us. Tyranny in Iraq was worth defeating, and democracy in Iraq is worth defending. We're going to complete the mission, so another generation of American soldiers and Marines doesn't have to go back and do it again.

Success in Iraq will confirm our good intentions in the Middle East more than words alone ever could. Especially in a region of such great strategic importance and so many dashed hopes, commitments are credible only if they're backed up by deeds. The United States, and certainly this Administration, has shown a willingness not just to proclaim great objectives, but to work and sacrifice to achieve them. George W. Bush is the first president to call for a two-state solution, with Israel and Palestine living side by side in peace and security. He has announced a peace conference to be held in Annapolis later this year, and Secretary Rice just made her seventh journey to the Middle East to lay the groundwork for that conference.

Further progress in the region will depend on responsible conduct by regional governments; respect for the sovereignty of neighbors; compliance with international agreements; peaceful words - and peaceful actions. And if you apply all these measures, it becomes immediately clear that the government of Iran falls far short, and is a growing obstacle to peace in the Middle East.

Given the recent appearance by the Iranian president in New York City, no one can fail to understand the nature of the regime this man represents. He has called repeatedly for the destruction of Israel, and has spoken of his yearning for a world without the United States. Under their current rulers, the people of Iran live in a climate of fear and intimidation - with secret police, arbitrary detentions, and a hint of violence in the air. In the space of a generation, the regime has solidified its grip on the country and grown ever more arrogant and brutal

- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E  
toward the Iranian people. Journalists are intimidated. Religious  
minorities are persecuted. A good many dissidents and freedom advocates  
have been murdered, or have simply disappeared. Visiting scholars who have  
done nothing wrong have been seized and jailed. The regime has also long  
used political assassinations and bombings against fellow Iranians who live  
overseas. Killings have occurred in other Middle Eastern countries, in  
France, in Germany, and even in Bethesda, Maryland, in 1980.

This same regime that approved of hostage-taking in the 1970s . that  
attacked Saudi and Kuwaiti ships in the 80s . that incited suicide bombings  
and jihadism in the 90s and beyond . is now the world's leading state  
sponsor of terror. As to its next-door neighbor Iraq, the Iranian  
government claims to be a friend that supports regional stability. In fact  
it is a force for the opposite. As General Petraeus has noted, Iran's Qods  
Force is trying to set up a "Hezbollah-like force to serve its interests and  
fight a proxy war against the Iraqi state and coalition forces in Iraq." At  
the same time, Iran is "responsible for providing the weapons, the training,  
the funding and in some cases the direction for operations that have indeed  
killed U.S. soldiers."

The Qods Force is a branch of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps - the  
defender of the theocracy. The regime has used the Qods Force to provide  
weapons, money, and training to terrorists and Islamic militant groups  
abroad, including Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza and the  
Palestinian territories; militants in Afghanistan and the Balkans; and  
Hezbollah terrorists who are trying to destabilize Lebanon's democratic  
government. Indeed the Qods Force operates Hezbollah training camps in  
Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. The Qods Force is also believed to have had a key  
role in the attack on Khobar Towers in 1996.

The Iranian regime's efforts to destabilize the Middle East and gain  
hegemonic power is a matter of record. And now, of course, we have the  
inescapable reality of Iran's nuclear program - a program they claim is  
strictly for energy purposes, but which they have worked hard to conceal; a  
program carried out in complete defiance of the international community and  
resolutions of the UN Security Council. Our intelligence does not indicate  
that Iran now has a nuclear weapon, but it's clearly on course to do so.  
The world knows this. The security Council has twice imposed sanctions on  
Iran and called on the regime to cease its uranium enrichment. Yet the  
regime continues to do so, and continues to practice delay and deception in  
an obvious attempt to buy time. Given the nature of Iran's rulers, the  
declarations of the Iranian president, and the trouble the regime is causing  
in the region - including direct involvement in the killing of Americans -  
our country and the entire international community cannot stand by as a  
terror-supporting state fulfills its most aggressive ambitions.

The Iranian regime needs to know that if it stays on its present course, the  
international community is prepared to impose serious consequences. The  
United States joins other nations in sending that regime a clear message: we  
will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon.

<<...>>

The irresponsible conduct of the ruling elite in Tehran is a tragedy for all  
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- CLOSE HOLD - FOR YOUR REVIEW - Vice President's Remarks to the Washington Institute for Near E  
Iranians. The regime has passed up every opportunity to be a positive force  
in the Middle East. For more than a generation, it has only isolated a  
great nation, suppressed a great people, and subjected them to economic  
hardships that get worse every year. The citizens of Iran deserve none of  
this. They are the proud heirs of a culture of learning, humanity, and  
beauty that reaches back many centuries. Iranian civilization has produced  
shining achievements - from the Persian Book of Kings, to celebrated  
achievements in astronomy and mathematics, to art and music that are admired  
on every continent. The Iran of today - a nation of 70 million, most them  
under the age of 30 - is a place of unlimited potential. And the Iranian  
people have every right to be free from oppression and tyranny in their own  
country.

The spirit of freedom is stirring in Iran. The voices of change and  
peaceful dissent will not be silent. We can expect to hear more from the  
courageous reformers, the bloggers, and the advocates for women's rights -  
because these men and women are more loyal to their country than to its  
regime. All Iranians know that America respects them, cares about their  
troubles, and stands firmly on the side of liberty, human dignity, and  
individual rights. Freedom in the Middle East requires freedom for the  
Iranian people. America looks forward to the day when Iranians reclaim  
their destiny. The day that our two countries, as free and democratic  
nations, can be the closest of friends.

It's been given to us, ladies and gentlemen, to live in an era crowded with  
decisive events, and we've had to face challenges that no generation would  
choose for itself. All of you know those challenges better than most, and  
you've devoted time, energy, and intellect to the great issues confronting  
the Middle East today. In all your discussions, and in all that lies ahead,  
you can be certain that our country will stay engaged in the Middle East,  
making the hard choices and providing the kind of leadership that makes this  
world a better place. We accept that responsibility, for the sake of our  
own security and in service to our founding ideals. And as long as America  
continues to lead - steady in the face of adversaries, and firm in the  
defense of freedom - this young century will be a time of rising hopes, and  
advancing peace.

Thank you very much.