

## An Overview of International Support for Iraqi Democracy On the Eve of the December 15, 2005 Elections

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(1:30 p.m. EST)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much, Ed. I'd like to first thank Ed Feulner for that kind introduction. We were just remembering outside that we first met at Camp David when President George H.W. Bush had some people together to talk about the Soviet Union. He was going off to meet with Mikhail Gorbachev that December and it seems like a lifetime ago that there was actually a Soviet Union and that the big challenge was to rid the continent of Europe of Communism and the tyranny therein. And a lot has happened in that very few years.



But, Ed, thank you for your tremendous leadership of this great organization. I'd also like to recognize Kim Holmes, who I had the pleasure of working with at the State Department before Ed stole him away. It's great to see you, Kim. And I'd like to thank the Board of Trustees, with whom I just briefly had a moment to say hello. The organization, the Heritage Foundation, is a true bedrock of our democratic principles, our freedom, our way of life and a vehicle by which free men and women can debate their future. Thank you very much for the great work of this organization.

I have come to Heritage today on the cusp of an historic event. Two days from now, the Iraqi people will go to the polls for the third time since January. And they will elect a parliament to govern their nation for the next four years. All across Iraq today, representatives from some 300 political parties are staging rallies, they're holding televised debates, they're hanging campaign posters, and they're taking their case to the Iraqi people. They are asking for the consent of the governed.

As this historic moment approaches, we in America are engaging in our own historic debate. Many Americans have asked questions about our nation's role in Iraq. And in recent weeks, President Bush has responded by clearly describing our National Strategy for Victory in Iraq.

The American people want to know who we and the Iraqis are fighting and that we can

win. And President Bush has answered, explaining the nature of the enemy that we face and why failure is not an option. The enemy in Iraq is a combination of rejectionists and Saddamists and terrorists. The rejectionists miss the unjust status they have lost. But we believe that some of them can be convinced to join a democratic Iraq that is strong enough to protect minority rights. The Saddamists are loyal to the old regime and think that they can regain power by inciting undemocratic sentiment. But as the Iraqi people become more able to defend their democracy, we believe that they will increasingly be marginalized.

The final enemy we face, the terrorists, are a small but deadly group, motivated by the global ideology of hatred that fuels al-Qaida, and they will stop at nothing to make Iraq the heart of a totalitarian empire that encompasses the entire Islamic world. If we quit now, we will give the terrorists exactly what they want. We will desert Iraq's democrats at their time of greatest need. We will embolden every enemy of liberty across the Middle East. We will destroy any chance that the people of this region have of building a future of hope and decency. And most of all, we will make America more vulnerable.

In abandoning future generations in the Middle East to despair and terror, we also condemn future generations in the United States to insecurity and fear. And President Bush has made clear that on his watch, America will not retreat from a fight that we can and must win.

(Applause.)

The American people also want to know what victory means in Iraq. And President Bush has answered, defining victory as the establishment of a free and democratic Iraq that can guarantee the freedom, meet the needs and defend the rights of all its citizens. As the President has said, victory in this struggle will not be a singular event, like the surrender of our enemies on the deck of an American battleship. Rather, victory, like democracy itself, will be a steady but definable process that will not be won overnight.

Lastly, and most importantly, the American people want to know how we and our Iraqi partners will achieve the victory we seek. And again, President Bush has answered, describing a national strategy that is broad and integrated, with three complementary tracks: security, economic and political.

On the security track, we are working together with the Iraqis to clear areas from enemy control, to hold the territory controlled by Iraq's democratic government and to build the capacity of Iraq's security forces to defend the rule of law.

On the economic track, we are helping the people of Iraq to restore their battered infrastructure, to reform their statist economy and to build the institutions that sustain economic liberty.

Finally, on the political track, we are helping the Iraqi people to isolate incorrigible

enemies from democratic supporters, to engage all citizens who would choose the path of politics over the course of violence and to build inclusive democratic institutions that protect the interests of all Iraqis.

Ladies and Gentlemen: The President is answering America's questions about our mission in Iraq. And today, I have come to the Heritage Foundation to address an additional question: What is the international community doing to advance the cause of victory in Iraq?

To answer simply: As the Iraqi people have inspired the world by freely embracing democracy, an international consensus has emerged that securing democracy in Iraq is strategically essential. This new consensus is generating international support that, quite frankly, was not fully present in the earliest days of Iraq's liberation. And this support exists along each of the three tracks that I've outlined.

On the security front, our coalition today remains strong and active. Some 30 nations are contributing over 22,000 soldiers, who are risking their lives alongside brave Iraqi and brave American troops. Like generations of Americans before them, our men and women in uniform are distinguishing themselves today through selfless service. They are heroically defending the freedom of others against a determined enemy. And we in America mourn the loss and honor the sacrifice of our many sons and daughters who have fallen in Iraq and around the world to protect our way of life.

Our coalition in Iraq includes several partners, both old and new, who are also making historic contributions. No ally has assumed greater responsibility than Great Britain. Japan is maintaining its first significant overseas military deployment in 60 years. South Korea has more soldiers in Iraq today than any other ally except Great Britain. And even a small nation like El Salvador is making a large impact, sustaining the biggest and most distant deployment in its nation's history.

America is grateful to every nation that stands with us in Iraq. Our coalition members have suffered nearly 200 dead and 500 wounded. And we especially note with some pride and some understanding that some of our strongest partners from the very beginning, those whose desire to fight tyranny is most fierce and for those with whom the memory of tyranny is most fresh.

Coalition forces today have responsibility for security in nearly 40 percent of Iraq. In southern Iraq, Britain and Poland are commanding multinational divisions, encompassing 19 nations in total, that are helping to root out terrorists and maintain security. Coalition field hospitals have treated more than three quarters of a million Iraqis. And smaller deployments from nations like Kazakhstan and Bosnia and Herzegovina are removing thousands of landmines and old ordinance.

Our coalition partners are also contributing to the important work of building effective Iraqi security forces. NATO is now participating in the training of Iraq's new military. And

Jordan is hosting a major police academy that is preparing thousands of Iraqis every month to protect and serve their fellow citizens. In addition, Hungary has donated dozens of tanks to Iraq's military. And Japan has provided more than one thousand vehicles like fire trucks and ambulances to Iraq's police and security forces.

Now, over time, the size and shape of our coalition will continue to evolve. In the coming months, some nations will reduce their number of troops in combat, but will continue to assume new security missions, including the training and equipping of Iraq's military. Other countries, however, will extend the mandate for their forces as many have done in just the past few weeks.

Over time, the role of our coalition will also evolve, as Iraqis assume greater responsibility for their own security. With every passing day, Iraqis become better able to defend their nation and themselves and this enables us to shift more of our forces to helping Iraqis build the institutions of their new democracy. In the coming months and years, this will enable America's men and women in uniform, as well as those of our coalition, to return home to their families with the honor that they deserve.

As the security situation in Iraq improves, so too does the prospect for Iraq's economic reconstruction. It is difficult, however, to overstate the extent of this challenge. For several decades, Saddam Hussein robbed his nation to enrich himself, destroying Iraq's infrastructure and abusing its most valuable resource: the talented Iraqi people themselves. In less than three years, however, the increased generosity of the international community has begun to build the foundation of a modern economy in Iraq and to liberate the entrepreneurial spirit of the Iraqi people.

Two years ago in Madrid, almost 40 countries and international institutions pledged \$13.5 billion in assistance to Iraq. And as Iraq continues its transformation into a stable democracy, donors are making good on their promises. Today, this money is providing the Iraqi people access to more clean water and better health care, to renovate its schools with better teachers and upgraded houses in some of Iraq's poorest neighborhoods. And Iraqis are making the most of this increased opportunity: They have started three times as many businesses in two and a half years of freedom as they did in four whole decades of tyranny.

Iraq's international partners have also helped to liberate the Iraqi people from much of the crushing debt with which Saddam burdened the country. Last year, the Paris Club of international creditors agreed to forgive 80 percent of the \$40 billion of Iraqi debt that is held by Club members, one of the most generous forgiveness efforts in the group's history. This is a positive example that we are encouraging others to follow.

And in early 2004, the World Bank and the United Nations established the International Reconstruction Fund Facility for Iraq. Canada is serving as its co-chair and providing \$85 million to the Facility, which has already received over \$1 billion in contributions from 25 countries. These funds are enabling millions of Iraqis in cities to enjoy clean drinking

water, improved sanitation in their poorest neighborhoods, and make a better life. And in the past year alone, this money has financed the rehabilitation and construction of hundreds of school buildings and provided 69 million new textbooks to children of all ages in nearly all of Iraq's schools.

The gradual improvement of Iraq's economy and the Iraqi government's increasingly responsible fiscal leadership are also restoring the confidence of international financial institutions. Recently, the World Bank approved \$500 million in development loans for Iraq to modernize its transportation, water, and education systems. And the International Monetary Fund, having determined that Iraq qualifies for \$450 million in emergency assistance, is now working with the Iraqi Government to implement a long-term program for economic reform.

Now, despite the growing international support for Iraq's reconstruction, more needs to be done. Many nations, especially Japan and South Korea, have distinguished themselves with their generosity. But others, like Iraq's neighbors, should be doing a lot more. And for all who have pledged assistance to the Iraqi people, it is now time to deliver.

Finally, on the political front, the international community is increasingly overcoming old divisions and supporting Iraq's transition to democracy. We have now passed four major Security Council resolutions on Iraq, most of them unanimously, pledging the UN's support for everything from an international mandate for our coalition forces, to an international rejection of terrorism in Iraq, to the goal of advancing Iraq's democratic process.

Yet, as welcome as this broad support is, I'm sad to say that the international community has barely done anything to help Iraq prosecute Saddam Hussein. All who expressed their devotion to human rights and the rule of law have a special obligation to help the Iraqis bring to justice one of the world's most murderous tyrants. The international community's effective boycott of Saddam's trial is only harming the Iraqi people, who are now working to secure the hope of justice and freedom that Saddam long denied them.

The Iraqi people clearly voiced their desire for freedom through democratic elections this January. And the sight of eight million free Iraqis, proudly displaying their ink-stained fingers, inspired new levels of international support for the goal of democracy in Iraq. In June, the United States and the European Union co-hosted an international conference in Brussels, at which more than 80 countries agreed to a new international partnership to support Iraq's freely elected government.

The courage and conviction of the Iraqi people has also inspired new assistance from the United Nations, especially in preparation for Thursday's elections. The UN supported Iraq in its successful constitutional referendum in October and before that in its elections in January, helping the Iraqis do everything from train election workers, to administering polling sites, to print and distribute five million copies of their constitution to their fellow

citizens.

Finally, a new and hopeful change has been the growing support that Iraq now receives from its neighbors. Of course, countries like Jordan and Kuwait and Qatar were early supporters of Iraq's liberation. And Jordan's King Abdullah has consistently championed the emergence of a free Iraq and welcomed its integration into the region.

But lately, others have joined this course as well. Last year, Egypt hosted an international conference in Sharm el-Sheikh to support the Iraqi people. And Iraq's neighbors have welcomed it back into the Arab League. Many Arab governments now recognize the legitimacy of Iraq's democratically elected leaders and this newfound support culminated in the recent Arab League conference in Cairo in which states like Jordan and Saudi Arabia encouraged Iraq's Sunnis to reject violence and to join the democratic process and to participate in Thursday's elections. The process of supporting national accord in Iraq should continue early next year when there will be another international conference hosted by the Arab League.

Now, some of Iraq's neighbors are showing themselves to be no friends of the Iraqi people. Syria has still not taken sufficient action to stop the terrorists who cross into Iraq from its territory. And Iran continues to meddle in Iraqi affairs and to support violence in Iraqi society.

Nevertheless, the enemies of Iraq are increasingly fewer and isolating themselves from the international community, because today, the world is more united than ever in support of a new Iraq. In just two days, when Iraqis make history by electing the most democratic leaders in the entire Middle East, they will do so with the moral and financial and diplomatic backing of an overwhelming majority of the world.

This is remarkable when you consider how sharply divided the world was only three years ago. President Bush's vision of an Iraqi democracy, standing as a tribute to its citizens and serving as an inspiration to its neighbors, was neither grasped nor supported by many in the international community. Many believed that despotism was the permanent political condition of the Middle East. And they were prepared to countenance the false stability of undemocratic governments.

But there were others who knew better. Nations as different as Ukraine and Australia, Great Britain and South Korea, Poland and Japan, Lithuania and El Salvador, nations that were united by the shared conviction that liberty is not a scarce possession to be selfishly hoarded. Rather, it is a universal right that all free peoples must defend.

Today, countries that previously doubted the promise of democracy in Iraq are rallying to Iraq's side. The Iraqi people are seizing an unprecedented opportunity to live at last in peace and in freedom. And their democratic example is inspiring impatient patriots in places like Lebanon and Egypt and the Palestinian territories -- courageous men and women who are now finding ever more supporters in the international community to

champion their aspirations and defend their dignity.

The lesson, my friends, is clear: When America leads with principle in the world, freedom's cause grows stronger. We saw this when Ronald Reagan spurned friendly dictators and supported freedom's cause in Latin America. We saw this as well when Reagan called out the true character of the Soviet Union and liberated a democratic longing that ended the Cold War. And we are seeing this today, as the world awakens to the promise of a free Iraq.

I would like to thank all of you here at the Heritage Foundation for your continued support for America's principled leadership in the world because without it, the world suffers and America suffers, too. Thank you for letting me speak with you this evening.

(Applause.)

**MR. FEULNER:** Thank you, Madame Secretary. The Secretary has agreed to take some questions.

**QUESTION:** Dr. Rice, it's good to see you again.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you.

**QUESTION:** I have a great stake at Iraq. My son served a tour. He just came back.

I listen to you now and I have listened to you before a few times and you have to understand you are empowering a lot of people, especially in Saudi Arabia. My question is, as you know and most of the people in this room know, that the Saudi policies and their extremist religious institutions pose a great threat to this country's values domestically and interests internationally.

Recently, you formed -- or the Administration formed six working committees to deal with the American-Saudi relations. None of those committees is assigned to deal with promoting democracy in Saudi Arabia. If I am right, why is that not happening?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Thank you very much. First of all, thank you for your son's service in Iraq and also the sacrifice that the family had to make in order for that to take place.

We have indeed formed committees with the Saudis, but let me start by saying that when I was in Saudi Arabia, both times, I stood next to the Saudi Foreign Minister and I talked about the importance of reform in Saudi Arabia and indeed the empowerment of women, that women need to vote. You'll notice that there is a committee on human development. That committee has wide range to talk about human development, to talk about how human beings prosper, and it is very clearly our view and it will therefore be introduced into the conversation in that group that human beings only develop in the context of

political pluralism and democracy and reform.

Saudi Arabia is a complicated state that is at the beginning, we hope, of its reform process. We are prepared to start where states are and to move forward. But I think we've made very clear that -- the President made very clear in his Second Inaugural Address that his call to have democratic aspirations of people around the world answered did not stop at the border of the Middle East, nor did it stop at the border of any of our friends.

We've made the mistake in the past, for the last 60 years, of assuming that we could have stability without democracy. And so whether it is Saudi Arabia or other friends of ours, we have expectations about reform and about democracy, and that will be a part of our dialogue.

Thank you. Let's see, in the back here.

**QUESTION:** As you laid out today, the case for our policies in Iraq is very strong and overwhelming. My question is why did the Administration wait so long to make the case?

(Laughter.)

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, to be absolutely fair, I think we thought we were making the case over the last period of time. The President has talked a lot about it. We've been in before Congress. We've -- all of us -- been on -- Don and the Vice President, all of us have been out there talking.

But what the President has done, I think, in the last few -- last couple of weeks, really, is to go to the American people with a kind of renewed sense of urgency about what it is we face in Iraq and what it is that we risk in Iraq if we do not succeed.

It is perfectly acceptable, indeed it is natural in a democracy, to debate policies, no matter how important those policies are. But it is also incumbent upon the President, as he has been doing, to say to the American people we can have our disagreements, we can have our debates, but here are the risks if we take certain courses of action.

And while I respect and I know the President respects all of those who have a different view about our commitment in Iraq, who had a different view about the decision to overthrow Saddam Hussein after all of those years of his defiance of the international system, I do think that the case is very clear that we cannot fail in Iraq, that we have not just a tremendous opportunity to have a different kind of Iraq at the center of a different kind of Middle East, and therefore make ourselves safer, but we also have a responsibility to recognize that there could also be a different kind of Iraq and a different kind of Middle East that would be very bad for American interests and for world stability.

America has always wanted to finish the job. I've been, as of late, talking about the circumstances after World War II. And when I look back on that period of time, I can't imagine what our predecessors were going through as they watched strategic defeat after strategic defeat after strategic defeat, whether it was the communists winning large minorities in France and Italy in 1946, or in 1947 the Greek civil war and the tensions and the strife in Turkey, or in 1948 Germany permanently divided in the Berlin events, or in 1948 the Czechoslovak coup, or in 1949 the Soviet Union exploding a nuclear weapon five years ahead of schedule and the Chinese communists winning their civil war. Those weren't minor setbacks. Those were huge strategic defeats. And yet they pulled themselves together and they laid a foundation for peace to the point that today, today, no one can imagine war between the great powers of Europe ever again. It was not inevitable in 1945 or 1946 that no one could imagine war between France and Germany. It was not inevitable that Japan was going to emerge as a free, democratic state and an ally of the United States after what we had suffered in Pearl Harbor and in the Pacific. Nothing was inevitable about any of this and yet now it seems inevitable.

And so I think that what we've been trying to do and what the President has been doing is to tell people what the stakes are, but also to say if we follow through, if we keep our counsel, if we keep our eye on the values that we are espousing, that we're going to get to a day 10, 20, 30 years from now when people are going to look back and say: What was all the fuss about? The Middle East is a place of peace and democracy and there's a peaceful Palestinian state living side by side with Israel and the people of Syria and the people of Iran and the people of all of these states are living in a democracy, and it will be unimaginable that it could be a region that produces an ideology of hatred so great that people fly airplanes into buildings on a fine September day.

And so I think what the President is challenging the American people to do is to look at what could happen if we do not finish our job, but also at what could happen if we do finish our job. And that has always been the role of American leadership to have a vision of a future that is fundamentally different than the present. (Applause.)

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Microphone. Microphone right here.

**QUESTION:** Oh, thank you. Let me start anew. Madame Secretary, to me you are an inspiration for the achievement of the American goals to bring freedom not only to Iraq but to the rest of the world, and keeping in mind their culture because that's very important. We win by understanding people. And I think you have brought that message very well.

Now my question is we are going to (inaudible.) Iraq is going to elections on the 15th, okay. The terrorists always manage to surprise us with the most unexpected surprises at the last moment. How well are we prepared to ensure that people will go to vote and be alive (inaudible)?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thank you.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, thank you. And indeed, there are many, many preparations that have taken place to provide security during the Iraqi elections. We are a part of that, the coalition forces. And you may have noticed on television that Iraqi security forces are voting some two days ahead of time. Well, that's because it's expected that they're going to be out protecting their fellow citizens to vote when the voting actually starts in earnest on Thursday. And so the Iraqi security forces have made a lot of preparations and we have, too.

But it is a sign of how far we've come. I can tell you that back in January, when the elections took place, it was principally coalition forces that provided the security and the Iraqis provided some security and indeed they helped a lot, and one thing that General Casey was very proud of was that they stayed their ground. But there weren't very many of them and they didn't really have as much of a lead. These days, they're able to provide a much stronger element of the security. But I can assure you there's a lot of work that's gone into it.

I cannot guarantee that the terrorist won't do something. Heaven knows, I think they'll try. Because as we know from the Zawahirian-Zarqawi exchange, their worst fear is that these elections and that democracy actually starts to take hold. I mean, Zarqawi has impugned democracy as some kind of foreign idea that only apostates would be interested in. So democracy is a threat to them. And every time there's a successful election in Iraq, they lose some steam. So of course they will try, but we've made all the preparations we can. And the most important thing is the Iraqi people have demonstrated their willingness to take risks in order to have their democracy.

Yes.

**QUESTION:** Thank you for being with us, Secretary Rice. My question is, you just returned from a successful trip to Europe. Could you give us an update on your conversations with our allies there?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes. Well, it depends on your definition of successful, I guess. (Laughter.) But I did have very good discussions with our European allies. And what I wanted to do -- first of all, let me just highlight a couple of things that didn't get very much press.

We signed a defense agreement with Romania and that military access agreement will allow, at any time, 1500 or so American forces to actually be deployed in Romania for purposes of training. And for somebody like me, kind of an old Warsaw Pact specialist, that's really kind of a remarkable breakthrough. And the Romanians have demonstrated

that they are a firm ally in the war on terrorism. They've had their people in Iraq. They right there on the spot said that they're re-upping for the efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. So that was a major breakthrough.

At NATO, the NATO allies agreed to expand significantly their presence in Afghanistan, which NATO now has responsibility for significant parts of Afghanistan, allowing our troops to really fight terrorists while the International Security Assistance Forces, which NATO oversees, are able to provide security for reconstruction and that kind of effort in what are called Provincial Reconstruction Teams. And so they go out to an area. They go out with military forces to protect, with civilian forces to build both political and economic institutions. That effort has been expanded by NATO.

What an amazing thing for NATO, an organization that I can tell you in 1989, 1990, 1991, people were saying, "Is NATO going to survive the end of the Cold War?" Well, not only has NATO survived the end of the Cold War, but they're in Afghanistan, they're training troops in Iraq, and by the way, supporting the African Union mission in Darfur. So this is a wonderful institution and it was great to see it do what it's doing.

I also went to Ukraine. This is a young and in some ways struggling democracy, but what an amazing story of the Ukrainian people having taken their fate into their own hands. And we also did discuss at some length some of the questions that were out there about American practices concerning detainees and interrogation. I wanted to make the point that the United States respects the rule of law, that the United States respects human rights. We, indeed, are a leader; that the President would never and has never condoned torture and that we respect U.S. law and international obligations. I also wanted to say that within that context, anything that is legal; we should be prepared to do anything that is legal to prevent another terrorist attack. (Applause.)

I reminded people that terrorism is not like a criminal offense. If you allow the criminal in this case to carry out the crime before you prosecute them, then 3,000 people will be dead in New York and Washington, hundreds will be dead in Madrid and in London, scores will be dead in a Palestinian wedding in Jordan.

What is different about this war is that you're talking about a kind of stateless enemy that is often within our borders, that is there for the express purpose of hurting us and where the goal is the wanton slaughter of innocents. It's not collateral damage what happened in Jordan. It's not collateral damage what happened in New York. It's not collateral damage what happened in London. The target is men, women and children going to work on a subway or working in the World Trade Tower or going to a Palestinian wedding in Jordan. That was the target.

And so we are always going to respect our obligations in terms of our own law and in terms of our international obligations. We're also going to recognize that this is a different war and the United States President, most especially, has an obligation to defend the American people; and much of the intelligence that we have garnered has defended not

only the American people, but populations around the world through our intelligence sharing. (Applause.)

**QUESTION:** Dr. Rice, you make a convincing argument that we are moving towards democracy in Iraq. But my question and my concern is the presence of the insurgency. How do we have a democracy in a country when we have individuals who don't believe in a democracy? You talked about consent of the governed in the beginning of your speech, in the beginning of the introduction. How do you move forward to truly having a democracy -- we know democracy just isn't elections -- when certain individuals just don't want to play by the rules of the game? And how do we move about getting rid of this insurgency?

**SECRETARY RICE:** It's a very good question and we are indeed witnessing simultaneously two sets of events that seem contradictory. On the one hand, you see Iraqis participating in their political process, having their political parties, putting up posters, people are campaigning. I can tell you, I talked to Iraqi politicians when I was there and they're getting their platforms together and it really -- it's in that sense the political system is maturing actually rather rapidly when you consider that it's two years ago that Saddam Hussein was actually captured.

On the other hand, you have this track where you have violence against the Iraqi people. The strong belief is and there is lots of evidence over history in terms of insurgencies that an insurgency cannot maintain itself without political support, and that as more and more people recognize that their future is with the political track, not with violence, they will turn away from these people. By the way, these people have to live among them. They have to live off the land to a certain extent. And to the degree that people turn them in rather than turn a blind eye to them, it's going to be harder.

We're getting more and more tips about -- from Iraqis about activities that are going on over there. And you're beginning to see as the Sunnis join the political process, more and more people who might have been in one way or another associated with insurgency or supportive or at least turning a blind eye, saying, well, we should end violence and go to the political process.

The political process has got to demonstrate in Iraq that it is capable of advancing the interests of all Iraqis. That's why it is important that Sunnis participate. It's why the constitutional process which has the possibility of amendment is important. But I think we sometimes need to just step back and remember that this is a country that was drawn essentially on the kind of fault line between Shia and Sunni Islam with Kurds thrown into the mix and lots of other people as well. It's not a homogenous population. It has principally managed that fact by violence and/or repression. And now they're trying to manage that fact by consensus building and politics and compromise. And it's hard. It's really hard. But they are showing amazing resilience to want the process, the political process, to be where they actually do engage in bringing all their interests to bear.

I would note that I think there may be violence for a long time. You know, it's cowardly but it's not that hard to blow up a group of schoolchildren at a bus. And what will hopefully, eventually, make that less likely is that, first of all, the insurgency is split off from the people, and secondly that the forces, the security forces, the intelligence forces of Iraq get stronger to be able to deal with that. And we think that process is underway.

Now, that's the internal dynamic. But there is -- there's a hardened core of terrorists there who came to Iraq to fight the same violent so-called jihad that they were fighting in Afghanistan and have fought in other places, and they have to be defeated. There is no politics in which they would be involved because their view of the Middle East is 180 degrees different than the view of the Middle East that most of the region has. They don't believe in women's rights. They don't believe in tolerance of others. They don't believe in consent of the governed. And they are not going to be reformed in any way. And so they have to be defeated and that's why you see American and other coalition forces having to make these military activities in the Euphrates Valley or places like that.

Yes. Can we get this gentleman right here in the middle?

**QUESTION:** Dr. Rice, thank you very much. How can you stop the Iranian meddling in Iraq which you mentioned and how will the democracy -- success of democracy in Iraq will affect countries like Iran?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes. Well, thank you. And let me say a word about Iran. First of all, we've always said that we expect Iraq to have relations with Iran; it's their neighbor. As long as their transparent relations, from our point of view, it's only natural. The problem is when Iran somehow is supporting some of the terrorists. The British, for instance, have talked about their concerns that the Iranians might be providing certain kinds of technology to enhance the capability of attacks in that region. We know that Iran wants to be involved in non-transparent ways in the politics of Iraq.

But I think we have a couple things going for us. First is that there really has to be an international spotlight on that, and I want to return back to that in a moment.

But secondly, I don't have any sense that the Iraqis wish to trade the tyranny of Saddam Hussein for the tyranny of the mullahs in Iran. Iraqis are proud people. They are a great culture in their own right. They are a people for whom religious difference has been a source of division and violence, but it doesn't have to be. The Iraqis will explain to you that their tribes are intermingled. An Iraqi will say to you, "Well, I'm married to a Shia. My daughter just married a Kurd." The societal fabric I think will support something very different.

And so to the degree that Iraq becomes stronger, I think Iran will find it harder to do what it's trying to do. But in the short term, the international community has to draw attention to it and to say to Iran this is not acceptable. Transparent relations absolutely are acceptable, but this kind of meddling is not.

It speaks to a larger problem with Iran, which is that it is a state that is out of step with the direction in the Middle East. It is a state that we worry a great deal about its pursuit of nuclear technology that would lead to a nuclear weapon. I think the international community is united that that cannot happen. It is a state that supports Palestinian rejectionists as well as groups like Hamas and Hezbollah, which is continuing to try to cause difficulties in places like Lebanon, at a time when the international community is trying to support a peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

And perhaps most importantly, it is a regime that where an unelected few frustrate the aspirations of a great people -- the Iranian people. These are a people who are educated and cultured and scientifically in the lead, and they suffer under this terrible regime. Now, the recent comments by their new President have, I think, sharpened the contradictions and made clearer that this regime is out of step with the international community. And I do think that it has to be said, it has to be spoken, that Iran is a problem for a stable and democratizing Middle East and the international community will have to find a way to deal with that.

Yes, sir.

**QUESTION:** Madame Secretary, thank you for being with us this afternoon. My question involves Indonesia and this is the fourth largest country population-wise in the world, the largest Muslim population. They just had a rather popular, forward-looking leader whose called SBY -- S-B-Y -- because of his initials. And the question is what is the United States -- how are we cooperating with SBY and Indonesia, at this point, to move them forward with us?

**SECRETARY RICE:** Yes, Indonesia is an extremely important country. In fact, we just -- the President just met with President Yudhoyono when he was in Korea and I have met with my colleague on a couple of different occasions. Indonesia is a place that is complicated in its religious and ethnic composition. It's spread out as an archipelago and so in many ways difficult to govern. But we have now in this new government, as you say, a reformist, a government that is forward leaning. One of the things that they have said is that they want to be a voice for moderate forms of Islam that understand that democracy, which by the way they went through great elections to get there, that democracy and Islam are by no means enemies of one another and that people of all ethnic groups and all heritages and religious heritages can live together. And so we need to support this government and we're trying to do that.

I might just make a point about President Yudhoyono. He was actually a graduate of our International Military Educational Training program, IMET. And it underscores something that I think is very important. I can't tell how many times around the world I run into or the President sees leaders who have studied in the United States or have been a part of our military exchange programs or at the very least been part of our International Visitors Programs. And they have a different perspective on America. They know us better and they are less given to the kind of caricatures and stereotypes about the United States.

And so we have a very deep interest in keeping open to the exchange of people as well as the exchange of ideas.

I am always very proud to note they go to universities all over the country. It's not just Yale or Harvard or Stanford. It's also to places in the middle of the country, the University of Iowa, Texas A&M or wherever. And it's a good thing that they come here. And I think the President of Indonesia is a very good example of that. We are going to support his government. We've just made it possible for our military exchanges to be broadened because we think that's an important institution. We, of course were, I think, quick to respond and it was welcomed, the response to the tsunami, which is another way for America to demonstrate that we are fighting a war against terrorists.

This is not a war on Islam. Islam is an honorable religion. It is one of the world's great religions. It has every possibility to live in peace with other religions. And as we know in our own country as well as in other democracies, people of Islamic faith are some of the strongest supporters of democratic development. And so Indonesia is an important example of that.

Thank you. One last question? All right. The lady right here.

**QUESTION:** As an expert on the former Soviet Union, I wondered if you'd comment on where those countries are now and also if President Bush's recent comments have improved his public opinion in Western Europe.

**SECRETARY RICE:** Well, I'll tell you, on the public opinion side, the President always makes very clear that he doesn't read the polls and he doesn't intend to. Because I think we can take snapshots of what people think at any point in time, but I believe that the respect for America and for American values and for what America did for that continent is something that's very deeply ingrained in Europe. You feel it more fully when you're in the room with the new united Europe, and I don't mean the European Union specifically. I mean the United Europe as you see at a table at NATO, for instance, where you sit with not just Germany and France and Great Britain, and the Netherlands, but you sit also with Poland and Hungary and Romania and Lithuania and Latvia and Slovenia.

And you're reminded that this was not always the case; that it was not that many year ago -- less than 20 years ago -- that the Soviet Union still dominated Eastern Europe, still sat deep into the heart of Eastern Europe, but Germany was still divided into one part free, and one part not. That people like me who had grown up studying the Soviet Union expected that that was the way things were going to be for a long time.

Now to be fair, it's hard. Places like Ukraine are -- have just been through their Orange Revolution and they're struggling with whatever young revolutionary government does, which is that they now really have to provide for their people because people are inspired by the revolution, but they also want to know are my kids going to be better educated and then am I going to have a better life. And so they're struggling with those things.

If you go to a place like Romania, they're struggling with how to get foreign investment into their country. If you go to a place like Hungary, they actually are very much on the front lines of trying to provide guidance to other newly democratizing states. They actually have a center for transition to democracy in Hungary. But you look back and you think, what a remarkable evolution this is.

And I just want to return to the point that I made earlier. In 1989, in 1990 and 1991 when I was lucky enough to be the Soviet specialist at the end of the Cold War. Doesn't really kind of get better than that. (Laughter.) I really looked back and I thought, what we were really doing was harvesting those good decisions that had been taken back in the '40s. And we were, in effect, harvesting good decisions that frankly Ronald Reagan had made in 1982 and '83 and '84 when he held fast and essentially said that the Soviet Union was an artifact of history that was going to go away. And I remember people saying, "How undiplomatic. My goodness. How could you say that about a great power like the Soviet Union. But you know, it was speaking the truth. And in times of change, in times of challenge when the tectonic plates of the international system are moving around, you have to know where you want to go. It's not necessarily that we or I will see the full embodiment of the Middle East that we're now seeking -- the full embodiment of a fully democratic Iraq that has taken its full place in the international system. It takes time.

But there are so many events in history that one day seemed impossible and now we look back on them as inevitable. And they weren't inevitable. They came about because the United States of America married power and principle together, because the United States understood that its values and its interests were inextricably linked and because the United States was willing to speak the truth, that men and women wherever they are, whoever they are, are endowed by their creator to have these rights. Now, I know that there are days in Iraq when it seems very, very hard to imagine that that is ever going to take place.

But I'll just end by telling you that somebody asked me recently what did I read this summer, and I read biographies of the Founding Fathers. I read Jefferson and Franklin and Washington and Hamilton. And I read them because -- not only because of the ideals that they espoused but because when you read those biographies and you are inside their world, there is no earthly reason the United States of America should have ever come into being. But they somehow overcame the challenges that they had. They somehow overcame the greatest military power of the time, basically on the basis of an idea, and they triumphed.

I think if we stay true to what we are doing in Iraq, in Afghanistan, in the Middle East, then at some point in time there is going to be that same sense of triumph. Not our triumph, but the triumph of the people of that region that will finally claim their place, their rightful place, among the free peoples of the world.

Thank you very much.

(Applause.)

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