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For Immediate Release
October 26, 2006

Setting the Record Straight: Mainstream Media Reports Inaccurate; Distort Prime Minister Maliki's Press Conference

 [Setting the Record Straight](#)

Reports Draw Incorrect Conclusions By Taking Prime Minister Maliki's Remarks Out Of Context

- **Many Media Reports Wrongly Claim That Prime Minister Maliki Disagreed With President Bush On Key Issues, Including Timetables, In His Press Conference Yesterday.** One media outlet reported that a "defiant al-Maliki ... slammed the top U.S. military and diplomatic representatives in Iraq for saying his government needed to set a timetable to curb violence in the country."

Prime Minister Maliki Was Asked Whether He Agreed With Setting An 18-Month Timeline For The Withdrawal Of Coalition Forces

- **In Yesterday's Press Conference, Prime Minister Maliki Was Asked Whether The United States Had Set A "Timetable For The Withdrawal Of Foreign Forces From Iraq Within 18 Months."** ("Iraqi PM Says No Deadline For US Pullout, Rejects Militias At News Conference," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 10/26/06)

Prime Minister Maliki Was Clarifying That The U.S. Government Is NOT Pursuing A Timeline For Withdrawing Forces

- **Prime Minister Maliki's Full Response Shows He Was Saying That Discussion Of A Timeline For Withdrawing U.S. Forces Is Driven By American Politics And Is Not Bush Administration Policy.** MALIKI: "The U.S. government has the right to reconsider its policy as deemed fit for its interests although I am confident that what is said is not said by the official state quarters. Yesterday you all heard the State Department spokesman or the U.S. president's statement in which he denied such logic, the logic of a deadline or a period of time. I also stress that all know that this government is based on the people's national will. None has the right to set timetables for it. But the others have the right to make decisions that are in harmony with their interests. ... I am confident that this logic is not the official logic of the U.S. government but one of the results of the current electoral competition and this does not concern us much. Second, I am confident that this issue is subject to the will of the government and the people who elected it." ("Iraqi PM Says No Deadline For US Pullout, Rejects Militias At News Conference," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 10/26/06)

News Reports Are Taking Prime Minister Maliki's Comments Out Of Context

- **Prime Minister Maliki Was Not Discussing Proposed Benchmarks For Resolving Political Issues, Which Ambassador Khalilzad Discussed On Monday, And Which Iraqi Leaders Have Already Developed And Agreed To Support.** KHALILZAD: "President Talabani has made these commitments public. The United States and its coalition partners will support Prime Minister Maliki and others in their effort to meet these benchmarks." (Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, Press Conference, Baghdad, Iraq, 10/24/06)
- **Prime Minister Maliki Followed His Comment That "None Has The Right To Set Timetables" By Saying That "Others Have The Right To Make Decisions That Are In Harmony With Their Interests."** ("Iraqi PM Says No Deadline For US Pullout, Rejects Militias At News Conference," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 10/26/06)
- **In His Own Press Conference Yesterday, President Bush Agreed With Maliki's Comment That Benchmarks Cannot Be Imposed On Iraq By An Outside Force.** THE PRESIDENT: "And if [Maliki's] point is, is that those benchmarks, or the way forward can't be imposed upon Iraq by an outside force, he's right. This is a sovereign government." (President Bush, Press Conference, 10/26/06)

Prime Minister Maliki And President Bush Agree On Sadr City Raid And Pursuing Illegal Militias

Reuters Reports That Prime Minister Maliki Said "The Raid Had His Backing." "Maliki said the raid had his backing but argued that it was conducted in a heavy handed way that could wreck a political deal he had worked on with Moqtada al-Sadr, a radical anti-American cleric who controls the Mehdi Army Shi'ite militia. Maliki had appeared to disavow the raid at a news conference on Wednesday, saying he had not been consulted, but he told Reuters his problem was with an operation in the same area which was part of the hunt for a kidnapped American soldier." (Paul Holmes and Mariam Karouny, "Exclusive: Maliki Says Iraqi Death Squad Leader Escapes U.S. Raid," Reuters, 10/26/06)

Prime Minister Maliki: "I Clearly Said We Instructed Our Security And Military Services To Act Against Any Illegal Or Illegitimate Display Of Arms." "The security measures I talked about provide the necessary ground for the adoption of the method of confronting rebellion and encroachment on state prestige by force. Therefore, I clearly said we instructed our security and military services to act against any illegal or illegitimate display of arms." ("Iraqi PM Says No Deadline For US Pullout, Rejects Militias At News Conference," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 10/26/06)

Prime Minister Maliki And President Bush Agree On Coordination

- **Prime Minister Maliki: "Coordination Is A Demand On Which The Joint Political Process Between Us And The Multinational Forces Should Be Based."** "As for what happened in Al-Sadr City, we will ask for a clarification of what happened. We will review this issue with the multinational forces so that it will not be repeated. ... The government should be aware of and

part of any military operation. Coordination is a demand on which the joint political process between us and the multinational forces should be based." ("Iraqi PM Says No Deadline For US Pullout, Rejects Militias At News Conference," BBC Monitoring International Reports, 10/26/06)

- **President Bush: "The Idea That We Need To Coordinate With Him ... Makes Sense To Me."** "And there's a lot of operations taking place, which means that sometimes communications may not be as good as they should be. And we'll continue to work very closely with the government to make sure that the communications are solid." (President Bush, Press Conference, 10/26/06)

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