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## Dr. Rice Addresses War on Terror

Remarks by National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice Followed by Question and Answer to the U. S. Institute of Peace  
Washington, D.C.

DR. RICE: Directors and distinguished guests, I'm delighted to have a chance to come to this fine institution to talk about policies that will help us to deal with the long-term challenge of confronting Islamic extremism and replacing the hopelessness and the lack of opportunity in the Middle East that has led to that challenge.

In its comprehensive report, the 9/11 Commission called for the United States to develop a long-range strategy to engage in a struggle of ideas to defeat Islamic terrorism. The report says that we must have a "strategy that is political, as much as it is military," and that "long-term success demands the use of all elements of national power: diplomacy, intelligence, covert action, law enforcement, economic policy, foreign aid, public policy, and homeland defense."



President Bush and the members of his administration could not agree more. Since the beginning of the war on terror, the President has recognized that the war on terror is as much as conflict of visions as a conflict of arms. One terrorist put it succinctly. He said, "You love life, we love death." True victory will come not merely when the terrorists are defeated by force, but when the ideology of death and hatred is overcome by the appeal of life and hope, and when lies are replaced by truth.

This has been the President's clear message and consistent practice. In his very first State of the Union speech, he said, "America will take the side of brave men and women who advocate values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror."

The President has put these words into action. Under his leadership, America has adopted a forward strategy for freedom for the Middle East. That strategy has many elements. We are supporting the people of Afghanistan and Iraq as they fight terrorists and extremism and work to build democratic governments. We have joined with our NATO and G8 allies to help the people of the broader Middle East and North Africa to create jobs, increase access to capital, improve literacy and education, protect

human rights, and make progress toward democracy.

President Bush has launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative to link America with reformers in the Middle East through a concrete project. He is working to establish a U.S.-Middle East free trade area within a decade, to bring the people of the region into an expanding circle of opportunity. And just this week, he signed America's newest free trade agreement in the area with Morocco. The latest administration budget doubles funding for the National Endowment for Democracy for its new work, focusing on bringing free elections, free markets, free press, free speech and free labor unions to the Middle East. And we are increasing our efforts to support broadcasting in the Middle East by one-third, from \$30 million to \$40 million. And early in the administration, we began the successful Arabic language Radio Sawa service, and the Persian language Radio Farda service. This year, we launched a new Middle East television network called "Alhurra," Arabic for "the free one." The network broadcasts news, movies, sports, entertainment and educational programming to millions of people across the region -- fulfill a goal of getting to the truth.

We can and we must do more. Our future efforts should focus on two areas. First, we must work to dispel destructive myths about American society and about American policy. Second, we must expand dramatically our efforts to support and encourage the voices of moderation and tolerance and pluralism within the Muslim world.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11th, many Americans were asking, "Why do they hate us?" It was even the title of a celebrated Newsweek cover story by my friend, Fareed Zakaria. Then, as now, the answer to that question depends on what one means by "they." There is a small minority of extremists in the Muslim world who, indeed, hate America and will always hate America. They hate our policies, our values, our freedoms, our very way of life. When that hatred is expressed through terrorist violence, there is only one proper response. And that response is that we must find them and defeat them, defeat those who seek to kill our people and to harm our country.

Yet, there are some 1 billion people in the world who profess the Islamic faith. And the evidence about their attitudes toward the United States is far from conclusive. A great many Muslims still come to this country every year in search of a better life. And surveys show that a great many more would do so if they could. Yet, surveys of Muslim populations also show that large majorities of Muslims fear American power, or mistrust American intentions, or misunderstand American values.

For instance, many in the Muslim world see the worst of American popular culture and assume that American-style democracy -- or any democracy at all, for that matter -- inevitably leads to crassness and immorality. Others believe that democracy is inherently hostile to faith, and corrosive of cherished traditions. And many more are fed a steady diet of hateful propaganda and conspiracy theories that twist American policy into grotesque caricatures.

These views pose a serious challenge for our country. At their worst and most intense, they create a climate of bitterness and grievance, in which extremism finds a sympathetic ear. And such views can hold entire societies captive to failed ideologies and prevent millions of people from joining in the progress and prosperity of our time. The consequences for much of the Muslim world are stagnation, persistent poverty and a lack of freedom.

Dispelling these myths and instilling trust is a difficult and long-term proposition. We must not lose sight of the fact that some of the mistrust and suspicion felt toward the West by many in the Middle East and in the Muslim world, in fact, have some basis in reality. Relations between the Islamic world and the West began in conflict, and for many centuries, bitter and bloody conflict -- wars of religion and then colonial wars -- defined the contact that each side had with each other. And for the last six decades, America and our allies excused and accommodated the lack of freedom in the Middle East, hoping, as President Bush said, "to purchase stability at the price of liberty." Of course, we got neither.

Yet, this is far from the whole story. The story of America's more recent relations with the Muslim world is a story of friendship and partnership. Turkey is a strong ally of the United States, and a full and proud member of the NATO alliance. America has built alliances with Muslim nations around the world, from Morocco to Indonesia. We have signed free trade agreements with two Muslim nations, and we are working on two more. We are a major provider of development assistance in the Muslim world.

And America has worked to find a lasting solution to the conflict between the Israelis and Palestinians. No matter who is in office, no matter from what party, American Presidents have cared to try to find peace in the Holy Land.

In doing so, we stand these days with the Palestinian people who seek democracy and reform. After all, President Bush is the first American President to call, as a matter of policy, for a Palestinian state. Yet, because America supports Israel's desire for security, many in the Muslim world seem to believe that America opposes the Palestinian desire for freedom. This is a misconception that we must take head-on and dispel. Because the truth is that our policy insists on freedom. The President believes that the Palestinian people deserve not merely their own state, but a just and democratic state that serves their interests and fulfills their decent aspirations.

For its part, Israel must meet its responsibility under the road map and help create conditions for a democratic Palestinian state to emerge. Israel must take steps to improve the lives of the Palestinian people and to remove the daily humiliations that harden the hearts of future generations. Along with the vast majority of people who dwell in the Holy Land, Americans want peace for this troubled region -- but we realize that there can be no lasting peace for either side until there is freedom and security for both sides.

The story of America's recent relations with the Muslim world is also one of help and, we can even say, perhaps, rescue. America -- American soldiers gave their lives trying to provide food in Somalia. America has gone to war five times since the end of the Cold War, and how many in the Muslim world know that each time it was to help Muslims? Americans have fought in Kuwait and in Bosnia and in Kosovo and in Afghanistan and Iraq. Without exception, these were wars of liberation and of freedom. Kuwait's sovereignty was restored and today that monarchy is pursuing reform. Kuwait has a directly elected national assembly.

America stopped the killing in Bosnia and reversed ethnic cleansing in Kosovo. Today, those two nations are making the tough reforms needed so that they can join a united Europe. Afghanistan is free of the brutal repression of the Taliban and building a democracy that recognizes the central role of Islam in Afghan life, and that sees that control as completely consistent with democracy.

Iraq is free of the terror and fear of Saddam Hussein. Iraqis are free to worship as they choose. Major religious shrines are open to pilgrims for the first time in decades, and the Iraqi people are taking the very hard steps toward the building of democracy.

These are stories that need to be told and that need to be heard. And so does the truth about American society. From a distance, I am certain that America can seem secular and commercial and hectic and hyper-modern and dismissive of tradition. Yet, Americans have a profound respect for tradition, a deeply felt sense of justice, and a strong attachment to our communities and families.

Survey after survey shows that Americans are the most religious people in the developed world. The American Constitution and the American way of life strike a successful balance between the imperatives of government and the demands of conscience. Since our founding we have separated church and state, but we do not exclude religion from our lives. In fact, among all the modern societies in the world, America is the one in which religion and religious people play the largest role. There is no conflict between being a good citizen and being a good Jew or Christian or Hindu or Buddhist or Muslim. Many Muslims born in other lands have learned this for themselves, as they pray in America's 1,200 mosques and raise their American children in the Islamic faith.

Yet, we cannot take for granted that Muslims in the rest of the world know these simple truths. We need to get the truth of our values and our policies to the people of the Middle East, because truth serves the cause of freedom. We must also do everything that we can to support and encourage the voices of moderation and tolerance and pluralism within the Muslim world. There is a hunger for new ideas and fresh thinking in the broader Middle East, and that hunger cannot, ultimately, be satisfied by the work of outsiders. Just as freedom must always be chosen, lasting progress and reform in society must emerge from within.

Don't worry, I can still see. (Laughter.)

We are fully aware that outside support can sometimes harm more than it helps. Some critics in the Muslim world will point to aid from the West as a way to de-legitimize reformist ideas. We are thinking hard about how moderate and democratic forces in the West can usefully help those in the Islamic world who are fighting against extremism -- because they need our help. But, of course, democracy and freedom must be home-grown. Today, outside support for extremists is common, while moderates too often struggle with inadequate resources and too little solidarity. That has to change -- and we have to help to change it.

Americans also need to hear the stories of the people of the Muslim world. We need to understand their challenges and their cultures and their hopes; to speak their languages and read their literature; to know their cultures in the deepest sense. Our interaction must be a conversation, not a monologue. We must reach out and explain, but we must also listen. Student exchanges and sister city programs and professional contacts helped forge lasting ties of friendship and understanding across the Atlantic and across the barriers of tyranny during the Cold War. Similar efforts today can achieve similar results between Americans and Muslim peoples throughout the world.

This is, by the way, not a task for the American government, alone. Our nation needs the help of all of our citizens -- of our schools and our universities, and of institutions like this one, the U.S. Institute of Peace. All of us must play a vital role in this dialogue.

These efforts begin from a simple principle: America is taking the side of the millions of people in the Muslim world who long for freedom, who cherish learning and progress, and who seek economic opportunity for themselves and for their children.

If history has taught us anything, it is that these aspirations are, indeed, universal. Their realization can be delayed by tyranny or corruption or stagnation -- but they cannot be indefinitely denied. People will not tolerate arbitrary or artificial limits on their hopes forever.

As we speak, the momentum of freedom is building in the broader Middle East. At Alexandria and Istanbul and the Dead Sea and Sana'a and Aqaba, political, civil society, and business leaders have met in the last years to discuss modernization and reform, and have issued stirring calls for political, economic and social change. There will always be cynics who deride freedom and democracy as dangerous foreign imports -- just as there are cynics here at home who allege that Arabs and Muslims are somehow not interested in freedom, or aren't yet ready for freedom's responsibilities. Yet, time and truth are on the side of liberty.

The 9/11 Commission report has it exactly right. Our strategy must be comprehensive, because the challenge we face is greater and more complex than the threat. The victory of freedom in the Cold War was won only when the West remembered that values and security cannot be separated. The values of freedom and democracy -- as much, if not more, than economic power and military might -- won the Cold War. And those same values will lead us to victory in the war on terror.

That is why it is President Bush's strong belief, and his strategy. America will fight and win the war on terror, because freedom is worth defending. And America will fight and win the war of ideas, because truth is needed for freedom's defense.

Thank you very much. (Applause.)

Q My question is with regard to the transatlantic relationship. It seems that one of the biggest impediments to success in the Middle East is deep divisions between the United States and our European allies as to how to deal specifically with the issue of Iraq, Iran and the (inaudible) conflict. Can you describe the state of this relationship and how would you attempt to deal with that problem?

DR. RICE: You know, I'm tempted to say about the transatlantic relationship what I think Mark Twain apparently said about Wagner's music: it's better than it sounds. (Laughter.)

The transatlantic relationship is actually in very good shape, and it's in very good shape because we have had to confront, once again, the fact that we are an alliance of values. I will take each of those in turn, because I think they are somewhat different.

On Iraq, there were differences among some allies on Iraq, not all. There's no doubt that with France and Germany, there were differences; with Britain, Italy, at the time, Spain, Poland and others, there were not differences. And so it was not somehow the Europeans and the Americans on Iraq. There were differences within Europe about Iraq.

Now, to this day, there are some 16 members of NATO serving in Iraq, and a number of those forces serving in very dangerous circumstances, in harm's way, and I think we should honor their service and appreciate the fact that we have allies who are there with us from the beginning and who have joined us since.

There is now, I think, complete agreement -- and there I would include the French and the Germans -- that a free and stable Iraq is in the interest of everybody and that we cannot afford to fail in Iraq. And I think you are seeing in NATO's willingness to provide training an example of that. You might also notice that most of the states of Europe have re-established diplomatic relations with the Iraqis, are engaged in discussions about economic relations and so on.

As to Iran, I think there the United States was, perhaps at one time, the state that was most concerned about Iran's activities, but others have come to that position, principally because of Iranian behavior. There is great concern that the Iranians, under the cover of civilian nuclear program, are, indeed, engaged in illegal activities, activities that are not -- that are inconsistent with its international obligations. And I think you will see that the statements that have been coming out of the European Union Three -- the French-British-German effort to deal with the Iranians -- are very consistent with what we, the United States, believe and we've been in very close contact with them. That is one of the stories, the coming together of the international community around, and insistence that Iran deal with its international obligations, and a lot of concern about it.

Finally, as to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, I think there's a general understanding on all sides that you have got to have two partners in order to make this work. It is our belief -- and we are getting support for that view from a number of quarters -- in the Quartet, in Europe -- that the disengagement plan which Prime Minister Sharon has put on the table could provide an opportunity to give a new spur to the Palestinian -- to a possibility of a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as long as that disengagement plan from the Gaza is followed by further steps, which the Israelis have said they're prepared to take.

Now, in order to do that, we do need leadership on the Palestinian side, as well. And I think that the recent problem that we've been through in the Palestinian territories where, really, lawlessness has broken out and where the Palestinian Authority has not been able to deal with it, and where Chairman Arafat's first idea was to appoint his cousin, or nephew as chairman of the security forces, and where that was violently rejected by the Palestinian people shows that there is growing discontent with a leadership that has not been prepared to deal with the best aspirations of the Palestinian people.

We remain committed to a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. I think the Europeans remain committed to that. Yes, we have degrees of difference from time to time, but through the Quartet we've been able to coordinate our policy, I think, in a quite effective way.

Q Can I follow? I'll be brief. (Inaudible) -- and let's stay off the Middle East -- if you'll agree with me that Iran isn't the Middle East, exactly. This --

DR. RICE: -- asked about Iran.

Q No, I understand that. And I had this question in my head before you got to Iran.

So, how would this be translated? Do you expect that the policy that John Bolton has enunciated this week to try to isolate, to try to interdict, to stop Iran's nuclear program will get support from the Europeans? Do you suppose the Europeans will support the United States on Darfur, should it come to applying sanctions? Are we hearing just expressions, or do you think there really is an alliance? And, Middle East aside, I think we know how they feel about the --

DR. RICE: Well, of course there is an alliance. And, of course it has served us extremely well in a number of crises -- whether it is Afghanistan or in Iraq or a number of places it served us very well.

Now, as to Darfur, we have just gotten a U.N. Security Council resolution on Darfur in which we and the other European members of the Security Council were completely united. Everybody knows that there needs to be a solution to Darfur. The problem is the government in Khartoum, not the alliance, when it comes to Darfur. I don't know if people are prepared to support sanctions. The U.N. Security Council made very clear that there will be next steps if the Somalian government -- I'm sorry, the Sudanese government has not acted to deal with the Jangaweed and to deal with the threat to the populations of the West. So I suspect that if they do not act within the 30 days that they were granted, that people will be prepared to look at what those next steps ought to be, and nothing is off the table.

So, yes, we've had very good cooperation and it's a constant source of discussion among us, with our European allies, how we can be supportive of the AU efforts there. But, of course, the African Union has the lead, and that's only appropriate.

On Iran, I think we've gotten very good cooperation with our European allies on Iran. Now, the problem, again, is Iran, because the European Three went to the Iranians and they thought that they had an arrangement where the Iranians were agreed to not reprocess and enrich. The Iranians have gone back on that deal. The Iranians have not been forthcoming with the IAEA. We have a board meeting in September, and we will see what people want to do. But it is not for lack of consistency and lack of coherence in alliance policy -- these problems are that you have some very recalcitrant governments that have to come under even greater pressure to live up to their international obligations. But we and the Europeans have been very much united on both these fronts.

Q (Inaudible) -- the U.S. administration has had to deal with Israeli and the Palestinian and they have an even-handed policy. Why do you find it so hard to condemn the Israeli plan, because 1,000 new settlements? Do you think that's mostly a (inaudible) --

DR. RICE: What we have asked of the Israeli government is to let us know what it is that they are doing and what it is -- our policy on settlements are very clear. We believe that the Israelis should live up to their obligations under the road map. I might mention, by the way, the dismantlement of

settlements comes in the third phase of the road map. If you get the disengagement plan from the Gaza, you will have dismantlement of settlements early in the process.

And so we are very engaged with the Israelis on how they begin the disengagement from the Gaza, the dismantlement of settlements there, the dismantlement of settlements in parts of the West Bank. And we've been very clear so that settlement expansion is not consistent with our understanding under the road map.

Now, when I said that our policies were to -- were equally to try to find peace and security for both sides, I do want to be very clear that the President did make clear that he felt that it was time for a Palestinian leadership that was ready to take up that challenge, and that was ready to live up to its obligations under the road map. The fact is that we had, in 2000, an opportunity for a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and the Palestinian leadership, for one reason or another, was unable to take that opportunity. We have not been able to get back to that place since. We tried in the Aqaba process to re-start that again, working very hard with the then-Prime Minister of the Palestinian territories, Abu Mazen, to put forward a set of steps that would be taken on the road to a final status solution, to get back on the road map. Within a few weeks of Aqaba, Chairman Arafat decided that he didn't want Abu Mazen around, and he eventually resigned because he was not given the freedoms to do what he needed to do.

Yes, the Israelis have obligations and the Israelis need to act on those obligations because they need to end the occupation that began in 1967. But the Palestinians have got to give them somebody to work with. And they've got to embrace a leadership that does not believe that terrorism is a means to an end. And they have got to embrace a leadership that believes that democracy and transparency and good government deserve -- the Palestinians also deserve good government and democracy and transparency. And that's what we believe.

Q You gave a picture half-full. Let me try to make it look half-empty. Your own commission reported to Congress last fall that the United States is providing (inaudible) -- of funding for things like public diplomacy, (inaudible) -- in 1980. is there any plan to increase the amount of funding to match the zillions that are going into airline security, (inaudible), homeland security, (inaudible) -- the core issue that spawned (inaudible). And, secondly, why is it that in the three years since 9/11 you haven't given this kind of a speech to a Muslim audience in one of the five largest Muslim countries, nor has any senior administration official?

DR. RICE: That's a very good question, maybe we should.

Look, on where we've given the speech, the President has tried to rally the international community and what we once called the western world, but I'll call the alliance of free nations, to be supportive of a policy that looks to the broader Middle East and that looks to trying to deal with the freedom deficit.

A year ago, the President identified the fact that for 60 years it has been the policy of the United States and our allies to turn a blind eye to the absence of freedom in the Middle East. It was high-time somebody did it. It was this President who did it. We, out of that, got a G8 agreement to a broader Middle East initiative that has not just a set of good words about reform in the Middle East, but, in fact,

a series of action items that G8 nations and the G8 as a whole will take. We will have the first meeting of the Forum for the Future at the preparatory level and with the foreign ministers sometime in September.

And so we are moving ahead on that agenda of engaging the Muslim world. We took the time to try to build an international coalition from which to do that. I know that you think that we do everything unilaterally, but sometimes it's a good thing to stop and to build the coalition, and that is what the President has done.

As to funding, it is later than it has been and it is more identified with broadcasting, for instance, in which we've started two new radio channels and a new television channel; new funding, doubling the funding of the National Endowment for Democracy to do its work. And I'm certain that we want to look at more. I think one of the things that we will want to look harder at is how we do better on the public diplomacy side. We are obviously not very well organized for the side of public diplomacy.

I'm a student of the Cold War. I'm a Cold War baby. In fact, my entire life was linked up in the Cold War. And I know that Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty played, and Voice of America played an extraordinarily important part in making sure that clear and truthful messages could get out, and that people on the other side of the Iron Curtain hung on to those messages. I also know that we as a country mobilized ourselves not just in the government, but in universities to study the Soviet Union and east European languages, and to send our best and brightest into the study of those societies; that we trained under the National Defense Languages Act thousands of people who could speak and work in Russian and east European languages. And I know that we as a society, leave alone the government, we as a society are not yet mobilized in that way.

And so, yes, there's more that the government should do. We should be looking very hard at what new resources are needed. But so should this country be looking. I'm a university professor, I come from a great university. Great universities also ought to be looking at what they're doing to engage the Muslim world, what they're doing to encourage people to study these cultures, what they're doing to train people in these languages. And I'm quite sure that if we, as a country, take on this challenge in the way that we took on the war of ideas in the Cold War, that we're going to succeed.

Q Dr. Rice, you mentioned Turkey as a great, strong ally, yet, it's getting very hard for the Turkish public to understand why the U.S. is waging a global war against terror, yet, because not taking any action against the terrorist organization which is based in northern Iraq, and why you're asking a more effective use of (inaudible). They are still, you know, trying to understand (inaudible).

DR. RICE: And you mean against the PKK in northern Iraq. First of all, we are in discussion with the Turkish government about what can be done on both sides of the border to deal with the threat of those irregular forces to Turkey. We've declared those as terrorist organizations. They continue to be terrorist organizations.

It is obviously a complicated situation in Iraq right now, where resources are an issue. But I think that the Turks know that we are doing what we can with non-military means to try and make less active and less capable those forces. And we are working with the Turks and with the Iraqis -- who are now, by

the way, sovereign -- with the Iraqis to see if we can deal more forcefully and more effectively with those forces.

We know that it is a problem. We have no desire to have Turkey attacked by these irregular forces, which we have declared a terrorist force, and we'll continue to work with our Turkish ally.

You do remind me, though, in answer to Robin's question, of course, one of the places that the President gave a speech like this was in Turkey, which of course is an important country as the bridge between the Muslim world, a Muslim democracy and the Western world. And so he did take that opportunity to talk about these values.

Q (Inaudible.)

DR. RICE: Well, we have, as you say, very good relationships with the Egyptian government, we do. We have been very clear -- and, by the way, Egypt has been important in a number of initiatives and is increasingly important, for instance, in what we might be able to do in the Israeli-Palestinian issue, and so Egypt is a good friend, has been an ally for a long time and will continue to be.

We've been very clear that we are going to expect from our allies

that they take seriously the issues of the forum, that they take seriously the issues of civil society, the spread of freedom in their own society, economic opportunity, opportunity for women.

And while we don't expect that any of this will proceed rapidly, because democratic change sometimes comes slowly; and while we are quite cognizant that it can't be enforced from the outside, I do believe that the President's decision in his Whitehall speech to make very clear that the 60 years of the United States turning a blind eye to the freedom deficit in the Middle East, that that 60 years is over was an extremely important step in starting now a dialogue with others in the Middle East who may or may not be governmentally affiliated.

You would be perhaps interested to find out that as we discussed with the G8 how the Forum for the Future would evolve, how the broader Middle East initiative would evolve, it was the United States that was most insistent that this not be a dialogue between governments, but a dialogue among civil society and, indeed, between government and civil society.

Any specific organization I can't speak to, but I can see that we believe very strongly in dialogues between civil society and government as being one of the most important pillars of the beginnings of democratic development.

Q (Inaudible.) On behalf of the (inaudible) people, I'd like to thank you once again for a leading role in liberating our country. But you mentioned in your speech about encouraging moderation and pluralism in Iraq. I'm aware that the United States government in formulating its expenditure of the \$18.4 billion (inaudible) in Iraq is setting aside a very disproportionately small amount of funds for the north. And this is -- it still requires a lot of major infrastructure projects. This is sending the wrong message to your

allies in Iraq and (inaudible) the Kurds are spearheading the democratic movement in Iraq.

DR. RICE: Well, I can't speak to the specifics of which projects are going to the north. I believe that they -- I know that what they did was to make an assessment of the most critical infrastructure projects at any particular point in time. We are working, of course, not just with the \$18.7 billion that was allocated by the United States, but with other donor states and with the World Bank and with the IMF to increase the amount of money that will be available for infrastructure projects.

I will say that what was achieved in the north in the period after the Gulf War, until Operation Iraqi Freedom, was really quite remarkable. It showed what can happen under the protection, in effect, of American and British forces, where I think the basic institutions that now will help to spread Iraqi democracy did get in place and did begin to function.

Iraq will need to remain a united country. I'm quite certain that there will be elements of federalism that we here in the United States would recognize. But what has been impressive to me so far is that Iraqis -- whether Kurds or Shia or Sunni or the many other ethnic groups in Iraq -- have demonstrated that they really want to live as one in a unified Iraq. And I think particularly the Kurds have shown a propensity to want to bridge differences that were historic differences in many ways that were fueled by Saddam Hussein and his regime. And I think it's a testament to the years that were spent in developing some of the habits, at least, of liberty.

Q I'm wondering how you reconcile the statement you just made about the Kurds with the fact that in January, 1.7 million people in the Kurdistan region of Iraq, which is about 80 percent of the adults, signed a petition asking for a vote on independence -- and, obviously, anybody who signed the petition was in favor of that. And that raises a larger question, which is, if, in fact, you find irreconcilable differences in Iraq -- I mean, for example, Shiites who may well be supporting religious parties wanting a nationwide Islamic state through the democratic process, and a minority which wishes to preserve its secular traditions, how would you see that being resolved within a single state?

DR. RICE: Well, first of all, as to the Kurds, I would just note that such referenda on independence have taken place in lots of places, including, for instance, Canada to our north. And it has been the role of leadership to convince people that they really ought to stay in the same body. And so what I have found interesting and I think important is the degree to which the leaders of the Shia and Kurdish and Sunni communities have continually expressed their desire to have a unified Iraq. I would note, for instance, when the work of, we believed, Zarqawi was to try and foment problems between the various ethnic groups so that he would bomb something in the Shia areas that the Kurdish leadership was there within 24 hours to express solidarity. When there was a bombing in the Kurdish areas, Sunni and Shia leadership were there to express solidarity.

So I think these are a people who do want to live in the same body. And I'm going to come back, in just a minute, to some of our tendency towards impatience with every twist in turn in Iraq, I want to come back to that.

But let me just speak also to the question of how they will resolve their differences. Those of us who believe in democratic institutions believe that what those institutions do is to mitigate against the need

for a full break between people who have differences. That's what democratic institutions do. They give you a framework in which to resolve differences.

Now, it's very interesting to go to another case, Afghanistan, which is a country with a very weak history, really, of central government and a very strong history of peripheral activity, to see what is happening now that they are coming to a --

(End tape.)

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