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PRESIDENT
GEORGE W. BUSH

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Office of the Press Secretary
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Fact Sheet: Strategy for Victory: Defeating the Terrorists and Training Iraqi Security Forces

Today's Presidential Action

Today, President Bush Delivered The First In A Series Of Speeches Updating The American People On Our Strategy For Victory In Iraq. The President delivered an update on progress in training Iraqi Security Forces and explained Coalition efforts to combat improvised explosive devices (IEDs). The President's Strategy for Victory in Iraq has three tracks: political, economic, and security. Today's speech focused on the security track.

The Iraqi People Have Chosen A Future Of Freedom And Peace

After The Brutal Terrorist Attack On The Golden Mosque of Samarra, The Iraqi People Looked Into The Abyss And Did Not Like What They Saw. The attack on the Golden Mosque of Samarra was a clear attempt to ignite a civil war. There were mass protests and reprisal attacks in response to the provocation, but by their response over the last two weeks, the Iraqi people have shown the world they want a future of freedom and peace, and they will oppose a violent minority that seeks to take that future away.

While The Situation Is Still Tense, We Have Also Seen Signs Of National Unity. We saw the restraint of the Iraqi people in the face of massive provocation. Many Iraqis showed solidarity by coming together in joint Sunni-Shia prayer services. We saw the leadership of Sunni and Shia clerics, the capability of the Iraqi Security Forces, and the determination of many of Iraq's leaders to come together and act decisively to diffuse the crisis.

Iraqis Now Have A Chance To Show The World That They Have Learned The Lesson Of Samarra. A country that divides into factions and dwells on old grievances risks sliding back into tyranny. Soon, the new parliament will be seated in Baghdad and begin forming a new government. This will demand negotiation and compromise by the Iraqis - and patience by America and our Coalition allies. Yet out of this process, a free government will emerge that represents the will of the Iraqi people - instead of the will of one cruel dictator.

Iraqi Security Forces Are Taking The Lead In Defending Their Democracy

The Aftermath Of The Samarra Mosque Attack Shows The Progress Made By The Iraqi Security

Forces. After the Samarra bombing, Iraqi Security Forces - not Coalition forces - restored order. Iraqi leaders put the Iraqi Security Forces on alert - canceling leaves and heightening security around mosques and critical sites. In Baghdad and other trouble spots, Iraqi police manned checkpoints, increased patrols, ensured peaceful demonstrators were protected, and arrested those who turned to violence. Public Order Brigades deployed rapidly to areas where violence was reported. During the past two weeks, Iraqi Security Forces have conducted more than 200 independent operations.

- **Having Iraqi Forces In The Lead Has Been Critical Because They Can Do Things That Coalition Forces Could Not.** For example, on the day of the Samarra bombing, the Iraqi National Police responded to an armed demonstration where an angry Shia crowd had surrounded the Sunni Al Quds Mosque. The Iraqi Brigade Commander placed his troops - who were largely Shia - between the crowd and the mosque, and called for calm and urged the crowd to disperse. After a two-hour standoff, the crowd eventually left without incident, and the National Police remained in position overnight to guard the Mosque until the threat was over. The fact that Iraqis were in the lead and negotiating with their own countrymen helped diffuse a potential confrontation and prevented an escalation of violence.
- **Iraqi Security Forces Are Making Progress Against the Enemy, And They Are Gaining The Confidence Of The Iraqi People.** Last fall, there were over 120 Iraqi Army and Police combat battalions fighting against the terrorists - and 40 of these were taking the lead in the fight. Today, there are more than 130 battalions in the fight - and more than 60 are taking the lead. As more Iraqi battalions come online, these forces are assuming responsibility for more territory. Iraqi forces now conduct more independent operations throughout the country than do Coalition forces.

A Major Goal Of 2006 Is To Accelerate Training Of The Iraqi Police. The Iraqi police still lag behind the Army in training and capabilities. One problem is that some police units have been disproportionately Shia - and there have been reports of infiltration of the National Police by militias. We are taking a number of steps to correct this problem:

- **First, We Are Partnering U.S. Battalions With Iraqi National Police Battalions.** U.S. forces are working with their Iraqi counterparts to give them the tactical training needed to defeat the enemy. They are also teaching them about the role of a professional police force in a democratic system, so they can serve all Iraqis without discrimination.
- **Second, We Are Working With Iraqi Leaders To Find And Remove Any Leaders In The National Police Who Show Evidence Of Loyalties To Militias.** For example, last year there were reports that the Second Public Order Brigade contained members of an illegal militia who were committing abuses. Last December, the Interior Ministry leadership removed the Brigade's commander and replaced him with a new commander - who then dismissed more than 100 men with suspected militia ties. Today, this Iraqi police brigade is a capable and professional unit that performed with courage and distinction during the recent crisis.
- **Third, Iraq Is Diversifying The Ranks Of The National Police By Recruiting More Sunni Arabs.** For example, the basic training class for the National Police Public Order forces that graduated last October was less than one-percent Sunni, but the class graduating in April will include many more Sunni Arabs. By ensuring the Public Order forces reflect the general population, Iraqis are making the National Police a truly national institution.

As More Capable Iraqi Police And Soldiers Come Online, They Will Assume Responsibility For More Territory. The goal is to have the Iraqis control more territory than the Coalition by the end of 2006. Today, Iraqi units have primary responsibility for more than 30,000 square miles of Iraq - an increase of 20,000 square miles since the beginning of the year. As Iraqis take over more territory, American and Coalition forces can concentrate on hunting down high-value terrorist targets.

Coalition Forces Are Combating The Threat Of IEDs

The Terrorists Are Turning To A Weapon Of Fear Because They Know They Cannot Defeat Us Militarily. After the terrorists were defeated in the battles in Fallujah and Tall Afar, they saw they could not confront Iraqi or American forces in pitched battle and survive. So they turned to IEDs - a weapon that allows them to attack from a safe distance, without having to face our forces in battle. Innocent Iraqis are the principal victims of IEDs.

Our Strategy To Defeat IEDs Has Three Elements: Targeting, Training, And Technology. To combat IEDs, the Administration has established a new high-level organization at the Department of Defense, led by retired four-star General Montgomery Meigs.

- **Targeting And Eliminating Terrorists And Bomb-Makers.** Across Iraq, we are capturing and killing the enemy before they strike, uncovering and disarming their weapons before they go off, and rooting out and destroying bomb-making cells so they cannot produce more weapons. Because the Iraqi people are also targets of the bombers, Iraqis are increasingly providing critical intelligence to help us find the bomb-makers and stop new attacks. The number of tips from Iraqis has grown from 400 last March to over 4,000 in December.
 - **Coalition Efforts Are Producing Results.** Today, nearly half of IEDs in Iraq are found and disabled before they can be detonated - and in the past 18 months, the casualty rate per IED attack has been cut in half. During the past six months, Iraqi and Coalition forces have found and cleared nearly 4,000 IEDs, uncovered more than 1,800 weapons caches and bomb-making plants, and killed or detained hundreds of terrorists and bomb-makers.
- **Providing Our Forces Specialized Training To Identify And Clear IEDs Before They Explode.** Before arriving in Iraq and Afghanistan, our combat units receive training on how to counter the threat of IEDs. Last month, we established a new IED Joint Center of Excellence headquartered at Fort Irwin, California - where lessons learned from the IED fight in Iraq are shared with troops in the field and those preparing to deploy. This new initiative will ensure every Army and Marine combat unit headed to Afghanistan and Iraq is prepared for the challenges of IEDs. Before deploying, our troops will train with the equipment used in the IED fight, study enemy tactics, and experience live-fire training that closely mirrors what they will see when they arrive in the combat zone.
- **Developing New Technologies To Defend Against IEDs.** The Department of Defense recently gathered some 600 leaders from industry, academia, the national laboratories, the National Academy of Sciences, all branches of the military, and every relevant government agency to discuss technological solutions to the IED threat. We now have more than 100 projects underway.

The President Is Committed To Providing The Funding And Personnel Needed To Succeed. In 2004, the Administration spent \$150 million to fight the IED threat. Last year, the funding was increased to \$1.35 billion, and this year, we are providing \$3.3 billion to support our efforts to defeat IEDs.

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