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"AMERICA'S ROLE AS NATION BUILDER: LESSONS LEARNED AND APPLIED TO IRAQ"

REMARKS BY
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"THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S STRATEGY"

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MR. WOLFOWITZ: (Applause.) Thank you, Tim. That was a warm and generous and unusually provocative introduction. And I'm almost provoked to make a comment. I think I will, actually -- (scattered laughter) -- because you asked some very important questions. And let me at least touch on them up front.

The question, are we winning the peace – let's understand, I believe we are winning the peace. I believe we're also winning the war. But let's understand, the war continues. And that is what makes this such a difficult challenge.

You mentioned Abraham Lincoln in 1861. I've been reading some of the things that Lincoln wrote or that were written about him in the summer of 1864. Of course, all of us learned in -- somewhere along the way, probably in junior high school, that the Civil War was won at the battle of Vicksburg and the battle of Gettysburg in 1863. A full year after those so-called turning points in the Civil War Lincoln faced bitter opposition here in Washington, possible political defeat, a war that was going very badly, and of course, a war that ultimately was won for the greater benefit of this country and for our moral standing in the world. I don't want to compare anything that we're trying to do today to the greatness of that moment or the greatness of Abraham Lincoln, but I -- the point I would make is we have two challenges in front of us: to win the peace and to win the war.

And I guess I'd have to correct the record somewhat -- maybe this is an opportunity to do it -- that I allegedly argued the case for U.S. military intervention to remove Saddam Hussein long before becoming deputy secretary. The fact is that for me what changed everything was September 11th. The attack on the Al-Rashid Hotel was nothing compared to being in the Pentagon on September 11th and learning that 150 brave Americans had died in that one attack alone. And, of course, that was nothing compared to what was going on in New York, where not only did 3,000 Americans die -- not Americans; innocents of all countries -- but keep this statistic in mind: I believe 406 firemen and policemen, heroes of this country who went into a burning building to rescue others, died on that day. It's those numbers that have changed, I think, the way we have to look at the world, including the way we have to look at Iraq.

It's my personal belief that had we done so much earlier, it might have been possible to arm and equip Iraqis to liberate themselves, and we would have been much better off in that event, actuality. But one of the things that September 11th changed was it made it a war of necessity, not a war of choice. It made it something we had to be certain we could win quickly, not something that we could contemplate as a protracted Iraqi-style guerrilla war. And therefore, the entire calculation changed.

So I think as we talk about the tragic events of the last week or two weeks, as we talk about the challenges ahead of us in Iraq, it is very important to remember that this is part of a much bigger war on terrorism, a war which is not going to be over with one

victory in Afghanistan or another victory in Baghdad or a larger victory in all of Iraq, nor will it be over as we arrest and continue to arrest, kill or capture thousands of members of al Qaeda and other terrorist groups. It won't be over when we finally get Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, as wonderful as those days will be. We have got to do something very substantial if we want to prevent a repetition of September 11th not just on a scale of September 11th, but 10 times or 100 times or 1,000 times worse. That is what is at stake for this country, in my view. And winning in Iraq is a significant part of that, but only part of that.

I am tempted with these Hoosiers all around me to note that I'm not from Indiana; I'm from upstate New York. (Laughter.) And when I was growing up in Ithaca, Fulton Sheen, who some of you may remember was the nationally-known bishop of Rochester -- and I recall his saying that when an audience applauds at the beginning, that's faith. When they applaud midway through the speech, that's hope. But if they applaud at the end, that's charity. (Laughter.) So, I want to thank you for that show of faith there at the beginning, and I will appeal to you for some charity at the end.

In the meantime, let me thank Mercatus Center and George Mason University for sponsoring this conference. Your topic is timely, although I'm not sure about your choice of setting. Every time I come into this building, I wonder what Ronald Reagan, that apostle of small government, would think about having a building like this one named after him. (Laughter.) On the other hand, he was also an apostle of big ideas, so maybe he would approve. In any event, it's good to be here and to have a chance to talk with you about events of the last few days and the last few months in Iraq.

As you know, the last few days have been among the bloodiest since the fall of Baghdad. We lost 16 brave soldiers in a helicopter that was shot down two days ago, and many more wounded -- many wounded, not more. Each of those casualties represents a personal story of heroism and tragedy. Every one of their families deserves our gratitude and our appreciation, and we need to keep in mind that these casualties are not statistics or somebody's scorecard. They are individuals who represent the best that America has to offer. They are true American heroes.

Over the past few months, I've met dozens of heroes like the soldiers who were on that helicopter. Their remarkable stories bear some repetition. Just a month ago, we had a dinner here in Washington to honor the liberators of Iraq. And we invited a few of those liberators, seriously-wounded soldiers from Walter Reed Hospital, to join us that evening. Let me just mention two of the stories of those soldiers.

One was Sergeant Dean Lockhart, of the 3rd Army Cavalry Regiment. I met him at the hospital when he was recovering from wounds that had been judged so severe he would not survive. In fact, they retired him so his family would have better death benefits when he passed away. His young daughter was just a month old when I saw him in the hospital. All he could talk about and all his wife could talk about was how to get back on active duty. And I'm pleased to report that Sergeant Lockhart got his wish and is now back on active duty with the U.S. Army.

Also at Walter Reed was Corporal Ricky Nelson of the 3rd Infantry Division. On May 5th, he was guarding the rear of a bank in downtown Baghdad when his group was ambushed by five enemy combatants. Corporal Nelson responded by returning fire, surprising the men and driving them away. Had he not defended his post, the enemy would have gained access not only to the bank, but to the rest of his squad. During that firefight, an enemy bullet shattered Corporal Nelson's knee, but that injury has not diminished the great spirit with which he served his nation and wishes to continue serving.

After the attack on the Al-Rashid Hotel, I met some more American heroes when I visited the casualties in the hospital. One of them is an American Army colonel. When I visited in the hospital that day, he was still getting oxygen and in considerable pain. They lifted the mask so that we could talk, and I asked him where he was from. And he said, "Are you asking where I live or are you asking about my accent?" I hadn't noticed the accent, but I encouraged him to answer both questions. And he said, "Well, I live in Arlington, Virginia, but I grew up in Beirut." I asked him how he felt about helping to build a new Middle East, and he gave me a big thumbs-up and an amazing smile for a man in that pain. And then he asked the nurses to prop him up so that we could have a photo taken together. It's a picture that I will always cherish.

Our heroes include not only soldiers, but civilians as well, and not only Americans, but heroes from many other nations. It is an appropriate symbol of the joint effort being undertaken in Iraq that those five serious casualties from the Al-Rashid attack included that one military officer and four civilians; four Americans and one British citizen. The three Americans, symbolically enough, came from three different agencies -- Department of State, Department of Labor, and the National Imagery and Mapping Agency -- and they were all volunteers.

The British civilian was from the Finance Ministry. He had helped to produce the new Iraqi currency that eliminates the butcher's face. When I visited him in the hospital, I asked him if he was in a lot of pain, and he said, "No." So I said, "Either you're lying or it's that stiff British upper lip of yours." And he said, "Well, actually, I have a lot of American blood in me also." And he was proud of his service.

The Americans included a State Department secretary who had been in Iraq only a few weeks, having volunteered to come from Guatemala. I asked her if she was sorry she was there, and she said, "No, this is important work."

I saw the same dedication and resolve that day in the people working in the headquarters of the Coalition Provisional Authority. It was a Sunday, and they were hard at work, even after a terrible attack that had touched hundreds of them and killed one of their number.

We're proud of them, civilians and military, State Department and Defense Department, and Department of Justice, and Department of Labor, and AID -- and I could go on with a long list. People were wounded in that attack not only from the United States and United Kingdom, but from Italy and Kosovo and Nepal. They are all heroes, as was Sergio de Mello, the wonderful man who represented the United Nations and was

killed in that attack on the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad; as are, importantly, the Iraqis who are fighting with us for a future of freedom for their country.

Approximately 100,000 Iraqis now serve in the various branches of the Iraqi security forces, and there are five: the Iraqi police force, the Facilities Protection Service, the new Iraqi army, the border guards and the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps. I have to say "approximately" because the numbers are growing so fast that it's hard for me to have an accurate, precise count. What is unmistakable is that we are bringing eager Iraqi volunteers into the service of their country at a rate unmatched in any corresponding situation that I know of over the last decade. Whatever the precise number, there is no question that by their numbers alone, the Iraqis constitute the second-largest member of the coalition, and another tragic number that testifies to their commitment, more than 80 of them have died in the line of duty since June 1st.

One of those committed Iraqis is a senior police official, a man who served a year in jail for denouncing Saddam Hussein. When I first met him in July, I was a little suspicious that anyone would have been foolish enough to denounce Saddam Hussein, much less get away with a year in jail, and he said, "Oh, I only denounced him to my best friend. I couldn't believe I'd be turned in."

A few days after I met him in July, this police officer was shot in the leg while capturing several former Ba'athists and a large cache of weapons.

I met him again in Baghdad 10 days ago. He'd been viciously attacked in an Arabic newspaper, and he showed it to me. He showed it to me with enormous pride, proud of what he is doing to eliminate the remnants of the old regime and to move Iraq forward.

And at that very police station where I met him, a week ago Sunday, was attacked on Monday by a suicide -- putative -- would-be suicide bomber, a Yemeni traveling on a Syrian passport, who was stopped, effectively, by Iraqi policemen, who stood their ground and shot at him and disrupted the attack.

Not only in the security forces, but brave Iraqi civilians are standing up for their country. In Hillah, in the South, the site of, I guess, the worst of dozens of mass graves that we've uncovered, where some -- possibly as many as 15,000 people were murdered in one field, on a happier note, I met there a young woman who was wearing very conservative Muslim dress as she constantly stood up for women's rights and asked me what we could do to help. She saw nothing inconsistent between her religion and her traditional dress and human rights and women's rights.

And I saw similar courage among those in Hillah who were organizing a center for human rights in a country where those rights have been systematically trampled for over 35 years by a sadistic and evil regime, and the Iraqi heroes who have been assassinated for their leadership in working to build a democratic country, like Akila Hashimi, one of the women members of the Iraqi Governing Council, who was brutally gunned down some weeks ago; or like the important Shi'a leader Bakir al-Hakim, who

was murdered by a car bomb on the steps of the holy mosque in Najaf, one of the holiest mosques of Shi'a Islam, back in August.

Five of his brothers and some 63 members of their family were murdered by the old regime, and yet today his sole surviving brother, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, who has taken over the leadership of their organization, has not hesitated to be a part of the new Governing Council and a spokesman for religious tolerance and moderation. He knows there are risks, but he is undeterred.

Countless individuals are taking their stand for a free Iraq. On the other hand, as we know, it doesn't take very many people to mount a terrorist attack. We've seen it here. It only took 19 people to kill more than 3,000 on September 11th. It only took two -- Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols -- to kill 150 in Oklahoma City. Dramatic violence like that grabs attention and drives news coverage, butt it can effectively obscure the larger picture, which is, of course, one of the terrorists' main goals. The terrorists don't want the world to know that the real numbers are on our side and that they stand for only a small minority.

It's hard to know exactly how many of the attacks being mounted against our forces today and against their Iraqi allies are conducted or paid for by what are euphemistically called "former regime loyalists." On the briefing charts, it's FRLs -- we love acronyms. They might better be called the surviving criminal murderers of the Saddam Hussein gang because that's who they are. Certainly, anecdotally, when you talk to our troops in the field, the sense they have is that the majority of attacks on American troops come from that source.

What is more certain is that the Iraqi people report daily on death threats coming from those sources, and they firmly believe that the former members of the Fedayeen Saddam, Uday's personal killers; the secret police, the so-called Special Security Organizations; the Iraqi intelligence, the Mukhabarat; or the Special Republican Guards are still out killing Americans and killing Iraqis in order to bring back that hated regime. And if you stop and think, if you're an Iraqi in that situation, you've got to be fearful. And it is testimony to the enormous courage of the tens of thousands of Iraqis who are fighting alongside us for their country that they are doing so.

Remember, this is a regime that did not simply put people in jail for a few years if they were suspected of treason. As reported in some detail -- just one example -- in the Washington Post a few days ago, high school students, 16- and 17-year-olds who were suspected of writing anti-regime graffiti were taken from their homes and executed in large numbers in that industrial-style execution chamber called Abu Ghraib prison some 20 years ago. Their families only now are learning of their fates.

This was a regime that ruled by terror, and it still seeks to come back to power by terror, and they cannot be allowed to succeed. (Applause.)

To win this battle and to sustain the support of the courageous Iraqis who are on the front lines with us, it is crucial that we send a clear and strong signal that the United States will be with them until we are no longer needed. The bipartisan support that the

Congress overwhelmingly gave to the president's supplemental request for $87 billion is a strong signal of exactly the kind that is needed. So, too, the commitments of $13 billion by some 70 nations at the Madrid conference recently is another signal of strong support that the world will be with the Iraqi people until these murderers are defeated.

As the president pointed out in his press conference a few days ago, it's dangerous in Iraq because there are people who can't stand the thought of a free and peaceful Iraq. As he said, the Ba'athists try to create chaos and fear because they realize that a free Iraq will deny them the privileges they had under Saddam Hussein. The foreign terrorists are trying to create conditions of fear and retreat because they fear a free and peaceful state in the midst of that part of the world where terror has found recruits; that freedom is exactly what the terrorists fear most. It is the same mentality the president correctly pointed out that attacked us on September 11th, 2001.

Iraq is dangerous, but our troops and the Iraqi and international allies are making progress. You are hopefully familiar with many examples of that progress: the reconstituted courts; the newly-independent judiciary; the reopened universities and colleges now available to all Iraqis, regardless of religion or ethnic group or political party; the hundreds of rehabilitated primary and secondary schools with books that no longer teach arithmetic by saying two Saddams plus two Saddams equals four Saddams; the hospitals and clinics which are now all open and operational; the clearing of thousands of kilometers of weed-choked canals now irrigating thousands of farms; the restoration of potable water and phone service; the introduction of a unified currency for the first time in 15 years; an independent Central Bank; the mushrooming of satellite TV dishes; 170 newspapers -- 170 newspapers now publishing in a country that only less than a year ago had no free press at all; and the development of professional and civic organizations, what Edmund Burke once called the small platoons of democratic society.

I'm told by some of our military officers who have served in the Balkans and elsewhere that this is a record unmatched in any other post-conflict situation in the last 15 years. Unfortunately, it's not correct to describe Iraq as a post-conflict situation. On the one hand, that makes this progress all the more impressive. But on the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that we must be successful on the security front for this progress ultimately to last.

That said, let me describe several things from our recent trip because I think they tell the story of extraordinary progress in the liberation of a long-oppressed, talented and energetic people.

I already mentioned the murder of Bakir al-Hakim. When I was in Baghdad the Sunday we left, I had dinner that night with his sole surviving brother, Abdul Aziz al-Hakim. We discussed that Bakir's death, tragic as it was, also provided a demonstration of how far Iraqis have come. Some had speculated that the assassination would trigger attacks of violence by Shi'a Muslims on Sunnis. Instead, hundreds of thousands of people turned out peacefully to mourn and to take part or to witness the funeral procession as it wound its way from Baghdad to the holy city of Najaf. Hundreds of Iraqi Christians came to offer their condolences personally to Abdul Aziz, many weeping inconsolably for a Muslim leader because when he was in exile in Iran he had petitioned

Iranian authorities to permit Christian Iraqi prisoners of war to observe Christmas. And then, when that permission was granted, he personally joined them for Christmas Day.

I know that Abdul Aziz al-Hakim and I would probably disagree on some important questions about the role of religion in society or the role of women in society. But when leaders like him express a strong and convincing commitment to religious tolerance, especially leaders from the Shi'a clerical community, which so many people have told us we have so much to fear, I think, in fact, there's strong reason to be hopeful.

In Kirkuk, a very different city in northern Iraq with a diverse population that includes Kurds and Arabs and Turkmen and Christians, we walked about the marketplace, which is full of life and commerce today. The people we encountered were a mixed crowd of Arabs and Kurds, and some others. The Arabs were vocal in their enthusiasm for liberation and their hatred of Saddam Hussein, as were the Kurds. In fact, it was a young Arab girl, I would guess maybe 10 years old -- she came up to me and said, "Saddam is a donkey." (Laughter.) A simple act which under the old regime would have led to severe punishment for her, and surely for her family, but now she could have her say, and her teenage friend came up and said "Thank you," and put her head on my shoulder.

There was also a moneychanger sitting at a card table -- a Kurd, I believe. When he saw us, he held up a piece of the old Iraqi currency, with Saddam Hussein's picture on it, and with a great smile, and relish, he tore the bill into pieces. Last year, that simple act could have cost him his life. Today, instead, he can express himself openly and defiantly on any subject he likes.

It's no accident that we encountered such outspokenness in a marketplace, because, as you at the Mercatus Center know, trade and commerce are thriving. So many of you have made significant contributions in defense of economic freedom and argued the relationship of economic freedom to social and political freedom, so I think you can understand, at the end of tyranny the reintroduction of the rule of law and an independent judiciary are beginning to unleash the creative powers of the Iraqi people, who have been suppressed for more than three decades.

Bear in mind that Iraq is a rich country, not only rich in natural resources, not only oil, but water, but even more importantly, I think, rich in human resources as well. What it lacked was the opportunity to translate those riches into real wealth, wealth that will benefit the entire people of Iraq, not just a kleptocracy that steals the nation's treasure to build weapons and palaces and prisons and torture chambers.

What happened to the marsh Arabs is a case in point. They are one of the oldest civilizations on Earth, going back thousands of years. In the marshes of southern Iraq, they had made some incredible adaptations of agriculture, breeding water buffalo, for example, that produced milk in large quantities, something which I think some of you would know is quite an unusual feat. They provided a large percentage of the country's vegetables.

Just a dozen years ago, they measured about half a million. Saddam Hussein undertook one of the great engineering projects of the last 10 years, to deliberately drain the marshes in which those people live and to take an ecologically rich environment and turn it into a man-made wasteland the size of the state of New Jersey.

Today it is estimated that instead of a half a million, the marsh Arabs number somewhere between 40,000 and, at most, 200,000. When we visited the little marsh Arab village of Al-Turaba last July, we were mobbed by a crowd shouting "Salaam, Bush" and "Down with Saddam," a crowd that was mostly women and children because few of the men had survived.

Liberation did not come in time for many of the marsh Arabs and many other victims of this regime, but it has come and there is progress. A long-oppressed people are emerging and taking their rightful place in the community of nations.

But the job is far from done. It will take time to dispel the fear that remains and for normal life to return. We can debate whether the glass is half-full or half-empty, but I think there's no question that it is filling, and filling at a rate that is impressive compared to some other examples in modern history.

Secretary Rumsfeld recently compared it to the postwar situation in Germany. As he put it, our plan in Iraq called for an Iraqi cabinet of ministers, which took office in four months. It took 14 months to reach that milestone in postwar Germany. Our plan for Iraq called for an independent central bank, which was achieved in two months. It took three years in postwar Germany. Our plan for establishing a new Iraqi currency, which was announced in two months and in circulation in five -- it took three years to do that in postwar Germany. The plan called for a new Iraqi police force, which was accomplished in two months. It took 14 months in postwar Germany. The plan called for the establishment of a new Iraqi army. It began training within three months and completed training of the first battalion in less than five. It took 10 years to stand up the Germany army.

And there are other examples, more recent ones, that put the Iraqi situation today into perspective. When we visited Hillah, we met with Polish Major General Andrzej Tyszkiewicz, the commander of the multinational division that has responsibility for the entire area that's called the Shi'a heartland, including Najaf, and Karbala, and Hillah and Babil. He told me that when Iraqis come to him and complain about electricity shortages or unemployment, he tells them that 15 years, almost 15 years after the end of Soviet occupation, Poland still has 18 percent unemployment and blackouts from time to time and many challenges still to confront. But, he adds, his country has made progress in the last 10 years and is incomparably better off than it was under Soviet tyranny.

In Kosovo and Bosnia, we see progress today, but it has taken many years. And the people in the Balkans do not have to contend with Fedayeen Saddam or Ansar al-Islam or other elements that continue to wreck havoc.

I think compared to those situations, Iraq has come an enormous distance in a relatively short time. Consider the fact that we attracted more recruits for the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps than we had planned for. These young Iraqis are not trained as well as Americans; they're not equipped as well as Americans. But they can do something that our brave soldiers can't do. They can communicate with people with a speed that our people obviously can't match without translators. They can read the local situation in ways that we can't and find explosive devices or stolen cars. They are in a better position than our troops to attract information from other Iraqis. And what's more, they are enthusiastic about their role. In fact, one of the biggest complaints I learned about -- these recruits have is that the only uniforms available to them so far are the uniforms of the old Iraqi army. We will fix that.

Do the Iraqis want us to leave? Of course they do, eventually. But the polls do show that most Iraqis want us to stay as long as necessary to ensure that the defeated bitter-enders cannot return to power. So the challenge for us is to see -- is to help the Iraqis see the job through, to help them set up a viable democratic government with reliable security forces.

In that respect, as The Wall Street Journal pointed out the day after the Al-Rashid bombing, the most important news of those few days was the news from Madrid, from the donor conference that brought together some 70 nations and 20 international organizations, and produced billions of dollars of support, pledge support, for Iraqi reconstruction. The consensus at Madrid was in line with the international community's unanimous adoption not only of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 that preceded the war, but three postwar resolutions, including the unanimous adoption of Resolution 1511 last month.

President Bush and Secretary of State Powell have placed high priority on securing international support and on spelling out an international consensus for how to move forward in Iraq and to establish a multinational force under U.S. command. I believe that this is a great venture which the international community will one day be able to look back at with pride, and that is what we all want to see.

From our vantage point here in the United States, the good news in Iraq is especially important, because of what it means for the global war on terror. As the president put it, the world is safer today because Saddam Hussein and the Taliban are gone. We're now working with many nations to make sure Afghanistan and Iraq are never again a source of terror and danger for the rest of the world.

We learned in the last century that democracies cannot live peacefully and undisturbed in a world where evil people control whole nations and seek to expand their bloody rule. We may have forgotten that lesson in the euphoria over the end of the Cold War. The attacks of September 11th were a shocking wake-up call, and President Bush has made it clear that America got the message and that we will not neglect its obvious implications.

With that, I thank you for your patience, I appeal for your charity, and perhaps now I can hear from you. (Applause.)

(Audio break.)

Q: (Audio break) -- as he labeled that. You articulated different milestones very well in your talk, about a central bank being created and other security establishment issues being created. At what point does that lead to enough security for the short and longer term for Iraq that we can exit, and enough of a political middle that will hold so that we see a stable Iraq for the future? What kinds of milestones might you look at to establish this exist strategy that leaves behind a stable and democratic Iraq?

MR. WOLFOWITZ: Very good and very difficult question. I think what we're looking for is a strategy for winning, a strategy for success. And I think we have, as you pointed out, I pointed out in my speech, there are a lot milestones of success.

I, by the way, didn't mention the famous electricity issue. When we had blackouts in the summer, people were saying this must have been a product of terrible pre-war planning, because how else could you explain it? I think it was in September we passed the pre-war level in electricity production. We're moving along. I think by next summer we'll be some 50 percent above pre-war levels. I have yet to read a story that says what was the marvelous planning that produced this back at pre-war levels six months after all that looting and all that destruction? But I'll wait; maybe it'll appear some day.

But the electricity piece is exceptionally important, not only because it really does affect the daily life of everybody, and therefore affects satisfaction. But I perceived in conversations with Iraqis and with some of their relatives back here, there was this kind of suspicion out there. Here is a country that put a man on the moon, that can conquer Baghdad in record time, and the electricity still doesn't work. And it led to questions about what are our intentions. Maybe we really never intend to make the electricity work. Maybe we never intend to hand Iraq back to the Iraqi people. Maybe it's really true, what the Ba'athists are putting out in the street rumors, that it's going to be like 1991 all over again and we'll hand the country back to Saddam. Or maybe it's really true what Al-Jazeera broadcasts every day, that they really came here just to steal your oil. As these measures of progress have begun to take hold, I think it's increasingly clear to Iraqis that we mean what we say about liberation and not occupation. I think as these attacks have turned on Iraqis and not just Americans it's increasingly clear that they are the targets, and not just us. So there's a good news story there. On the other hand, it's also clear that it takes more courage, I think, for an Iraqi to step forward today and support us.

So, there are really these three pieces. There's the -- I would call -- we call it "essential services" -- the sort of basic economics of daily life. And I think we're winning that battle. There's the longer-term piece of economic growth, and I don't think -- I think we can set them on their course. That's not our main responsibility. So the two big challenges to us today are the security and the governance, and they do, in our view, intersect with one another; that the goal has got to be to get Iraqis more and more fighting for their country because -- A, because they do a better of job of it in many ways. And

we can help them, but the more we can help them, in a sense, in a supporting role, the better it will be.

Let me give you an example of what I mean by supporting role. We had a very serious problem a few weeks ago in Karbala when one of the smaller mosques there -- and I think a lot of you know, Karbala is, again, one of the two -- the sort of Mecca and Medina of Shi'a Islam -- had been taken over by an ugly armed group; in fact, killed three American military policemen in the process. We simply had to arrest those people; there was no choice. But the last thing we wanted to do was to send American troops into a mosque to do that. Fortunately, we had Iraqi police who stepped up to the job, and we had these newly trained Iraqi Civil Defense Corps who stepped in behind them to complete it. And that is what I mean by getting Iraqis on the frontlines.

And the other thing we need to do -- and Ambassador Bremer has laid it out very clearly -- is as quickly as possible, move toward an Iraqi constitution that will set the framework for Iraqi elections. I think we're on a good course. I don't want to sort of predict dates. I think we have to measure progress by what's actually the situation on the ground.

Q: Thank you very much.

MR. ROEMER: We'll go right here. Please identify yourself.

Q: My name is Daven (ph) Williams. I'm with the United States Department of the Army. A disclosure, I'm a political appointee, so I'm very favorably disposed towards anything you have to say. (Laughs.)

MR. WOLFOWITZ: You shouldn't have given that away! (Laughter.) You should have said you're a recent convert! (Laughs; laughter.)

Q: But with every new report and article beginning with a body count, and every presidential opposition speech beginning with "we have no plan," and the constant barrage of criticism and second- guessing that comes from the media and academic elite in this country, how aware are the Iraqi people of this public activity, these voices of opposition and criticism? And if they are aware of it, do they understand that it's part of our democratic process, or does it substantially undermine what we're trying to achieve over there?

MR. WOLFOWITZ: It's pretty hard to measure. I think it -- as I said in my remarks, I think it is very important in every way we can to send a message to them that whatever the arguments here, whatever the criticisms, whatever people want to say it might have been done better, when people stand up and say, as my Democratic colleague here said at the beginning, we're in it, we have to win and we're going to win, and when the Congress votes $87 billion, which is incredible, I hope that's the message that gets through, and when they see our troops on the ground every day with them, that's the message that gets through.

So look, we are a democracy. There's a wonderful quote, if you go back and read Churchill's memoirs from December 8th, 1941, when he describes how people underestimated the United States. And one of the lines I remember is "this distant, remote, wealthy but talkative people," and he goes on to say, "But I knew better. I knew, among other things" -- he quotes Foreign Secretary Grey, who said on the eve of American entry to World War I, that the United States is like a giant boiler; once a fire is lighted underneath it, there's no limit to the power it can generate.

And the more we can get that message out. Part of our power comes from that debate. In fact, not part; I mean, we wouldn't be the country we are if we had gone down the road of Saddam Hussein. And I think that's a message that has to come through.

MR. ROEMER: We'll go over here. Yes, sir?

Q: Thank you. My name is Chowdhury, H. Sham (ph) Chowdhury (sp). I work with the RNC in Washington, D.C. I'm an American, but originally from -- (inaudible) -- Bangladesh. I have a question on public diplomacy, although you are not from --

MR. ROEMER: Can you hold the microphone up to your mouth? I'm having difficulty -- (inaudible).

Q: -- although you are not from the State Department.

MR. ROEMER: Thank you.

MR. WOLFOWITZ: Much better.

Q: I continuously feel that we are not winning very well in terms of public diplomacy, especially in the Middle Eastern countries and the Muslim countries. Why are we not doing a better job in terms of promoting what really America stands for? It is not only a war on terrorism, but America, the liberty, the freedom, the opportunity, the Founding Fathers' dream. And to the whole world, we are an absolute -- what you call -- example how a society, a country can be built on freedom and, you know, equality and liberty. Why are we failing here?

Thank you.

MR. WOLFOWITZ: Well, it's always good to be introspective and say, what could we be doing better, and how can we improve our public diplomacy efforts? And personally, I was a big fan of the old USIA. And I think it's always good to look at whether, in this post-September 11th era, when public diplomacy and getting people to understand the United States is so important, we've got to make every effort to do the best job we can.

We've got to make every effort to do the best job we can. But let's also recognize some of what we're up against.

It's a fact that, I believe, seven times in the last, what, 12 years the United States has sent brave young Americans out to fight for people who were under tyranny or facing war-induced famine or genocide, who were predominantly Muslim. I start with the people of Kuwait in 1991; the people of northern Iraq, predominantly Kurdish Muslims, in April of 1991; the people of Somalia in 1992; the people of Bosnia in 1995; the people of Kosovo in 1999; the people of Afghanistan in 2001; and now the people of Iraq. Seven times young Americans have fought and died for predominantly Muslim people. And how much credit do we ever get for that in the Muslim world? I don't think it's entirely our fault that we don't. And I think --

I mean, I remember when I was in the government the last time when I felt we were appropriately criticized by various Muslim countries for our refusal to let the Bosnian Muslims have the weapons with which they could have defended themselves. And by the way, I believe that that's another war that could have been avoided if we had let people fight for their own freedom. But I didn't notice the same Muslim countries stepping forward and saying good about the United States when we finally did step up to the plate.

Part of our problem is that there are very well-funded propaganda outlets, commercial ones, like Al-Jazeera, like Al-Arabiya, that just spew poison and lies and misrepresentation day after day, and it is hard to fight that. It is also the case that in wartime things happen that are brutal. War is a brutal exercise.

I think we can do a better job in our public diplomacy. We need to. I think some of our friends who fund stations like Al-Jazeera could do a better job of at least having them portray the truth. And I also believe -- and this is where I think what winning the war and winning the peace in Iraq is so important -- more importantly, building a future of freedom in Iraq. I think, when we can look back two or three years from now at a successful Iraq that is emerging out of darkness into light, we will also find that there's some 20 to 25 million people, mostly Arabs, who say Thank you, America, you were right, the rest of the Arab world, the rest of the Muslim world needs to side with you.

MR. ROEMER: How many more can you answer? Do you time to --

MR. WOLFOWITZ: Two more.

MR. ROEMER: Two more? Okay. Two more.

Let's go -- right here, sir.

Q: I am -- (name inaudible) --

MR. WOLFOWITZ: Please pull the mike close to you so --

MR. ROEMER: Yeah. You got to -- you got to speak into the --

Q: I am -- (name inaudible) -- from NBC South Korea. I understand that the U.S. government wants more foreign troops in Iraq. But considering the worsening attacks on coalition forces in Iraq, it is getting harder for other countries, such as Korea, to send troops to Iraq. What do you think of the situation? And what do you say to the countries who may be reluctant now to send troops because of the situation?

MR. WOLFOWITZ: I think one of the reasons we're very interested in a Korean offer to send troops -- I'm very hopeful that the National Assembly will support it -- is because Korean troops are so good and so professional and so brave. And they understand the risks that our people have run over the course of decades and continue to run to help defend South Korea. We appreciate the way in which they've stood by us in earlier conflicts, the way in which they sent troops to Afghanistan and small units to Iraq. They're just very, very good, and that's the kind of help we need.

MR. ROEMER: Right behind you, and back over here for the last question.

Q: My name is Isaac Post. I'm with the International Policy Network. President Bush on December 7th, 2001, said the following about the war on terror: "Our war against terror is not a war against one terrorist leader or one terrorist group. Terrorism is a movement, an ideology that respects no boundary of nationality or decency. The terrorists are the heirs to fascism. They have the same disdain for the individual, the same mad global ambitions."

Do you agree with President Bush's thesis of terrorism as an ideology? Do you think that such an understanding of terrorism helps explain why President Bush clearly sees the toppling of Saddam's regime in Iraq as not only related to the attacks of September the 11th, but as part of one battle within a larger ideological war on terror? Thank you.

MR. WOLFOWITZ: I do. I think September 11th was a watershed in how we have to think about terrorism. If you think about it, I think it's fair to say that for the decades preceding, especially the previous 20 years or so, we viewed terrorism as an evil but a kind of manageable evil, one that you live with because it kills a few dozen people, maybe more in a bad year, maybe 240 in a Marine barracks, but it's something you just go along with.

I think what September -- and the way you deal with it is by finding the guilty, killing or capturing them. If they're countries, you retaliate to provide some kind of deterrence.

But I think what September 11th showed is if 19 people using nothing more than conventional airliners can kill 3,000 people in one day, and we start to look at the weapons that those people were exploring even on September 11th and the potential for groups like that ultimately to inflict not 3,000 in one day, not 30,000, but 300,000 or maybe 3 million, then you realize this is not an evil we can continue to live with; it's an evil that has to be eradicated. And it's not -- as I said earlier, it's not going to happen with one victory in Afghanistan or the capture of any one terrorist, any number of terrorists, it's going to take -- as the president has said over and over again -- a long and difficult

struggle. And I think one has to, as in any campaign of that kind, take one step at a -- not necessarily one step at a time, but you don't do everything all at once.

And I do think there is definitely an element of it that is in the realm of the battle of ideas, not just the battle of guns and bullets. And I think in many respects, we are dealing with a tiny minority of the Muslim world that wants to impose a kind of fascistic notion of their religion on the hundreds of millions of believers who I don't believe share those views.

I had the privilege of being American ambassador in Indonesia for three years. Some 200 million people in that country, where Islam is specifically not the state religion; they recognize five major religions -- Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and they recognize Catholicism and Protestantism as two separate ones. And they believe devoutly in religious tolerance. And yet, there too we see how a few dozen terrorists were able to kill 200 people in Bali, and probably less than that able to kill another dozen or so in the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta recently. This ugly group that is organized around a man named Hambali can't be more than a couple of thousand at most in a country of 200 million, and yet they can do great damage.

Our long-term battle has got to be to make sure that those people are isolated and marginalized and, ultimately, defeated. And I think our greatest allies in doing that are going to be the hundreds of millions of Muslims who want a life not unlike that which we enjoy in the free and democratic West.

Thank you. (Applause.)

(END)