

Sent: Tue, 18 Nov 2003 17:00:05 -0500
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Subject: TALKING POINTS: Progress in the War on Terror
[11-18 Talking Points.pdf](#)

Talking Points: Progress in the War on Terror

November 18, 2003

This Week's Actions

- President Bush visits the United Kingdom this week to affirm the broad and historic alliance between Great Britain and the United States. The countries share common interests, a common history, and common values, and the United States has no greater friend.
 - The UK is a key part of a broad coalition of nations that are providing support for efforts to stabilize and rebuild Iraq. More than 30 countries, including 11 of the 19 NATO countries, have provided over 24,000 troops to help provide security in Iraq. And, more than 70 nations participated in the recent Madrid donors conference, pledging \$13 billion in aid in addition to the United States' contribution.
- The Iraqi Governing Council announced last weekend that they would draft a "Fundamental Law" through which regional caucuses would select an interim legislative body before June 2004. This interim body will then elect a transitional Iraqi Administration to which full sovereign powers will be conveyed by the end of June 2004. The Fundamental Law will also contain a timetable for: formulating a permanent constitution through a body elected by the Iraqi people; holding a popular referendum to ratify the constitution; and conducting elections for a new permanent Iraqi government before the end of 2005.
- At the same time, our armed forces are on the offensive against terrorists and Saddam loyalists in Iraq.
 - The 82nd Airborne Division, through Task Force All-American, launched 6 offensive operations and conducted more than 170 patrols, including more than 15 joint operations with Iraqi border patrol and Iraqi police units.
 - Iraqis are providing more intelligence to coalition forces. The 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault) discovered two large weapons caches through airborne reconnaissance in Northern Iraq, and an Iraqi civilian turned in more than 40 rocket propelled grenade launchers and 60 hand grenade.
 - The 1st Battalion, 505th Parachute Infantry Regiment captured two brothers, the sons of a captured Iraqi general, who were responsible for an improvised explosive device attack on a US convoy in October.

In Case You Missed It

- "Protests Begin But Majority Backs Bush Visit as Support for War Surges," The Guardian (UK), 11/18/03 -- "A majority of Labour voters welcome President George Bush's state visit to Britain which starts today, according to November's Guardian/ICM opinion poll. The survey shows that public opinion in Britain is overwhelmingly pro-American with 62% of voters believing that the US is 'generally speaking a force for good, not evil, in the world'. It explodes the conventional political wisdom at Westminster that Mr Bush's visit will prove damaging to Tony Blair.... The ICM poll also uncovers a surge in pro-war sentiment in the past two months as suicide bombers have stepped up their attacks on western targets and troops in Iraq. Opposition to the war has slumped by 12 points since September to only 41% of all voters. At the same time those who believe the war was justified has jumped 9 points to 47% of voters. This swing in the mood of British voters is echoed in the poll's finding that two-thirds of voters believe British and American troops should not pull out of Iraq now but instead stay until the situation is 'more stable'. The detailed results of the poll show that more people - 43% - say they welcome George Bush's arrival in Britain than the 36% who say they would prefer he did not come."

- "America's Gamble on Iraq Is a Good Bet" by George Melloan, Wall Street Journal, 11/18/03 -- "[T]hings have gone about as well as could have been expected. The Iraqi armies were routed last April with surprisingly few casualties among the coalition forces. The Baathists and Arab fanatics from abroad have fallen back on terrorism, but have zero chance of reversing last April's defeat. Terrorism is nasty but Saddam's power was lost on the battlefield and won't be recovered with roadside bombs and sporadic rocket attacks. The main effect is to energize the anti-war demonstrators in the U.S. and Britain. More serious people know that the stakes are too high in Iraq to kowtow to noisy protestors.... The coalition soldiers have won the gratitude and respect of the vast majority of the Iraqi people, not least by the phenomenal coalition success in restoring schools, bridges, public buildings and other infrastructure. Law and order is being established in the 95% of the country outside the Tikrit triangle where the Baathists are making their last stand."

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