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Subject: TALKING POINTS: Progress in the War on Terror
[11-04 Talking Points.pdf](#)

Talking Points: Progress in the War on Terror

November 4, 2003

This Week's Action

- **Congress passed the President's supplemental budget request for our troops fighting the War on Terror in Iraq and Afghanistan.** These funds will help our troops in Iraq and Afghanistan to succeed in their mission. As President Bush said, "These resources, coupled with the growing assistance of international donors, will provide essential support to make Iraq more secure and to help the Iraqi people transition to self-government. The funds will also enable us to continue our efforts to help Afghanistan become a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous nation that contributes to regional stability."
- **Passage of the supplemental sends a sign of support to our troops and a clear message to the terrorists.** President Bush said, "Our country is being tested. Those who seek to kill coalition forces and innocent Iraqis want America and its coalition partners to run so the terrorists can reclaim control. The strong bipartisan show of support for this bill underscores that America and the world are united to prevail in the central front in the War on Terror by helping build a peaceful, democratic, and prosperous Iraq."
- **Democracy is beginning to take hold in the Middle East because of the thirst for liberty in the region and the support of America and our allies.**
 - **Under the leadership of the Iraqi Governing Council, the Iraqi people are working to build a free and democratic society.** Iraqis are working toward a December 15 deadline to develop a timetable for drafting a new constitution and holding democratic elections.
 - **Yesterday in Afghanistan, the public release of the draft constitution marked an important milestone for Afghanistan's political development.** The proposed Afghan constitution would feature an elected president and vice president, a bicameral legislature, and an independent judiciary. Now the Afghan people will have the opportunity to review it. A 500-member grand council, or "loya jirga," will debate and

ratify the constitution in December.

In Case You Missed It

- **Remarks by Dr. Condoleezza Rice to the National Legal Center for the Public Interest, New York, October 30, 2003 --** “As the President has said, Iraq is the central front in the war on Terror. But it is also a central front in the international effort to realize the vision of a Middle East that is a center of hope and change, rather than despair and hatred. We are aggressively attacking the Baathist remnants and foreign terrorists. And increasingly, Iraqis are fighting alongside our troops to secure their own freedom. The numbers of Iraqis now risking their lives to defend their nation is over 85,000 and growing. Together, we continue to discover arms caches, thwart attacks, track down killers, and dismantle the terrorist infrastructure. And we are helping the Iraqi people rebuild their country, reform their economy, and create a road to a representative and democratic government. Success will take time. And recent attacks by Baathist remnants and foreign terrorists show that the enemies of freedom will stop at nothing to prevent the emergence of a free Iraq. We must always remember that every democracy, even our own, is built day-by-day, brick-by-brick. Persistent effort produces something strong and solid.”
- **Judge Donald Walter, Wall Street Journal Op-Ed, November 4, 2003 --** In May, I traveled to Iraq with a dozen other legal experts to assess the Iraqi judicial system and make recommendations for the future. Initially, I vehemently opposed the war. But after spending five weeks among the Iraqi people, I became convinced that -- whether we find any weapons of mass destruction or prove Saddam sheltered and financed terrorists -- President Bush was right to intervene. When I left Iraq in mid-June, 57 mass graves had been found, one with the bodies of 1,200 children. There are credible reports of murder, brutality and torture of hundreds of thousands of ordinary Iraqi citizens. Their fear was palpable. I have seen the machines and places of torture and heard the horror stories, including an account of a Shiite who, during an interrogation in his home, watched helplessly as police plucked out his three-month-old baby's eyes. Worse things happened with the knowledge, indeed with the participation, of Saddam, his family and the Baathist regime.....Yet thanks to the Coalition Forces, the torture has stopped and the foundation of justice is being laid. Security, though lacking in parts of Baghdad (a city larger than New York) and the Sunni Triangle, is improving. New Iraqi policemen are being trained and deployed. Most of the country is relatively secure and functioning. We need to remember that the vast majority of Iraqis want us there, and fear we may leave too soon. The Iraqis I keep in touch with tell me that each day is better than the day before.”
- **“Iraqis Seek Justice, Or Vengeance, For Victims Of The Killing Fields,” New York Times, November 4, 2003 --** “Suspected mass graves continue to come to light, replenishing the stores of grief and anger. Aided by forensic specialists and satellite imagery, American legal experts in Baghdad say they have found 262 sites that may contain multiple human remains. Some people have already extracted their vengeance for the killing fields in blood.... Yet there has been no orgy of bloodshed as was feared, given the scale of state-sponsored killings and expulsions that Iraqis say they have suffered in the last 25 years.... Iraqis have mostly shown a willingness to set aside immediate vengeance for the relentless pursuit of justice. Counseled by leading Muslim clerics and most political figures to seek justice through the courts, many people

appear to have focused their energies on assembling, case by case, a damning indictment of the ousted government. The existing legal system is already groaning under the weight of demands. The bar association in Baghdad alone has received 50,000 claims against the old government for property confiscated and lives broken.”

- **“Where Things Stand,” TIME Magazine, November 2, 2003** – “To get a clearer picture of conditions in the entirety of Iraq—particularly in the north and south, which have received less media attention—TIME teamed up with ABC News to travel the length of the country, visiting more than 30 towns and conducting more than 600 interviews with Iraqis from all levels of society. We found dramatic contrasts between Greater Baghdad and the rest of the country. Security, which almost all Iraqis say is their major concern, is far better in both the north and south than it is in the capital. Electricity is much more reliable outside Baghdad. There are almost no power cuts in the south, a region that often had six or less hours of electricity a day before the war. Schools are mostly back to normal, and commerce is booming as goods flood in across the Turkish and Kuwaiti borders. The military presence of the U.S. in the north and the British in the south is far less visible than are the U.S. forces in and around Baghdad. Despite sporadic ambushes, the foreign troops are largely tolerated by locals, who tend to view them as a necessary evil until a viable Iraqi administration is in place. There are many complaints—about the increase in banditry on the roads, the slow pace of reconstruction, the rise in prices, the shortage of jobs caused in part by the U.S. dissolution of the Iraqi government and army. But when people in the north and the south were asked whether life has improved since the war, the answer, in Arabic, often came automatically: ‘Tab’an ahsan’ (‘Of course, better).”

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