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We'd like to get this in staffing as soon as possible. Thanks.

Remarks on the War on Terror  
Monday, December 12, 2005  
Draft #2

Thank you all for that warm welcome. And thank you, [XX], for that introduction – and for the invitation to come to Philadelphia. I appreciate the chance get out of the City of Brotherly Strife, and spend some time in the City of Brotherly Love. Since 1949, the Philadelphia World Affairs Council has provided an important forum for debate and discussion on vital issues of the day. And I have come to discuss an issue that is vital to the safety and security of all Americans: Victory in Iraq.

Earlier this month, my Administration released a document called the “National Strategy for Victory in Iraq” – and in recent weeks I have been discussing various elements of our strategy with the American people. At the U.S. Naval Academy, I spoke about our efforts to defeat the terrorists and train Iraqi Security Forces so they can provide for the security and safety of their own citizens. Last week at the Council on Foreign Relations, I discussed how we are working with Iraqi forces and Iraq’s leaders to improve security ... help Iraqis rebuild their cities ... and help the national government in Baghdad revitalize Iraq’s infrastructure and economy. Today, I want to speak in depth about another vital element of our strategy: Our efforts to help the Iraqi people build a lasting democracy in the heart of the Middle East. And I can think of no better place to discuss the rise of a free Iraq than in the heart of Philadelphia – the city where America’s democracy was born.

## **Acknowledgments**

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A few blocks from here stands Independence Hall – where our Declaration of Independence was written and our Constitution was debated. From the perspective of more than two centuries, the success of America’s democratic experiment seems almost inevitable. At the time, however, that success did not seem so obvious or assured.

The years following the American Revolution were a time of chaos and confusion. There were uprisings, such as Shays' Rebellion, with mobs attacking courthouses and government buildings. There was a planned coup – the Newburgh conspiracy – that was diffused only by the personal



intervention of General Washington. In 1783, Congress was chased from this city by angry veterans demanding back pay – and Congress stayed on the run for six months. There was rampant inflation caused by the lack of a stable currency. There were regional tensions between mercantile North and the agrarian South that threatened to break apart our young republic. There was violence and crime and a lack of an organized police force. And there were supporters of the former regime who had to be reconciled to America's new democracy.

Our Founders faced many difficult challenges. They made mistakes, learned from their experiences, and adjusted their approach. Our Nation's first effort at a governing charter, the Articles of Confederation, failed. It took many years of debate, discussion, and compromise before we finally ratified our Constitution and inaugurated our first president. And it took a four-year civil war, and a century of struggle after that, before the promise of our Declaration was extended to all Americans.

It is worth keeping this history in mind as we look at the progress of freedom and democracy in Iraq. No nation in history has made the transition from tyranny to a free society without facing challenges, setbacks, and false starts. The past two and a half years have been a period of difficult struggle in Iraq – yet they have also been a time of great hope and achievement for the Iraqi people.

Two and a half years ago, Iraq was in the grip of a cruel dictator who defied the world, threatened his neighbors, harbored terrorists, and murdered innocent men, women, and children. Since then, the Iraqi people have assumed full sovereignty of their country ... held free elections ... drafted a democratic Constitution ... and approved that constitution in a nationwide referendum. Four days from now, they will go to polls for the third time this year, to choose a fully constitutional government. This is a remarkable transformation for a country that has virtually no experience with democracy – and which is struggling to overcome the legacy of one of the worst tyrannies the world has known. Iraqis have accomplished all this in just a few years – and they have done it under fire, while determined enemies sowed violence and destruction and actively worked to stop their progress. There is still much difficult work to be done in Iraq. But thanks to the courage of the Iraqi people, the year 2005 will be recorded as a turning point in the history of Iraq ... the history of the Middle East ... and the history of freedom.



As the Iraqi people struggle to build their democracy, their adversaries continue their war on a free Iraq. The enemy is a combination of rejectionists, Saddamists, and terrorists. The rejectionists are ordinary Iraqis, mostly Sunni Arabs, who miss the privileged status they had under the regime of Saddam Hussein – and reject an Iraq in which they are no longer the dominant group. As we help Iraqis build a strong democracy, we believe that, over time, most of this group will be persuaded to support a democratic Iraq led by a federal government that is strong enough to protect minority rights. The Saddamists are former regime loyalists who harbor dreams of returning to power – and they are trying to foment anti-democratic sentiment among the larger Sunni community. Yet they lack popular support – and over time, they can be marginalized and defeated by the people and security forces of a free Iraq. The terrorists are the smallest but most lethal group. Many are foreigners coming to fight freedom's progress in Iraq. They are led by a brutal terrorist named Zarqawi – al-Qaida's chief of operations in Iraq – who has pledged his allegiance to Osama bin Laden. The terrorists' stated objective is to drive U.S. and Coalition forces out of Iraq and gain control of the country. They would then use Iraq as a base from which to launch attacks against America, overthrow moderate governments in the Middle East, and try to establish a totalitarian Islamic empire that reaches from Indonesia to Spain.

The terrorists in Iraq share the same ideology as the terrorists who struck the United States on September 11 ... blew up commuters in London and Madrid ... murdered tourists in Bali ... killed workers in Riyadh ... and slaughtered guests at a wedding in Amman, Jordan. This is an enemy without conscience – and they cannot be appeased. If we were not fighting and destroying this enemy in Iraq, they would not be leading quiet lives as good citizens. They would be plotting and killing our citizens – across the world and within our own borders. By fighting the terrorists in Iraq, we are confronting a direct threat to the American people – and we will not rest until this enemy is defeated.

We are pursuing a comprehensive strategy to defeat these enemies and aid the rise of a free Iraq – and that strategy has three elements: On the security side, Coalition and Iraqi Security Forces are on the offensive against the enemy – clearing out areas controlled by the terrorists and Saddam loyalists ... leaving Iraqi forces to hold territory taken from the enemy ... and following up with targeted reconstruction to help Iraqis rebuild their lives. And as we fight the terrorists, we are working to build



capable and effective Iraqi Security Forces, so they can take the lead in the fight – and eventually take responsibility for the safety and security of their citizens without major foreign assistance. On the economic side, we are helping the Iraqis rebuild their infrastructure ... reform their economy ... and build the prosperity that will give all Iraqis a stake in a free and peaceful Iraq. And on the political side, we are helping the Iraqis build inclusive democratic institutions that will protect the interests of all Iraqis. We are working with the Iraqis to help them engage those who can be persuaded to join the new Iraq – and to marginalize those who never will. And we are working with the United Nations, other international organizations, our Coalition partners, and supportive regional states to help Iraqis build a future of freedom.

Today, I want to discuss our efforts to help the Iraqi people build the institutions of a free and representative government ... how we have learned from our experiences and adjusted our approach ... how the advance of freedom is changing Iraq and transforming the region ... and why it is in America's vital interest to help the Iraqis succeed. We are working to help the Iraqi people build a stable democracy that will not be a safe haven for terrorists – so that when our forces come home, they will leave behind a free nation that is a strong ally in the war on terror, and a partner in the struggle for peace and moderation in the Muslim world.

From the outset of the war, our efforts in Iraq have been guided by a clear principle: Iraq belongs to the Iraqi people – and they will determine the destiny of their nation. Even before the fall of Baghdad, our Coalition began organizing town hall meetings in Basra, Umm Qasr, and other liberated parts of the country, so we could begin engaging the Iraqi people in planning the free future of their country.

To fill the vacuum left when Saddam Hussein's regime fled Baghdad, we established the Coalition Provisional Authority. The CPA was ably led by Ambassador Jerry Bremer, and many fine men and women from almost every department of our government volunteered to serve in the CPA. They did an amazing job under extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances – helping to restore basic services ... making sure the food distribution system continued to function ... getting abandoned government ministries up and running again ... and bringing the Iraqi people into the decision-making process of their government for the first time in their lives.



The CPA filled an important need in the early months after liberation. Yet for all its good work, the CPA went on too long. Life under the CPA did not satisfy the hunger of Iraqis for self-government. Each day that the CPA held power, it created a sense of occupation instead of liberation. Iraqis were eager to manage their own affairs – so our Coalition began handing more governing authority to Iraqi leaders. In June 2003, we established the Iraqi Governing Council, made up of 25 representatives from all of Iraq's communities – including Islamists, Communists, Shia, Sunnis, Christians, Turkomen, and Kurds. The Governing Council then appointed an Iraqi cabinet of ministers, who helped manage the various departments of government. And in August 2003, we outlined a plan to transfer full sovereignty to the Iraqi people over a period of 18 months. Under this plan, free elections would not be held until after a constitution had been drafted, and put before the Iraqi people. And the CPA would continue to hold power until Iraqis had chosen a fully constitutional government.

This initial plan met with widespread disapproval in Iraq. Iraqis made clear to us that they wanted a Constitution that was written by the elected leaders of a free Iraq – and they wanted sovereignty placed in Iraqi hands sooner. We listened, and adjusted our approach. We sped up the transfer of sovereignty – and working with Iraqis, we set firm deadlines for an accelerated transition to Iraqi self-government. In March 2004, a Transitional Administrative Law was established to guide Iraq's transition to a constitutional democracy. It included a series of clear benchmarks: By July, full sovereignty would be handed over to an Interim Iraqi Government. By January 2005, free elections would be held for a Transitional National Assembly that would choose a new government and draft a constitution. By August 15<sup>th</sup>, the constitution would be completed. By October 15<sup>th</sup>, the constitution would be put before the Iraqi people. And if it was approved, Iraqis would go to the polls by December 15<sup>th</sup> to choose a permanent government under their democratic constitution.

The transfer of sovereignty took place ahead of schedule – and since that moment, the Iraqi people have hit every deadline. Despite terrorist threats, eight and a half million Iraqis turned out to vote in the January elections. Despite the Sunni boycott of the elections, Iraq's national assembly appointed a cabinet of ministers that represented all of Iraq's diverse population. Despite election results that heavily favored the Shia and Kurdish communities, Iraq's new leaders reached out to Sunni Arabs – and brought them into the constitutional drafting process. Despite decades



of sectarian divisions, Iraqis worked together, compromised, and produced a constitution on time. The constitution was eventually endorsed by major Sunni parties – and overwhelmingly approved in a nationwide referendum that drew over a million new voters to the polls. And in a few days, Iraqis will meet their final deadline when they elect a permanent government of, by, and for the Iraqi. By pressing forward and hitting every benchmark, the Iraq people have built momentum for freedom and democracy ... brought pride to the Iraqi nation ... and earned the respect of the world.

The key to Iraq's success has been keeping this democratic momentum going. At every stage in the process, there was enormous pressure to let each of these deadlines slide – with skeptics and pessimists declaring that Iraqis were not ready for self-government. At every stage in the process, Iraqis proved the skeptics and pessimists wrong. At every stage in the process, the terrorists tried to stop Iraqis from taking the next step on the road to democracy – and at every stage, the terrorists failed. With their ballots, the Iraqi people have sent a clear message to the terrorists: Iraqis want to live in freedom – and they will not be intimidated by thugs and assassins. By meeting their deadlines, Iraqis are defeating a brutal enemy ... rejecting a murderous ideology ... and choosing freedom over terror. Despite the costs, the pain, and the danger, Iraqis are moving forward with courage on the road to democracy – and their courage is transforming their nation, their region, and the world.

The results of their courage can be seen across Iraq today. Despite terrorist violence, the country is buzzing with the sights and sounds of democracy in action. The streets of Baghdad, Najaf, Mosul, and other cities are full of signs and posters. The television and radio air waves are thick with political ads and commentary. Over three hundred parties and coalitions have registered for this week's elections – and they are campaigning vigorously. Candidates are holding rallies and debates ... laying out their agendas ... leveling charges and counter-charges ... and asking for the vote.

Our troops see Iraq's vital young democracy up close – and they are inspired by what they see. First Lieutenant Frank Shirley of Rock Hall, Maryland, says this about the campaign season in Iraq: "It's cool riding around Baghdad and seeing the posters – it reminds me of being home during election time. After so many years of being told what to do, having a real vote is different. We should stay the course and finish it out. I have no



problem coming back another time.” Our troops in Iraq are serving with courage – and their service is helping democracy take hold.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, more Sunnis are joining the political process – and the Saddamists and rejectionists are being marginalized. Many Sunnis boycotted the January elections – and in the months that followed, they came to recognize that opting out of the democratic process hurt their interests. In October’s constitutional referendum, Sunnis voted in large numbers in areas like Tal Afar, Fallujah and Saddam Hussein’s hometown of Tikrit. At least [three] major Sunni coalitions have registered to compete in this week’s vote – including many Sunni parties that opposed the Constitution. Other Sunni leaders have joined national coalitions that cross religious, ethnic, and sectarian boundaries, running on issues instead of identity. As one Sunni politician puts it, the December election “is a vote for Iraq, not for sects. We want a national Iraq, not a sectarian one.”

Many Sunni politicians are risking their lives to help build a free Iraq. The Iraqi Islamic Party – one of the country’s most prominent Sunni parties – has seen its offices in Fallujah and Ramadi firebombed during the course of this campaign. And the head of the party reports that at least ten members have been killed since they announced they would field candidates in Thursday’s elections. Recently a top Sunni electoral official named Izzadin al-Muhammadi visited the Sunni stronghold of Baquba to encourage local leaders to participate. As he traveled to his meeting, a roadside bomb went off. The explosion rattled his convoy, but failed to stop it. He says this about the attempt on his life: “The bomb is nothing compared to what we are doing. What we are doing is bigger than the bomb.”

More Sunnis are taking risks for freedom because they see Iraqi democracy succeeding – and they want to play a role in their nation’s affairs. A Sunni leader named Adnaud Dulami who now supports elections puts it this way: “The country needs Sunnis to join politics. The Sunnis are now ready to participate.” Abdul Samarra, a leader of one of the vocal Sunni groups opposing the Coalition – the Association of Muslim Scholars – recently declared that Sunnis must “unite their voices and get ready to take part in the next election.... We’ll not miss this chance again.” A Sunni sheik in Diyala Province explains why Sunnis must participate this way: “In order to not be marginalized, we need power in the National Assembly.” As more and more Sunnis join the political process, they are gaining a



voice in shaping their democracy – and as more and more Sunnis join the political process, the Saddamists and rejectionists are the ones being isolated and marginalized.

To encourage Sunni participation in Thursday's election, Iraq's leaders made important changes in the country's electoral laws that will increase Sunni representation in the National Assembly. In the January elections, representation in the Assembly was directly related to turnout – and Sunnis who boycotted the vote found themselves left with little power. Now, Iraq has adopted a system based on proportional representation – with seats in the assembly allocated by province, according to the size of the population, much like our House of Representatives. Such power-sharing mechanisms are encouraging more Sunnis to join in the political life of their country. And as more Sunnis join Iraq's political life, they are ensuring the interests of their community are protected – and they strengthening Iraqi democracy. Sunnis who join the political process are teaching their fellow citizens an important lesson: Sovereignty, free elections, and majority rule are only the beginnings of freedom. The promise of democracy is fulfilled by minority rights, and equal justice, and an inclusive society in which every person belongs.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, the Iraqi people are growing in unity against a common enemy. We saw that unity on display earlier this year, when followers of the terrorist Zarqawi tried to force Iraqi Shiites to leave the city of Ramadi. Sunni Arabs in that city came to the defense of their Shiite neighbors against the terrorists. As one Sunni leader put it, "We have had enough of Zarqawi's nonsense. We don't accept that a non-Iraqi should try to enforce his control over Iraqis." By choosing to stand with their fellow Iraqis, these Sunnis rejected the terrorists' attempt to divide their nation and incite sectarian violence.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, the Iraqi people are growing in confidence – and that is helping in the fight against the terrorists. In March of this year, Iraqi and Coalition forces received about 400 tips from Iraqis about possible terrorist activity in their neighborhoods. Six months later, in September, that number jumped to more than 4,700 – an almost twelve-fold increase. General Pete Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, reports that one recent tip led Iraqi and Coalition forces to an IED factory loaded with over 4,000 pounds of explosives, about a dozen 500-pound bombs, and garage-door openers used to detonate IEDs. All these



explosives were taken out of the terrorists' arsenal because an Iraqi citizen had enough confidence in the democratic future of his country to come forward. General Pace says we are hearing more stories like that every day – and that is cause for optimism. With each Iraqi that makes a commitment to a free society, we are improving the prospects for Iraq's democracy ... depriving the terrorists of potential recruits ... and building a strong ally in the war on terror.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, Iraqis are seeing a return to rule of law. The leaders of a free Iraq have abolished Saddam Hussein's system of secret courts, and created a fully independent the Iraqi judiciary. Last week, millions of Iraqis saw that independent judiciary in action, as their former dictator, Saddam Hussein, was put on trial in Baghdad. The man who once struck fear in the hearts of Iraq's citizens was forced to sit and listen as his victims recounted the acts of torture and murder he ordered. One Iraqi watching the proceedings said this: "We all feel happiness about this fair trial." Another Iraqi who survived the massacre for which Saddam is now being prosecuted puts it this way: "We want the deserved punishment for the guilty and fair treatment for those who will be found innocent, even if it were Saddam Hussein or his aides.... The Iraqi judiciary is pure, transparent, and competent."

As Iraq's former dictator faces justice for his crimes, Iraqi courts are also meting out justice to ordinary criminals. As the Iraqi police grow more capable, they are cracking down on crime – and the Central Criminal Court in Baghdad is taking more cases, conducting investigative hearings, and prosecuting felonies. Slowly but surely, with the help of our Coalition, Iraqis are replacing rule of fear with the rule of law – and in so doing, they are laying the foundations for a lasting free society.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, international support is growing. The European Union has contributed over [30] million dollars to support this week's elections. The United Nations is playing an important role as well -- providing advice, training, and technical support to the Independent Electoral Commission ... helping with public information campaigns ... and helping Iraqis prepare voter rolls to ensure a free and fair election. Today, more than 20 UN agencies are assisting Iraq's reconstruction and democratic transition – and the UN and World Bank are working together to administer a multi-billion dollar International Relief and Reconstruction Fund for Iraq. In all, more than [XX] nations have pledged assistance to



help Iraq make the transition from tyranny to democracy. Whatever differences there were over the decision to liberate Iraq, all free nations now share a common interest – building an Iraq that will fight terror, and be a source of stability and freedom in a troubled region of the world.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, Iraq's neighbors beginning to recognize that a free Iraq is here to stay – and Iraq is starting to get more support from the Arab world. Egypt, Jordan, Algeria, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, and other Arab nations have reopened their embassies in Baghdad. And last month, the Arab League hosted a meeting in Cairo, where Arab foreign ministers met with Iraqi leaders to discuss Iraqi reconciliation. Other neighbors, such Iran, are playing an unconstructive role – and the reason is clear: The Iranian regime does not want a flourishing democracy across its border in Iraq, because Iraqi democracy threatens the legitimacy of Iran's brutal theocracy. Iran's leaders are doing all they can to undermine the success of a free Iraq – and they will fail. Iraqis do not want to live under an Iranian-style dictatorship. They will not tolerate Iranian interference their democratic progress – and neither will the United States and its allies.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, people across the broader Middle East are drawing inspiration from Iraq's progress. When the new Iraqi government takes power in January, Iraq will become the first constitutional democracy in the Arab world – and this will have an impact that reaches far beyond Iraq's borders. As Iraqis begin to enjoy the better life that freedom brings, democratic reformers across the region will have a cause for hope – and an example to show their countrymen. A free and stable Middle East begins with a free and stable Iraq. And as hope and freedom spread across that region, the American people will be more secure.

As democracy takes hold in Iraq, it is exposing the terrorists' lie that they are fighting a foreign occupation – and showing the world that they are really fighting the will of the Iraqi people. In his 1998 fatwa, Osama bin Laden argued that the suffering of the Iraqi people was justification for his declaration of war on America. Now bin Laden and al-Qaida are the direct cause of the Iraqi people's suffering. It is al-Qaida that blew up mourners at a funeral inside an Iraqi mosque, and murdered Iraqi children and their parents at a toy give-away outside an Iraqi hospital. These terrorists are killing and maiming innocent Iraqis by the thousands – and after this week's vote, they will be fighting to overthrow a sovereign, democratic,



constitutional government chosen by the Iraqi people. It is becoming clear to all with eyes to see and ears to hear, that the terrorists are not fighting on behalf of the Iraqi people – they murdering innocent Muslims to serve their own will to power and their desire for dominion over others. And as more Muslims across the world see this, they are turning against the terrorists.

This week's vote in Iraq will not be perfect – and we can expect more violence from the terrorists. In Iraq, our Coalition faces ruthless enemies – men who celebrate murder, incite suicide, and thirst for absolute power. These enemies will not give up their cause because of a successful election – because the terrorists understand what is at stake in Iraq. They know that as democracy takes root in that country, their hateful ideology will suffer a devastating blow – and the Middle East will have a clear example of freedom and prosperity and hope. And when the hope of liberty spreads in the Middle East, the terrorists will begin to lose their sponsors ... lose their recruits ... and lose the sanctuaries they need to plan new attacks.

The terrorists will continue fighting freedom's progress with all the hateful determination they can muster. They believe they can break our will and force us to retreat – because they have seen America cut and run before. In his recent letter to the terrorist Zarqawi in Iraq, the al-Qaida leader Zawahiri invokes the American abandonment of Vietnam as a reason to believe the terrorists can prevail in Iraq. Zawahiri writes, quote: "The aftermath of the collapse of American power in Vietnam – and how they ran and left their agents – is noteworthy." End quote. Now some in Washington are likening Iraq to Vietnam – and they are proposing the same solution. These politicians need to explain to the American people how we will be safer by doing the one thing that al-Qaida hopes we will do.

Abandoning Iraq would not make Americans safer – it would put the American people at greater risk. It would send a signal across the world that America is a weak and an unreliable ally. It would send a signal to our enemies – that if they wait long enough, America will cut and run and abandon its friends. And it would vindicate the terrorists' tactics of beheadings and suicide bombings and mass murder – and invite new attacks on America. I make the American people this pledge: We will not cut and run in Iraq so long as I am your Commander in Chief. We will not abandon the Iraqi people, and endanger our own, by quitting before the job



is done. Our military will continue to hunt down the terrorists in Iraq – and prepare the Iraqi Security Forces to defend their own free nation. We will continue to help Iraqis rebuild their cities and lives so they can enjoy the prosperity that freedom brings. We will continue to stand with the Iraqi people as they move forward on the path to democracy. And when victory is achieved, our troops will come home with the honor they have earned.

Before victory comes, there will be more hard fighting and heartbreak. Yet we can have confidence in our cause, because the Iraqi people are determined – and our troops have the courage and determination to see the mission through.

b(3) 10 USC 130b  
b(6)

Like all the men and women of our Armed Forces in Iraq, b(3) 10 USC 130b is fighting to defeat a direct threat to the American people. And our Nation will not rest until that threat is defeated and we have achieved complete victory.

A free Iraq will not be a quiet Iraq – it will be a nation full of passionate debate, and vigorous political activity. Iraqis are showing they have the patience and the courage to make democracy work. And Americans have the patience and courage to help them succeed. And by helping Iraqis lay the foundations of a lasting democracy, we are adding to our own security -- and laying the foundations of peace for generations to come.

Not far from where we are gathered today is a symbol of freedom familiar to all Americans: the Liberty Bell. When the Declaration of Independence was first read in public, the Liberty Bell was sounded in celebration – and a witness said: “It rang as if it meant something.” Today, the bell of liberty tolls in Baghdad, Basra and other Iraqi cities – and its



sound is echoing across the broader Middle East. From Damascus to Tehran people hear it – and they know it means something. It means that the days of tyranny and terror are ending ... and a new day of hope and freedom is dawning.

Thank you. God bless you. And may God continue to bless and protect the United States of America.

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