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Center for the Study of Popular Culture, Restoration Weekend Conference

Remarks as Prepared for Delivery by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz Palm Beach, FL, Friday, November 15, 2002

Thank you, David [Horowitz, Restoration Weekend Chairman]. I must say, it's easier to take the arrows of the opposition than to take the kind of shots that Colonel Jacobs [Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and honoree of the evening] took in Vietnam. And it's a true honor and privilege to be part of this magnificent Defense Department of ours.

As has been mentioned frequently by my boss, [Secretary of Defense] Don Rumsfeld, this is my third tour in the Pentagon. In fact, on my first day back in the building, Don was swearing me in, and he told the audience that this was my third time back, and they were going to keep bringing me back until I got it right. I sort of was tempted to say, "Well, what do we infer from the fact that you're back for a second try?"

It's an enormous privilege to be serving with Don Rumsfeld. Indeed I can't think of a more inspiring time to be part of America's National Security Team than right now. It's an unusual privilege to be able to serve with Vice President Cheney, Colin Powell, Condi Rice, Don Rumsfeld, and our President, George W. Bush. It's an extraordinary team and I think the American people have every reason to be both proud and thankful.

I want to talk about the war on terrorism, which is very serious business. Contrary to some of the things we've heard on the news recently, the war on terrorism is not just about one individual, or even one terrorist network, or even just one terrorist state.

September 11th has changed the way in which we must view the whole problem of terrorism. Since September 11th we understand that terrorism is an evil that we cannot afford to live with, given how terrible not only September 11th was, but how much worse a September 11th with weapons of mass destruction could be. If it was horrible beyond imagining to lose 3,000 Americans in a single day then

try to imagine what it would mean to lose 30,000 or 300,000 or, God forbid, three million.

The war on terrorism is not something that's going to be over with one battle or one engagement, or in one country. As President Bush and Secretary Rumsfeld have said over and over again, we are in for a long war. If we do capture Osama bin Laden or kill him, the war will not be over.

My boss reminded people right after September 11th that it's a mistake, in fact, to focus too much on one individual. And indeed, in some sense we should remind ourselves that the war on terrorism is not only about killing and capturing terrorists. As President Bush said in his State of the Union message, a major part of our efforts is building a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terrorism, and particularly in the Muslim world.

We hear a lot of talk about the root causes of terrorism. Some people seem to suggest that poverty is the root cause of terrorism. It's a little hard to look at a billionaire named Osama bin Laden and think that poverty drove him to it. Nor was that the case for Ayman al-Zawahiri who comes from one of the most prominent, distinguished families in Egypt.

I think in important ways the war against terrorism is a war for the soul of the Muslim world. I had some considerable experience with Indonesia, a country with the largest Muslim population of any in the world. I spent three years in Indonesia as the U.S. Ambassador to that country. I know what tolerant people most of those 200 million Muslims in Indonesia are. And I believe that, in fact, there are hundreds of millions of Muslims who really aspire to what we enjoy—freedom and the prosperity that freedom engenders.

I think the terrorists to a substantial extent feed off the fact that as Muslims look around their world as a whole, they can tend to believe that somehow the deck is stacked against them—that somehow the rules of the game are such that Muslims can't succeed.

There was a parallel phenomenon in Asia some 20 or 30 years ago. For the first 20 or 30 years after the Communist Revolution the Chinese leaders told their people the reason you're poor and miserable is because of two centuries of Western colonialism. And indeed, China suffered what is probably one of the worst colonial regimes one could imagine.

But something happened as Chinese people on the mainland began to notice that the Chinese of Singapore were doing quite well, thank you, and they had suffered under the same colonial rule. The Chinese in Hong Kong who had been a British colony were doing quite well, thank you. The Chinese in Taiwan, which had suffered under Japanese colonialism, were doing quite well. And I believe that that was a major engine of change on the mainland—so far, mainly an economic change, but I believe eventually it will be political change, as well.

It wasn't colonialism, and it wasn't culture. It's ironic to think as recently as 30 or 40 years ago people were trying to explain the backwardness of Asia by a Confucian culture that taught that gentlemen don't work. Gentlemen grow their fingernails long, in fact, and wear white clothes to demonstrate that they don't work. And yet today the popular explanation for the success of East Asia is that same Confucian

culture.

And I think the misery of the Arab world is largely because of failed policies of governments. It's important, therefore, if we're going to win this war on terrorism to help those countries in the Muslim world that are heading in the right direction, or at least trying to. Indonesia, which inherited a democratic transition in the midst of an economic tidal wave, I think is one such country that deserves our help and support. Turkey, which is going through difficult economic times but which is managing one of the few democracies in the Muslim world, deserves that support. We see some glimmers of positive reform in Bahrain where they've held for the first time free elections. And in Morocco. Those countries, their success, their movement toward our values is part of winning this war on terrorism.

I will admit that in DOD our main job is focusing on finding and killing terrorists. But at the same time that we do that we have a positive role, for example, in Afghanistan in building that better future. And if it comes to it in Iraq, we'll have a role in building something more positive there, as well.

So, let me say a few words about Iraq. And let me begin by emphasizing, although I am going to talk here a great deal about some of the issues surrounding the possible use of force, that what the President is doing, making every effort to do, is to bring about the disarmament of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction without the use of force. The goal here is, if possible, to achieve the disarmament of Iraqi chemical, and biological, and nuclear weapons, and to eliminate this very serious danger to our country—and indeed, to the world—by peaceful means. But, by one means or another, peacefully if possible, by force, if necessary, we will eliminate that threat.

Let me frame this discussion with two quotes. One addresses the strategic stakes, the security stakes. It comes from Secretary of State Powell testifying before the House International Relations Committee earlier this year. "Since September 11th, 2001," the Secretary said "the world is a more dangerous place. As a consequence of the terrorist attacks on that day a new reality was born. The world had to recognize that the potential connection between terrorists and weapons of mass destruction had moved terrorism to a new level of threat, a threat that could not be deterred because of this connection, between States developing weapons of mass destruction, and terrorist organizations willing to use them without any compunction and in an undeterrable fashion." That, I think, is a very clear statement of the strategic threat.

The other quote said something about the internal situation in Iraq. It comes from Scott Ritter, who has been in the news lately. At one juncture, he recently described just how horrible that regime is. And he admitted that he was doing so reluctantly. And he even said that what he was describing was even more horrible than he was willing to say, because as the former U.N. Inspector said, he didn't want to lend any ammunition to people like me because he's "waging peace now."

But he did describe a prison in Baghdad whose stench he said, was "unreal," an amalgam of "urine, feces, vomit, and sweat," a hellhole where prisoners were "howling and dying of thirst." And the remarkable thing is that in this prison the oldest prisoners were 12, and the youngest were toddlers. Their crime was to be children of political enemies of the Iraqi regime.

It's hard to imagine a more grim symbol of a regime that rules by terror and that embraces terror as a

policy against those who oppose it at home and abroad than a children's prison. And I think there are very few, if any, who would deny that the present Iraqi regime is an evil one and a dangerous one. And I think it would be difficult to find Americans who would not agree that the world would be safer, and the Iraqi people would be much better off if that regime no longer rules. That's not the issue.

The issue is: what means are appropriate to achieve that goal. The real issue that we face now is how to weigh the risks of using force should it come to that. Or, more precisely, to weigh the risks of action against the risks of inaction. Those risks are real, and no one in our administration is discounting the risks associated with the possible use of force. President Bush has demonstrated over and over again that he takes the risks associated with the use of force extremely seriously. And let me repeat what I said a few minutes ago—that is why the President is making every effort possible to achieve a peaceful solution that would remove this danger to our country and the world without the use of force.

Contrary to some of what I have read, the debate is not between those who desire peace and those who love war. I don't know of anyone who loves war. The issue is how best to increase the odds of a peaceful outcome. And there's a seeming paradox at work here. Our only hope—and let me emphasize, our only hope—of achieving that peaceful outcome is if we can confront the Iraqi regime with a credible threat of force behind our diplomacy. To be effective, the two have got to be part of a single policy. They are not two separate policies.

We know from 11 years of stubborn defiance of 16 U.N. Security Council resolutions, that Saddam Hussein is not easily going to give up the horrible weapons that he has paid such a high price to keep. No one should be under any illusions that Saddam Hussein will give up the weapons he's not supposed to have simply because the U.N. has passed another resolution. He will only do so if he believes that doing so is the only way that he and his regime can survive.

We would never have succeeded in the United Nations, let me make it clear, without the willingness of America's brave young men and women in uniform to risk their lives for their country. And we will have no chance of getting Saddam Hussein to take this, the 17th resolution passed by the United Nations, seriously but for the resolve of those brave men and women in uniform and our President. Our hope for peace rests with them.

Over the last 12 months, President Bush and his advisors have been weighing carefully the risks associated with the various courses of action available to us. And while everything possible is being done to minimize the risks should it come to use of force, no one is discounting them.

One of the questions that has been asked frequently, perhaps even more frequently since that horrible attack in Bali, is whether an attack on Iraq would disrupt or distract the United States from the global war on terror. The answer to that is simple and powerful: disarming Iraq and fighting the war on terror are not merely related, they are one in the same. If we can disarm or defeat a terrorist regime in Iraq it will be a defeat for terrorists globally.

This war is unlike any we have seen in history. It is not just a military operation. In many cases it isn't even primarily, sometimes even secondarily, a military operation. It involves the integration of military power with every other element of national power, including, very importantly, diplomacy and

intelligence and law enforcement.

But the war on terrorism is a global war, and one that must be pursued everywhere. It is impossible to see how a policy that we are pursuing in Indonesia, working with that government to deny terrorists sanctuary in Indonesia, could be assisted by a policy that leaves the terrorists a sanctuary in Iraq with one of the most murderous dictators we know. We cannot continue to allow one of the world's worst dictators to continue developing the world's worst weapons.

And it's worth remembering that when we got to Afghanistan we discovered documents and captured terrorists that helped us to break up plots in remote parts of the world, in Southeast Asia, and North Africa, and around the globe. And when we drove al Qaeda out of sanctuaries in Afghanistan we were able to capture some key terrorists, and not only get them off the street but get important intelligence from them, as well. Similar affects could be expected if there's a decent government in Baghdad, a government that can help us to uncover evidence that can help us to capture terrorists and to deny them sanctuary.

Another question that I'm often asked, is "why act now, why not wait until the threat is imminent?" Again, it seems to me this question has a fairly simple answer. It was expressed very clearly by Senator Joseph Lieberman in the Rose Garden, the day the original Joint Resolution on the Use of Force was introduced. He said, "I have felt for more than a decade now that every additional day that Saddam Hussein is in power in Iraq is an additional day of danger for the Iraqi people, for his neighbors in the region, particularly for the people in the military of the United States, and indeed, for the people of the world."

The notion that we can wait until the threat is imminent assumes that we will know when it is imminent. That wasn't true even in 1962 with a very obvious threat of Soviet missiles in Cuba. As President Kennedy said at the time, "neither the United States of America, nor the world community of nations can tolerate deliberate deception and offensive threats on the part of any nation, large or small. We no longer live in a world," the late President said 40 years ago, "where only the actual firing of weapons represents a sufficient challenge to a nation's security to constitute maximum peril."

If that was true 40 years ago of a threat that was comparatively easy to observe, how much more true is it today of threats developed by evil people who use the freedoms of a democratic society to plot and plan, even in our midst, and in the midst of our allies in Europe, and around the world. Just stop and think for a moment. Just when were the attacks of September 11th imminent? Presumably they were imminent on September 10th. Were they imminent in August of 2001? As a matter of fact, if we had taken military action against Afghanistan in August of 2001 it would have had no affect on the September 11th plotters—they were all here in the United States, they were all ready to go.

One might even argue it was already imminent in the spring of 2001 when all of the hijackers had arrived here. Was it imminent in early 2000 when all of the pilots had arrived in the United States? Perhaps it was imminent a few months before when Muhammad Atta and his friends in Hamburg had laid their plans.

These people don't tell us when the attacks are imminent, and if someone thinks that we can wait until

we know, they're going to wait until it's too late. We will only know when they've connected the dots, if we don't think we can connect them now.

Some people ask, "why run the risk of provoking Saddam Hussein? Doesn't the only danger that he will use weapons of mass destruction come if we threaten his survival?" There is no doubt a serious concern here. And we must certainly plan on the assumption that a moment of maximum danger will come if Saddam believes that his survival is in peril, and that he has little to lose by using his most terrible weapons. But it's important, I think, to remember the heart of that quote I read to you earlier from Secretary Powell, about the fact the terrorists give evil leaders like Saddam Hussein a means of delivering weapons of mass destruction that not only extends their reach globally, but allows them to disown their own work.

And it's also important, I think, to recognize how many assumptions, and in my view, very dubious assumptions, underlie the contention that the danger of this Iraqi regime is one that we can avoid forever if we simply contain the Iraqi regime indefinitely. First of all, it assumes that we understand the way Saddam Hussein's mind works. It assumes that he will always avoid actions that would risk his survival. And it makes that assumption despite an enormous body of evidence to the contrary.

It is quite clear that we do not understand the way Saddam's mind works. And it is quite clear that he is a risk taker who has frequently taken actions that put his regime in grave danger.

But the most dangerous assumption of all, I believe, is the assumption that Saddam would not use terrorists as an instrument of revenge. The use of terrorists is an undeterrable weapon for delivering the most terrible weapons of all.

Finally—and this is the last question I'd like to raise in these remarks—I hear a lot of people ask whether Iraq will be more unstable and dangerous after Saddam Hussein is gone. Of all the risks involved, and there are many, the one risk that it seems to me to be highly exaggerated is this risk that the removal of the Saddam Hussein regime would be a cause of instability in the region. To the contrary, that regime itself is a major cause of instability in the region. And in fact, one might observe, if people want to take the trouble to look at what's actually happening inside Iraq, one might observe that in the north of Iraq, where the control of the Baghdad regime has been removed for 10 years, the affects have not been instability but rather some remarkable progress, particularly by Middle Eastern standards.

Do the pessimists really believe that the only way to preserve what they call "stability" in one of the most important countries of the Arab world is to preserve indefinitely the rule of one of the world's most despotic tyrants? If so—and I sincerely doubt that many people actually believe that—if so, they would have to explain how this stability is going to be preserved after the demise of Saddam Hussein. Do they believe that his very dubious sons will successfully carry on after their father, the way the sons of Kim Il-Sung and Syria's Assad have done? It's hardly something I could imagine anyone wishing for.

In fact, for better or for worse—and I am convinced it will be far, far better—sooner or later, the Middle East will have to cope with the reality of an Iraq without this regime. And it would be far better for that

admittedly enormous change to take place when the eyes of the world are upon Iraq, and when the United States and a strong coalition are committed to seeing that change through to a successful conclusion.

Indeed, I have to say that I am quite surprised that so many people who know the Middle East well, who admire as I admire the great talents of the Arab people, believe that the demise of this despotic regime would be harmful to the Arab cause. To the contrary, there is a great opportunity here to liberate one of the most talented populations in the Arab world with positive affects throughout the Middle East, and indeed, throughout the Muslim world.

We saw that potential in Afghanistan, when women tore off their burkas and girls went back to school and the threat of famine disappeared for four or five million people who had been on the edge of starvation. That also gives us a huge strategic advantage if force does become necessary because Saddam Hussein, like Joseph Stalin before him, rules by fear and fear alone. And when his people no longer fear him Saddam Hussein will have to fear them.

That regime has turned Iraq, one of the potentially richest countries in the Middle East, into the most savage kind of prison. But as we have seen in Afghanistan, when the yoke of terrorism is removed, people use their newfound freedom to build a better future for themselves and for their children. There is no question in my mind if it comes to that, we will not only have removed another haven for terrorists and made our country safer, we will also have made a significant step forward in helping the Muslim world to build a better future for themselves and for all of us.

The President has made it clear that what is going on now is not a game. It is not, as Secretary Powell said, going to be "rope-a-dope in the desert." The national security of the United States is at stake. The President of the United States has made it clear that this is serious business. He has made his determination and his intentions unmistakable. If Saddam Hussein underestimates the President of the United States, he will have made a big mistake.

On Monday I traveled to Philadelphia to observe Veterans Day at a spot near Independence Hall, where some 2,500 of General George Washington's soldiers are buried, most of them in unmarked graves. More than a thousand of them died as prisoners. The conditions for prisoners were wretched and most often ended in death. But those American prisoners had a choice. They could have saved their own lives by joining the King's Army. Those soldiers buried in Philadelphia made the choice to stay loyal to their cause and their country. They chose to give their lives for what they believed in.

The brave young men and women wearing our nation's uniform today have made the same choice. They are helping all of us to build a safer world, helping us build what President Bush called, in his State of the Union message "a just and peaceful world beyond the war and terror."

For them and for all of us a great and important mission lies before our country. We will not be deterred from the truth. And the truth is that the greatest threat to peace and freedom in our time is terrorism.

So this truth we also affirm, that the future does not belong to the terrorists. The future belongs to those who dream, the oldest and noblest dream of all, the dream of peace and freedom.

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