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Memorandum on the Report to the Congress Consistent With the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002

July 22, 2003

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Report to the Congress Consistent With the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002

Consistent with section 206(c) of the Afghanistan Freedom Support Act of 2002 (Public Law 107–327 of December 4, 2002), you are hereby authorized and directed to transmit the attached report on implementation of the strategies for meeting the immediate and long-term security needs of Afghanistan to the appropriate committees of the Congress.

You are also authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 23.

Remarks on Coalition Activities in Iraq

July 23, 2003

It is my pleasure to welcome Ambassador Paul Bremer back to the White House. I'm also pleased to be joined by Secretary Rumsfeld and General Myers. Thank you all for coming.

Ambassador Bremer is doing a fine job in an essential cause. The nations in our coalition are determined to help the Iraqi people recover from years of tyranny. And we are determined to help build a free and sovereign and democratic nation.

The coalition provisional authority, led by Ambassador Bremer, has a comprehensive strategy to move Iraq toward a future that is secure and prosperous. We are carrying out that strategy for the good of Iraq, for the peace of the region, and for the security of the United States and our friends.

Saddam Hussein's regime spent more than three decades oppressing Iraq's people, attacking Iraq's neighbors, and threatening the world's peace. The regime tortured at home, promoted terror abroad, and armed in secret. Now, with the regime of Saddam Hussein gone forever, a few remaining holdouts are trying to prevent the advance of order and freedom. They are targeting our success in rebuilding Iraq; they're killing new police graduates; they're shooting at people that are guarding the universities and powerplants and oil facilities.

These killers are the enemies of Iraq's people. They operate mainly in a few areas of the country. And wherever they operate, they are being hunted, and they will be defeated. Our military forces are on the offensive. They're working with the newly free Iraqi people to destroy the remnants of the old regime and their terrorist allies.

Yesterday, in the city of Mosul, the careers of two of the regime's chief henchmen came to an end. Saddam Hussein's sons were responsible for torture, maiming, and murder of countless Iraqis. Now more than ever, all Iraqis can know that the former regime is gone and will not be coming back.

As our work continues, we know that our coalition forces are serving under difficult circumstances. Our Nation will give those who wear its uniform all the tools and support they need to complete their mission. We are eternally grateful for the bravery of our troops, for their sacrifice, and for the sacrifices of their families. The families of our service men and women can take comfort in knowing that their sons and daughters and moms and dads are serving a cause that is noble and just and vital to the security of the United States.

A free, democratic, peaceful Iraq will not threaten America or our friends with illegal weapons. A free Iraq will not be a training ground for terrorists or a funnel of money to terrorists or provide weapons to terrorists who would willingly use them to strike our country or our allies. A free Iraq will not destabilize the Middle East. A free Iraq can set a hopeful example to the entire region and lead other nations to choose freedom. And as the pursuits of freedom replace hatred and resentment and terror in the Middle East, the American people will be more secure.

America has assumed great responsibilities for Iraq's future. Yet, we do not bear these responsibilities alone. Nineteen nations are providing more than 13,000 troops to help stabilize Iraq, and additional forces will soon arise—arrive. More than two dozen nations have pledged funds that will go directly towards relief and reconstruction efforts. Every day, we are renovating schools for the new school year. We're restoring the damaged water, electrical, and communication systems. And when we introduce a new Iraqi currency later this year, it will be the first time in 12 years that the whole country is using the same currency.

Our greatest ally in the vital work of stabilizing and rebuilding a democratic and prosperous Iraq is the Iraqi people themselves. Our goal is to turn over authority to Iraqis as quickly as possible. Coalition authorities are training Iraqi police forces to help patrol Iraqi cities and villages. Ambassador Bremer and General Abizaid are working to establish as quickly as possible a new Iraqi civilian defense force to help protect supply convoys and powerplants and ammunition depots. Offices have been established in major Iraqi cities to recruit soldiers for a new Iraqi army that will defend the people of Iraq instead of terrorizing them.

Most importantly, 10 days ago, Iraqis formed a new Governing Council. The Council represents all of Iraq's diverse groups, and it has given responsible positions to religious authorities and to women. The Council is naming ministers to establish control over Iraq's ministries, and the Council is drawing up a new budget. The process of drafting a constitution will soon be underway, and this will prepare the way for elections.

Yesterday in New York, members of Iraq's Governing Council participated in a meeting of the United Nations Security Council. They heard a report from U.N. Secretary-General Annan, which welcomed the establishment of the Iraqi Governing Council as a broadly representative Iraqi partner with whom the U.N. and the international community can engage to build Iraq's future.

Now that we have reached this important milestone, I urge the nations of the world to contribute militarily and financially towards fulfilling Security Council Resolution 1483's vision of a free and secure Iraq. The U.N. report also urges a swift return to full Iraqi sovereignty.

And this morning, Ambassador Bremer briefed me on our strategy to accelerate progress toward this goal. He outlined a comprehensive plan for action for bringing greater security, essential services, economic development, and democracy to the Iraqi people. The plan sets out ambitious timetables and clear benchmarks to measure progress and practical methods for achieving results.

Rebuilding Iraq will require a sustained commitment. America and our partners kept our promise to remove the dictator and the threat he posed not only to the Iraqi people but to the world. We also keep our promise to destroy every remnant of that regime and to help the people of Iraq to govern themselves in freedom. In the 83 days since I announced the end of major combat operations in Iraq, we have made progress, steady progress, in restoring hope in a nation beaten down by decades of tyranny.

Ambassador Bremer is showing great skill and resourcefulness and is demonstrating fine leadership and the great values of our country. Mr. Ambassador, thank you for what you're doing for America. I appreciate you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. in the the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq; Uday and Qusay Hussein, sons of former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq, who were killed July 22 by U.S. military forces in Mosul, Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; and Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

July 23, 2003

The President. Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. Laura and I are really glad you all are here. We're especially pleased to welcome the distinguished guests we honor today and their proud families and friends.