

DAILY BULLETIN

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BUSH REVIEWS FIVE-POINT PLAN FOR IRAQI SELF-GOVERNMENT

President Addresses U.S. Central Command Military Personnel

President Bush outlined his five-point plan to return Iraq to self-rule and to rebuild its institutions in a speech to U.S. military Central Command personnel at MacDill Air Force Base in Tampa, Florida, June 16.

Listing the points, the president said: “We’re handing over authority to a sovereign Iraqi government. We’re encouraging more international support for Iraq’s political transition. We’re helping Iraqis take responsibility for their own security. We’re continuing to rebuild Iraq’s infrastructure, and we’re helping Iraq move to free elections.”

Bush told the U.S. soldiers that their missions of helping to bring democracy to Iraq and Afghanistan are “giving people an alternative to bitterness and hatred, and that is essential to the peace of the world.”

“We have come not to conquer, but to liberate people,” said Bush, “and we will stand with them until their freedom is secure.”

With Iraq’s interim government set to assume sovereignty June 30, Bush reported that the country’s economy is moving forward with new businesses and a new currency. He said dozens of political parties are organizing and more than 170 newspapers are being published.

Bush also said life is improving for ordinary Iraqis, with electric power being restored, nearly 2,500 schools being rehabilitated, and all of the country's hospitals and most medical clinics now open and serving the people.

The United States also is helping to train Iraqi security forces, he said, and he praised the more than 200,000 Iraqis currently on duty or in training for "setting an example for their fellow citizens."

"They are securing a future of liberty and opportunity for their children and their grandchildren. And when the history of modern Iraq is written, the people of Iraq will know their freedom was finally secured by the courage and by the determination of Iraqi patriots," he said.

Bush warned that more violence can be expected in the weeks and months ahead.

"With each step forward on the path to self-government and self-reliance, the terrorists will grow more desperate and more violent," he said. "The killers know they have no future in a free Iraq. They want America to abandon the mission and to break our word."

But, he added, "I will not yield, and neither will the leaders of Iraq."

POWELL RECOGNIZES WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Voices U.S. commitment to help refugees "at their time of great need."

Secretary of State Colin Powell recognized World Refugee Day at the National Geographic Society headquarters in Washington on June 16.

Powell praised the world's leading refugee agency, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for its dedication to, and compassion for, the plight of the displaced. Powell hosted the event with UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie.

The Secretary of State advocated strong international support for the relocation and resettlement of the millions of refugees and internally displaced persons worldwide. The United States is the leading contributor to the

UNHCR and offers resettlement opportunities to more refugees than any other nation in the world.

Powell said he is currently working with international colleagues to improve conditions in the Darfur region of Sudan, where there are currently 1 million internally displaced people and 180,000 refugees in a refugee camp in neighboring Chad.

Leaders at last week's G8 summit meeting issued a strong statement "condemning ethnic cleansing in Darfur and holding the Government of Sudan responsible for it," said Powell.

In his remarks, Powell also emphasized the importance of the U.S. commitment to the full transfer of sovereignty back to the Iraqi people on July 30th. "For the people of Iraq to truly feel at home, they must have ownership of their own country." He also praised UNHCR's work in Iraq and Afghanistan to help the people of these nations recover from long periods of turmoil.

"Today, on World Refugee Day, our thoughts turn to the hundreds of thousands of people who are still imperiled in Darfur, and to the millions of other driven, displaced people around the world, some 18 million people within this category," Powell said. "Today, together we renew our commitment to help them at their time of great need."

Following is the transcript of Powell's remarks:

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Secretary of State Colin L. Powell
At the Launch of World Refugee Day
June 16, 2004
National Geographic Society
Washington, D.C.

(10:00 a.m. EDT)

SECRETARY POWELL: Thank you very much, Joun-ah, for that kind introduction. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen, and welcome to World Refugee Day, really World Refugee Week, as over the next several days, we will celebrate what we try to do around the world for those of our fellow citizens who are so needy.

I'd like to thank Gil and the National Geographic Society for the generous support they provide every year that helps to make this important event possible. And of course, I am once again pleased to be sharing the stage with the United Nations Goodwill Ambassador, Angelina Jolie. This is not the first time we have done this and I'm sure it will not be the last as well.

We are so thankful that there are beautiful souls like Angelina who so selflessly turn their compassion into action and not just words. Angelina has just returned from the camps in Chad, where she met with the refugees from Sudan's Darfur region and where she heard firsthand of their terrible suffering.

I spent a lot of time in recent days and weeks talking to my counterparts in the international community and my colleagues in the United Nations leadership and to the leaders of the Government of Sudan, in order to put maximum pressure on them to do what they can do, not only the Government of Sudan but the international community to help the suffering people in Darfur, those that Angelina paid witness to and, by her presence, came to publicize to the world what's actually happening out there.

Today, on World Refugee Day, our thoughts turn to the hundreds of thousands of people who are still imperiled in Darfur, and to the millions of other driven, displaced people around the world, some 18 million people within this category. Today, together we renew our commitment to help them at their time of great need. Today, together, we pledge to support and to protect the world refugees as they seek a new life, a better life.

Echoing the theme of today's event, we vow to help them "feel at home" within the international family, within the international community. Together, we will work for the day when the world's refugees can return to their homes in safety. I'm sure that Angelina would agree that there's no better way to begin this important event than with a message from another beautiful soul, one who cares very deeply about the world's refugees, First Lady Laura Bush.

(Videotape is played.)

SECRETARY POWELL: America is a nation that millions of refugees have come to call home. It's a place where people of all races, religions and creeds enjoy the blessings of liberty. We are a nation of nations and we're proud to stand, as President Bush puts it, for the

non-negotiable demands of human dignity. The plight of refugees serves the hearts of all Americans; we who are so fortunate can hardly imagine what it must be like to flee in terror from our homes with only the clothes on our back, with what few possessions we can carry, pursued by the circling fear of torture, rape and death that could descend upon us at any moment.

We can hardly imagine being rushed from the ones we loved, wrenched and thrown out into the wilderness. We can hardly imagine the agony of day after day without food or clean water. We can hardly imagine waiting for weeks, months, and even years in uncertainty, not knowing where we'll end up, not being able to plan for the future, now knowing if we'll ever be able to feel like home again.

For millions of refugees and displaced people around the world, these horrors are a daily reality. And for them, the feeling of home must seem lost forever. And time and time again, the compassion of the international community and the dedication of the men and women of UNHCR has brought hope to the lives of millions; indeed, the UNHCR has helped millions of people return to their homes or to find new homes in freedom and safety.

The United States is proud, as you heard a moment ago, to be the UNHCR's largest contributor and to support its efforts across the globe. In Iraq, the UNHCR is helping a long-suffering people begin to feel at home after years of tyranny and violence. The United States shares this goal, which is why we are fully committed to a full transfer of sovereignty on the 30th of June, back to the Iraqi people. For the people of Iraq to truly feel at home, they must have ownership of their own country.

In Afghanistan, the UNHCR has worked together with us and our coalition partners to accomplish one of the largest repatriation operations in history. Together, we've helped more than three million refugees return to Afghanistan. UNHCR is helping the people of Afghanistan rebuild their houses, strengthen their communities and reclaim their country. Though the returned refugees of Afghanistan still face many difficult challenges, they are finally, finally starting to feel at home.

UNHCR has also restored hope to hundreds of thousands of refugees throughout Africa. People are now beginning to return to their homes in Angola, Burundi, Sierra Leone and Liberia. UNHCR is working hard to get children

back in school, to deliver health care to the sick, and to help farms reclaim and replant their lands.

One needs to look no further than Darfur to remind themselves in the most vivid and painful way of the great challenges that still remain. In addition to the estimated 180,000 refugees in Eastern Chad, an estimated one million more people have been internally displaced within Darfur itself.

As Angelina can attest, the people who fled Darfur were lucky to escape with their lives: their villages and crops were burned; their water sources were destroyed; and many were the victims of rape, mutilation, and other cruelties. The United States is deeply committed to helping the people of Darfur.

As you know, President Bush hosted the G-8 summit meeting in Sea Island, Georgia, last week. The summit leaders issued a strong statement last Thursday, condemning ethnic cleansing in Darfur and holding the Government of Sudan responsible for it. And the following day, the United Nations Security Council voted unanimously for a peacekeeping mission that would help implement an eventual peace accord to end Sudan's civil war.

These were positive and welcome developments. The United States will continue to play a role within the international community to press the Government of Sudan to stop the violence and give us unrestricted access to the suffering people of Darfur. We have flown in many planeloads of supplies but the situation remains dire. Ultimately, we will work within the international community with everything we can to create the conditions that will allow the refugees and displaced people of Darfur to safely return to their homes.

My friends, today we join other nations across the globe in recommitting ourselves to easing the plight of all who will close their eyes tonight in a strange land to dream of the home that they were forced to flee. We must turn our compassion and our good wishes into action. It's up to all of us to defend the nonnegotiable demands of human dignity. It's up to all of us to help the world refugees feel at home again.

Let that be a cause. Let that be a prayer. Let us commit ourselves to that end.

Thank you very much.

RELIGION AND THE 2004 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

An interview with Professor Clyde Wilcox

Clyde Wilcox, professor of government at Georgetown University in Washington and author of several books on the relationship between religion and politics, including "Public Attitudes toward Church and State" and "Religion and Politics in Comparative Perspective," spoke to Washington File Staff Writer Alexandra Abboud on June 4 about religion and the 2004 presidential election.

Following is a transcript of the interview:

Question: The United State is a country that fosters the separation of church and state. What is the relationship between religion and politics in the U.S. today?

Professor Clyde Wilcox: Politicians and the courts continue to debate the meaning of the separation of church and state in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The phrase itself is, "Congress shall make no law regarding the establishment of a religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof." So, what does it mean to establish a religion? It doesn't actually say.

The phrase "separation of church and state" is Thomas Jefferson's language later on. It means that the government shall not establish a religion in the way that there are established churches in Germany and Norway, for example.

But what it has never meant is that religious people can't use their religion to help them make political decisions, including policy decisions, including who to vote for. It has never meant that churches cannot comment on policy issues of the day. In my view, it simply means that the government can't establish a religion or take sides between religions.

Q: In this election year, are presidential candidates looking at religious voters and religious organizations as an important voting bloc? If so, what are they doing to reach out to these voters?

Wilcox: One of the remarkable things about the United States is that it is a very religious nation, compared to Europe for example. Probably close to half of Americans tell survey researchers that they attend church every week. And although some of them are probably exaggerating, this is a very high number and therefore no presi-

dential candidate could ever win the presidency without appealing to highly religious voters.

The difficulty is that we are also a nation of many religions. Christians constitute about 80 percent of the public, but there are many Muslims, and Sikhs, and Hindus, and so forth. And moreover, within that 80 percent who are Christians, there are hundreds and hundreds of denominations. So there is no single group that comes anywhere close to being a majority in the U.S. So candidates cannot make a narrow sectarian appeal but rather a broader appeal.

What the surveys show is that Americans want their president -- and their leaders in general -- to be somewhat religious. Voters don't seem to care too much about which of the Christian groups their leaders might belong to.

But what voters do want to see is a president who has some sincere religious faith -- some kind of grounding in a religion. At the same time, there's a little bit of a nervousness on the part of voters about voting for someone who might think that he's having a very close conversation with God, and God is calling him to make a particular policy.

Q: What is the role of religious organizations such as churches in an election?

Wilcox: Churches are actually active in campaigns, but there's a limit on what they can do and still remain a taxexempt charity. They can't endorse a candidate, for example. But they can have voter registration drives, they can encourage their voters to think about the issues, and which issues are important to them. Quite a few churches are very active in politics. But they're not at least in theory -- partisan in their approach.

Q: What safeguards are there to make sure that these taxexempt organizations -- such as churches -- aren't involved in political activities that tax-exempt organizations are prohibited from engaging in?

Wilcox: The Internal Revenue Service has developed a set of guidelines to help churches understand what they're allowed to do, and what they're not allowed to do, and those guidelines are widely distributed. If the IRS finds that the church had been engaged substantially in partisan politics, it might withdraw its taxexempt status.

In general, we lean over backwards to give freedom of religion, and to give churches the right to criticize policies and to talk about what issues are important in the campaign. But there is a policy that if they become heavily partisan, then they're no longer considered a charity. That's very important in the U.S. because anyone can form a church here. I could form my own church and call it the Church of Clyde, and if I'm a taxexempt operation, then, by law, I can't really be doing electoral politics from it.

SPACE COMMISSION LAUNCHES NEW APPROACH TO SPACE EXPLORATION

Commission advises NASA to engage private sector in new programs

A specially appointed presidential commission on space policy issued a report June 16 charting out a new vision to pursue U.S. ambitions in outer space. Titled "A Journey to Inspire, Innovate and Discover," the 64-page document calls for firm national commitment to the continued exploration of space, increased involvement from the private sector, and a transformation of the way in which the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) manages its programs.

President Bush established the panel in January 2004 and tasked it with developing specific recommendations for further exploration of Earth's moon, Mars and space beyond our solar system.

The executive summary of the report lists eight findings and 14 recommendations to establish and implement long-term space exploration that is "sustainable, affordable, and credible."

-- The president should establish a permanent Space Exploration Steering Council that includes representatives of all appropriate federal agencies;

-- NASA should recognize and implement a far larger presence of private industry in space operations, allowing private industry to assume the primary role of providing services to NASA, and most immediately in accessing low-Earth orbit;

-- NASA should pursue international partnerships aimed

toward encouraging global investment in support of the vision; and

-- The Space Exploration Steering Council should work with the U.S. education community and state and local political leaders to produce an action plan that leverages the exploration vision in support of the nation's commitment to improve math, science, and engineering education.

The text of the full report is available at <http://www.moontomars.org/docs/M2MReportScreenFinal.pdf>.

Please Note: Most texts and transcripts mentioned in the U.S. Mission Daily Bulletin are available via our homepage www.usmission.ch. Select "Washington File" from the drop-down menu under "News."