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Secretary Rice Cites Progress in War on Terror Since September 11 Attacks

Notes successes, says United States will continue "the long-term struggle"
By Jane Morse
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Although the United States and the international community have made progress in the war against terrorism, more work must be done, says Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"We're safer, but we're not yet safe, and we have to recognize that there's much more work to do," she said in a September 8 interview with Tribune Broadcasting. Building an effective international network to fight terrorism takes time, she said.

Rice lauded the progress that has been made in the five years since terrorists attacked the World Trade Centers in New York and the Pentagon in Washington. Port security in the United States has been vastly improved, she said.

In addition, the United States has "liberated 50 million people from countries that were friends of the terrorists," she said. "We have made great progress against al-Qaida as an organization, arresting or otherwise putting off the battlefield any number of their field generals," adding, "there are people in our intelligence agency who spend every waking hour looking for Osama bin Laden."

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, regarded as the mastermind of the World Trade Center attack, and Abu Zubaydah and Ramzi Bin Al Shibh are among the top al-Qaida operatives that have been captured.

Intensive questioning of these captives has yielded maximum information, and now "the priority has shifted to being able to bring them to justice," Rice said. To this end, President Bush is seeking new legislation that will set procedures for the interrogation and trial of detainees, she said.

"The president wants to make certain as we go forward in the War on Terror that we have sustainable means by which to gather intelligence, means that are well within our laws and within our treaty obligations," Rice said during a September 6 interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation.

"But the long-term struggle here," Rice told Tribune Broadcasting, "is to deal with the ideology of hatred that produced the people who made those attacks and that's why the president is so insistent that we have to have a different kind of environment in the Middle East, one that breeds hope, not an ideology of hatred."

"It's tough going in places like Iraq and Afghanistan and the Middle East," Rice acknowledged. "But this is going to be a very different world than the one that has closed off hope and to produce people who would fly airplanes into buildings."

U.S., Allies Cooperating To Enhance Security, U.S. Official Says

Homeland Security's Chertoff urges stronger links with American Muslim community
By Jacquelyn S. Porth
Washington File Security Affairs Writer

Washington – The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, persuaded the United States and allied nations not to be complacent in the face of terrorism, says Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff.

Speaking only days before the fifth anniversary of the tragic attacks in New York and Washington, Chertoff said the destruction at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon was a "clear warning of what lies ahead if we do not continue to build our safety and security here in the United States and all over the world."

Chertoff told students at Georgetown University September 8 that the United States is working with its international partners to disrupt terrorist plots before they reach a "point of no return." He said part of his job is to evaluate and prioritize high-consequence threats such as a terrorist attack using chemical, biological, nuclear or radiological weapons.

He also pointed to the importance of building "a new level of confidence and trust" within the American Muslim community, because it is a key partner in protecting against future attacks. This community's input is important to help track not only the high-visibility international threats, Chertoff said, but also "the low-visibility homegrown threats that could take root in any community."

The secretary also talked about the many layers of security that have been created in the past five years, such as screening travelers at U.S. borders, information sharing, cargo screening and enhanced emergency preparedness and response measures.

The disrupted August 2006 plot against airliners bound from London to the United States demonstrated the importance of determining "as early as possible who is trying to come into this country from overseas, and who is

trying to get on an airplane that might do us harm," Chertoff said.

Right now passenger identity information for international flights reaches U.S. officials 50 minutes after takeoff. "That's simply too late," he said.

Over the next two years, a new system will be implemented to transmit that information well in advance of a flight's departure, according to Chertoff. "This will give us the time to check passenger names against databases and to coordinate with airlines and foreign authorities to prevent a suspicious person from getting on an airplane." Such a pre-notification is already operational between the United Kingdom and the United States, he said.

The necessary information exists now, but Chertoff said the Europeans need to lift some of their restrictions so the data can be fully analyzed and a potential terrorist can be prevented from entering the country. He said his plea to the Europeans is to work together now to ease restrictions before another attack like those of 9/11 occurs.

Over the next year, Chertoff said he looks forward to working with his European colleagues to collect needed information and ensure it is fully analyzed while respecting "the privacy of those who travel internationally."

He also talked about a variety of initiatives under way, including the creation of a secure biometric credential for those traveling in the Western Hemisphere, a secure driver's license, and plans to take prints of all 10 fingers of those making their first visit to the United States.

Chertoff emphasized the deterrent effect of creating such a biometric security net, especially when devices to read fingerprints are deployed at U.S. visa-issuing posts overseas as well as at U.S. ports of entry.

He also mentioned plans to deploy radiation portal monitors at all U.S. land and sea entry points by the end of 2007. "We're also going to move overseas and continue to push to do as much of the screening as we can in foreign ports, working with our foreign partners," Chertoff added.

By the end of 2008, the first phase of a program called "Securing the Cities" will be completed, the secretary predicted. Starting with New York, he said, the plan is to "conduct nuclear and radiological scanning of the principal pathways into the cities, whether they be over land, in the water, or underground."

Because terrorists are constantly adapting their methods and tactics, "we have to keep pace and get ahead," Chertoff said.

Security Growing in Northern Iraq as Iraqi Forces Come of Age

As Iraqis stand up, coalition forces beginning to stand down, General Turner says

By David McKeeby
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – In 2006, the number of coalition forces active in northern Iraq has been cut in half, demonstrating the success of Iraqi security forces in restoring security and government services to the region, says the commander of the coalition's Multi-National Division – North.

Appearing via videoconference from Tikrit, Iraq, Army Major General Thomas Turner II of the 101st Airborne Division told journalists at a September 8 Pentagon press briefing that coalition forces deployed to the country's six northern provinces are succeeding in their mission to help Iraqis "work to bring security, deliver essential services and prosperity to the people."

Multi-National Division – North is responsible for supporting security operations in an area of more than 121,730 square kilometers, and includes territory in the provinces of Diyala, Salah-ad-din, At-Ta'mim (Kirkuk), Nineveh, Sulimaniyah and Dohuk. Straddling Iraq's borders with Iran, Syria, and Turkey, the area is also home to approximately 40 percent of the country's oil and 70 percent of its natural gas reserves. The successful development of those resources will be essential to the country's future.

Nearly a year ago when Turner took the helm of the coalition's regional command, U.S.-led forces operated out of 35 forward operating bases in the area. Only one battalion of the Iraqi army operating in the area at the time was fully equipped to lead independent operations, and Iraqi police units were known to abandon their posts if confronted by insurgents, he said.

Turner's troops began an intensive training campaign, partnering with Iraqi units to teach them new counterinsurgency tactics and techniques as well as providing embedded military advisers from the coalition's military transition teams to help Iraqi officers plan operations and, if needed, arrange for additional support from coalition forces. Coalition forces also provided training and support to area police and border patrol units, helping them to become more effective in their missions.

"This partnership and training has raised the Iraqi army's proficiency and advanced their capabilities from being able to participate in combined missions to leading both combined and increasingly independent operations," Turner said.

Two Iraqi army divisions, as well as 35 battalions and eight brigades now conduct their own security operations with coalition support, Turner said. These units are responsible for maintaining security for much of Turner's operations area, including At-Ta'mim (Kirkuk) and Salah-ad-din provinces.

The other two divisions operating in northern Iraq are expected to assume their own areas of responsibility by the end of 2006, he said.

Turner added that Iraqi national police operating in the northern provinces are improving, as are the border guards, who are working with Iraqi army units to tighten security from 132 newly built forts guarding key entry points into the country.

The growing effectiveness of Iraqi soldiers and policemen is allowing them to gain the trust of area residents, Turner said, which has led to an increase in information about area militant activities. As a result, Iraqi forces have been able to detain 500 suspected insurgents and seize more than 400 weapons caches in recent months.

Currently, six of the Iraqi army's 10 divisions have been assigned lead responsibility for maintaining security in various parts of the country.

These efforts are part of the coalition's nationwide strategy to help rebuild the Iraqi security forces, whose progress was highlighted by the September 7 ceremony initiating a transfer of full operational control for Iraq's security forces to its prime minister.

As his forces prepare to complete their tour of duty, Turner reported that they are transferring only 11 bases to their coalition replacements from the Army's 25th Infantry Division. Thanks to improved security, the rest of the facilities have been either closed, handed over to the Iraqi army for use as barracks, or given to Iraqi authorities who he said plan to convert them into business centers, vocational training schools and parks.

Turner cautioned that since insurgents and terrorists are committed to derailing the new Iraq, "They will continue to attack innocent Iraqi civilians and Iraqi police, and attack Iraqi army forces in attempts to undermine the legitimacy of this new government."

The general concluded by praising the dedication and commitment of the Iraqi people to building a democratic future, particularly members of the security forces, who serve and protect at great risk to themselves and their families.

"The majority of Iraqis are tired of the bloodshed," he said, adding that given the growing self-sufficiency of Iraqi forces and the coalition to support them, "this enemy presents no challenge that cannot be overcome."

U.S. Conducting Joint Naval Exercises with Pakistan

Training aimed at better proficiency, interoperability of U.S., Pakistani forces

Washington -- U.S. and Pakistani navies are conducting more than two weeks of joint exercises in the North Arabian Sea and in the territorial waters of Pakistan, a U.S. military source says. The exercises are aimed at building international counterterrorism preparedness and cooperation on the seas.

The naval operations are part of "Inspired Union 2006," which focuses on training in maritime security operations; amphibious operations; anti-submarine warfare; surface warfare; air defense; electronic warfare; explosive ordnance disposal and command and control, according to the U.S. Navy public affairs office at U.S. Central Command in Florida. The exercises began on September 4 and will conclude September 21.

The bilateral exercises are aimed at enhancing tactical proficiency and interoperability between coalition and regional forces, according to a Navy statement. If successful, these maneuvers may serve as the foundation for regional maritime security operations in support of the global War on Terror. The idea would be to deny international terrorists "use of the maritime environment as a venue for attack," as well as to transport personnel, weapons, and other material, the Navy says.

Scheduled to participate in the exercises are the Pakistani naval vessels Shahjahan and Babur (both destroyers), Moawin (a tanker), and Saad (an attack submarine). The U.S. Navy has dispatched the USS Nicholas (a frigate), USS McFaul (a destroyer) and USS Albuquerque (a nuclear-powered submarine). Also taking part will be the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, and Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit Six. Any necessary support will be provided by the USS Enterprise Carrier Strike Group, USS Iwo Jima (an amphibious assault ship) Expeditionary Strike Group, and maritime patrol aircraft from both nations, according to the Navy.

During this second annual bilateral exercise, participants will receive classroom training and take part in practical at-sea tasks.

According to the Navy statement, these exercises give U.S.

and Pakistani forces opportunities "to refine their conduct of combined maritime security operations," while also working on amphibious operations, anti-submarine, surface and electronic warfare, explosive ordnance disposal, and command and control. The exercises serve as "an excellent training opportunity" to become more proficient tactically and to improve the interoperability of U.S. and Pakistani forces to deter international terrorist organizations from using the maritime environment.

Coalition maritime forces regularly operate and conduct maritime security exercises throughout the international waters of the Northern Arabian Sea. Pakistan and coalition partners contribute maritime forces such as ships, boarding teams, maritime patrol aircraft, intelligence analysts and other staff to support maritime security operations.

Successful exercises benefit both nations, according to the statement. The United States improves its likelihood of success in conducting coalition maritime security operations. And regional governments and coalition partners also benefit in interoperability, intelligence sharing and assisting with deterrence against international terrorist organizations that pose a threat to their countries.

APEC Ministers Urged To Confront Common Economic Challenges

Treasury's Paulson says APEC should be relevant, results-oriented organization
By Peggy B. Hu
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Finance ministers must take an active role in confronting economic challenges common to all the members of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson says.

"APEC needs to be a relevant and results-oriented organization," Paulson told the 13th annual APEC Finance Ministers Meeting in Hanoi, Vietnam, September 8.

The treasury secretary called on APEC finance ministers to promote multilateral trade liberalization, particularly in the financial services sector.

Services account for more than 50 percent of global gross domestic product (GDP), or the total output of goods and services, but only 20 percent of world trade, he said. Paulson noted that the World Bank estimates goods-and-services liberalization "could provide income gains in developing countries four and a half times the gains from goods liberalization alone."

Another area in which finance ministers can make a difference is in helping to address global imbalances in the areas of trade and government spending.

The Treasury Secretary said he and his counterparts discussed the importance of increasing the savings rate in the United States, the need for stronger domestic demand-led growth in Japan, other APEC members and Europe, and the value of flexible exchange rates in China and emerging East Asia.

Paulson said he also highlighted the importance of using enforcement tools to respond to and combat growing threats to financial systems such as narcotics trafficking, organized criminal activities, terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

"We must act to prevent and combat threats to our security by establishing authorities that will financially isolate those engaged in illicit activities and ensure that they do not access the international financial system," he said.

While in Hanoi, Paulson met with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung and economic officials to discuss a range of bilateral issues, including the importance of open trade for both economies, Vietnam's pending accession to the World Trade Organization and permanent normal trade relations for Vietnam.

Paulson also met with a group of Vietnamese entrepreneurs to talk about the challenges of doing business in a transitioning economy and participated in an event with Vietnamese business students.

"Vietnam's economic success for this and future generations is largely in the hands of these individuals," the Treasury Secretary said, adding that he had "encouraged them to have the confidence and courage to continue steadily on the path of economic reform."

Torture of Detainees "Absolutely Banned" Says State Official

Military tribunals necessary to bring terrorists to justice, legal adviser says
By Michelle Austein
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The use of torture and the use of evidence derived from torture is "absolutely banned" in the Bush administration's proposed procedures for military commissions trying detainees at the Guantanamo Bay base in Cuba, John Bellinger, the State Department's legal adviser said September 7.

At a briefing in Washington, Bellinger said that under the proposed legislation, information derived from torture as defined by both international and domestic law cannot be used in trials. "It would be up to the judge to determine based on an argument by the accused whether he believed that something were torture and needed to be prohibited," Bellinger said.

On September 6, President Bush announced that he sent legislation to Congress that specifically would authorize U.S. military commissions to try captured terrorist suspects and would clarify the rules governing how U.S. interrogators may question detainees to gather intelligence against terrorist organizations and prevent potential terrorist activities.

The president also announced that 14 high-level al-Qaida members were transferred from CIA facilities to the Department of Defense's detention facility in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they will await trial by U.S. military commissions. Those 14 high-level al-Qaida members transferred to Guantanamo will have access to lawyers, Bellinger said.

The legislation, if passed by Congress, would address all the concerns raised by the Supreme Court in its June 29 decision ruling that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applies to the U.S. war with the al-Qaida group, Bellinger said. "We need Congress to pass that legislation so that we can move forward and begin to bring people to justice," he said.

After September 11, 2001, Bellinger said, "there were numerous rules on the books that were available to treat past wars and people in past wars … but that there are not clearly existing rules either domestically or internationally" that apply to individuals detained as part of the War on Terror.

"A system needs to be designed in which those who had been conspiring to commit attacks on the United States or elsewhere around the world can be tried in a fair system for their crimes," he said.

The Bush administration draft legislation calls for trials to be open except in certain limited circumstances that allow the accused to be excluded if presenting the evidence to him or her would compromise national security. In such a situation, a member of the president's Cabinet would have to certify that this exception is essential to national security. Then, the judge presiding over the case would determine whether there is a way in which the evidence can be presented that would not compromise national security. The judge also would have to determine if exclusion of the defendant from trial during presentation of that evidence would interfere with the accused person's right to a full and fair trial.

Also on September 6, the Defense Department released a new field manual that specifies treatment and interrogation procedures for all detainees under the department's custody worldwide.

Women Are Agents of Change Around the World, State's Hughes Says

Investment in women's, girls' education, pays off in communities
By Carolee Walker
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – When women have access to education, capital and health care, they not only improve the well-being of their own families but the stability of their communities, said Karen Hughes, under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, at the International Women's Leadership Conference in Honolulu on August 29.

"When you educate a woman, she teaches her family. Give a woman a micro-grant so she can start a small business in her home and she will buy shoes, milk and books for her children with the profits," Hughes said.

In the Middle East, according to Hughes, where two-thirds of the estimated 70 million illiterate people are female, U.S.-sponsored education programs for women teach both literacy and practical skills such as better nutrition for children.

"I'll never forget meeting with women at a literacy program in Morocco – as they told me of their pride in being able to go to the market and post office, read for themselves, and for the first time, be able to help their children with homework."

In Morocco, Hughes said, a new family code promotes equality between men and women and has raised the legal age for marriage for girls from 15 to 18.

One of the major goals of President Bush's Africa Education Initiative, a U.S.-led partnership designed to increase access to quality basic education and to increase the number of teachers in Africa, is to enroll more girls in school, Hughes said. Through the Ambassadors Girls' Scholarship Program, the United States will provide 550,000 scholarships to girls at the primary and secondary levels. To date, 180,000 scholarships for tuition, fees, books, uniforms and other essential supplies have been awarded

to girls in 40 countries in Africa.

Hughes said enrollment in Iraqi schools has risen every year since Saddam Hussein was removed from power; by 2004 about 35 percent of school-age girls attended school. Hughes said Iraqi women have told her they want a unified Iraq to succeed and emerge peaceful and free. "Women are working at great personal risk to help make it so."

Every extra year a girl attends school reduces the mortality rate of her children by 8 percent, according to Hughes, who said educated women are three times more likely to protect themselves against HIV/AIDS.

"As I have traveled around the world, I have seen that women are increasingly agents of change, arbiters of peace and reconciliation, and advocates of education and health," Hughes said.

A new generation of women leaders is being voted into office and bringing new backgrounds to government service, Hughes said, allowing women to have a greater impact in their communities outside their homes.

For example, Angela Merkel, Germany's first woman chancellor, is a former physicist. Prior to running for office in Liberia, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was an economist and banker. Today, children are back in school in Liberia, which Hughes said was once known as among the "worst places to be a woman on earth" and where an estimated one in 10 children was recruited into militias.

Michelle Bachelet, president of Chile, the daughter of a Chilean general who was tortured and died in prison, was a victim of hate, Hughes said, who dedicated her life to turning hate into understanding and tolerance.

"One women's ability to overcome hate and violence with hope and love is exactly what the world needs more of right now as terrorists seek to exploit political differences and grievances sometimes centuries old to their violent purposes, to the detriment of all of us who want a more peaceful and hopeful future for our children," Hughes said.

Today in Rwanda, 39 percent of the members of parliament and 40 percent of the Cabinet are women. "After the horrific genocide of the 1990s, when more than 800,000 people were killed," Hughes said, women "are promoting reconciliation and healing in Rwanda and actively supporting improved literacy and financial credit for women."

Hughes said mothers, sisters, wives and daughters are vital to advancing freedom, opportunity, education and health care and isolating violent extremists and undermining their ideology of hate and terror.

"We have much progress to celebrate as women around the world advance opportunities for themselves, their families, their communities and their countries," she said.

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