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INFO MEMO

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FOR: THE ADMINISTRATOR
FROM: Judy Van ~~Post~~
THROUGH: Scott Carpenter
SUBJECT: Talking Points on Democracy-Building Programs, Town Hall meetings, Focus Groups

The following are talking points for Ambassador Bremer's media interviews today:

Democracy-Building Programs:

- We have devoted a significant amount of funding to democracy building programs for Iraq, 6458 million. This is the largest amount of funding dedicated to the early stages of a country's democratic development since the end of the Cold War.
- We are implementing a robust plan for democracy building programs, coordinating use of supplemental funds with USAID, DOS, and the National Endowment for Democracy.
- Programs include political party and civil society development, civic education, women in leadership, national government support, decentralization, preparation for the 2004 caucuses and 2005 elections, transparency in government, and media infrastructure development.
- Throughout the country, training is being conducted in the basics of democracy including accountability of government employees, transparency of government actions and processes, and participation of citizens in the governance process.
- For example, in December alone, more than 600 meetings throughout the country were held on the basics of democratic government, and included citizens and political representatives.
- In the past 7 months, more than 1000 community action projects, each organized by a community mobilization specialist, have involved thousands of Iraqi citizens in the most basic process of democracy – learning how to unite to solve problems and work together.

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November 15th Agreement/Civic Education:

- Iraqis all over the country are becoming involved in the process of democracy by debating the November 15 Agreement.
- There are ongoing discussions in universities, women's associations, and other civic groups on the meaning of democracy in the new Iraq.
- There have been two large successful town hall meetings, one in Basra on December 28 (180 people) and another yesterday in Mosul (220 people). In both, there was lively debate on current issues, from federalism to the process of choosing a transitional assembly.
- More town hall meetings are planned for Baghdad, Kirkuk, Baquba and Arbil. But there are ongoing discussions taking place all over Iraq.
- In addition, the Iraqi Governing Council members are getting out and increasingly speaking to their constituent groups. I attended one such meeting last week in Nasariyah with more than 100 local notables.
- CPA has assisted by distributing over a million leaflets describing the November 15 Agreement; there was such a demand that we are printing another 250,000.
- We are also providing materials on civic education and conducting focus groups and polling to help the Iraqi leadership gauge public reactions to the Agreement.
- Iraqis participated in 16 focus groups in 8 cities following the town hall meetings.
- To date, the feedback we have received on the Agreement has been positive overall but reflects public concerns about security and the need to provide greater clarity on the process.

ATTACHMENTS: NONE.

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2