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Address to the Gulf Research Center in Dubai

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Remarks as Prepared for Delivery

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Introductory Remarks

Thank you for your kind introduction. I'm very happy to be here, and to have received such a warm welcome on my first visit to Dubai. While the UAE and Dubai in particular have gotten a lot of international press coverage recently, it is hard to fully comprehend what's been achieved here in a remarkably short time unless you see it with your own eyes.

I now have a greater understanding of the UAE leadership's vision, not only for economic development and infrastructure, but for Dubai as a forum for ideas and international understanding and cooperation. To this end, I appreciate the fact of the existence of the Gulf Research Center and its broad range of programs, and especially its willingness to host me here today.

The topic on the agenda today — the security of the Gulf and the broader Middle East — is one of tremendous urgency for the United States as well as for our friends and partners here in the region. It seems fitting to launch a conversation on Gulf security here in Dubai. As a historic entrepot of commerce and civilizational exchange, Dubai has thrived for centuries by making the most of its strategic location.

Today, as the epicenter of innovation, openness, and the global integration of the Middle East, Dubai embodies the aspirations and opportunities that are finally within reach for the peoples of this region. That you have achieved so much in the shadow of enduring regional challenges is a testament to the foresight of your leadership and the entrepreneurial spirit of your nation.

Throughout this truly transformational period, the strong bilateral relationship between the United States and the UAE has been constant source of security for the national interests of both our peoples and for the peace and stability of the broader international community. Our important partnership is based on shared values, as well as shared interests.

The prosperity and progress that are the hallmarks of this country are the carefully cultivated products of forward-looking political, security, and economic policies that are strengthening your position as a regional hub for trade, transportation, investment, and tourism, thus contributing to regional economic security.

Recognizing the elemental requirement for genuine security based on cooperation, the founder of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed, oriented the UAE's foreign policy toward promoting "peace, neighborliness, and friendship." The UAE has also stepped forward as a good neighbor in the world extending its generous assistance to Iraqis, Afghans, Palestinians, and Lebanese struggling to rebuild their countries; to Pakistanis following the terrible earthquake there in November of 2005; and even to my fellow Americans following Hurricane Katrina.

Gulf Security: A Global Concern, A Vital Mutual Interest

But while Dubai and the UAE have come to symbolize the flourishing future that stands before this region, your success should also serve to remind us of the vital need to deter and defend against the grave and growing threats that loom not far from these borders. The world has long understood that the Gulf is a vital transit way for the preservation of international security and the functioning of the global economy.

57% of the world's crude oil reserves and 40% of total proven natural gas reserves are located in the Gulf region. 20% of the world's oil supply passes through the Straits of Hormuz every day. The peace and security of the Gulf and our allies in the region are critical to the health of the global economy and to the security of the United States. We all know this. But our interest in Gulf security is not just about oil. In today's globalized, interdependent world, international stability is inextricably linked to Gulf security. Destabilization of the Gulf would threaten the vital interests of everyone.

And while the U.S. has long had a vital interest in the free flow of critical energy supplies, our commitment to the security of this region also now reflects the legacies of the terrible attacks of 9/11 and the long-awaited liberation of Iraqis from a dictatorial regime. Our challenge today transcends the traditional need to protect access to the region's energy supplies and transportation corridors from a conventional military threat.

Those events made clear that we must address a broader and more profound set of risks: to avert the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to counter the intensification of extremist ideologies, and to advance good governance, economic progress, and constructive interaction with the broader world. Preserving Gulf stability is thus a mutual responsibility and a common challenge that requires a multi-faceted set of policies and close coordination between the U.S., regional leaders, and all those states that share our commitment to democracy, peace and stability.

Threats to Gulf Security

As scholars and specialists, you are familiar with the geopolitical threats to regional security – and I want to talk in detail on two: the ongoing violence in Iraq and the Iranian regime's destabilizing actions across the region. But these specific threats derive from a broader conflict between the forces of freedom, moderation, and civil society, and those of violent extremism and sectarian hatred. This existential contest is being played out in several areas in the Middle East, and particularly in Iraq.

Our objective — one that we believe is shared by responsible leaders and reformers throughout the region — is to ensure that the forces of instability and violence do not prevail. To accomplish this, we have developed a

comprehensive approach intended to make progress in each of the key areas of tension, and to promote the general trends of progress, moderation and openness that have reaped such rewards here in Dubai.

Threat/U.S. Response: Iraq

We all agree that a stable, prosperous, and unified Iraq, based on respect for Iraq's territorial integrity and the sovereignty and authority of Iraq's democratically elected government, is in the interest of all countries in the region as well as the U.S. Iraq's democratic government is besieged by forces that view moderation and inclusive, representative government as anathema to their regional agenda. The brave Iraqis who are trying to build a new Iraq where all Iraqis have their voices heard, and where difference are resolved peacefully, are being challenged by sectarian extremists, al- Qaida terrorists, and terrorists who use violence, oppression, and intimidation to advance extremist agendas.

As President Bush has said repeatedly, failure in Iraq is simply not an option. The stakes for Iraq and the region are too high. That is why we put a lot of thought into a new plan. We listened carefully to the advice and views of our allies in the region. And we worked closely with the Iraqis. Our strategy is built on the premise that establishing security is a necessity for progress in other areas, and it includes strong, complementary economic and political approaches.

The main thrust of the President's *New Way Forward in Iraq* is for the U.S. to assist and support Iraqi-led efforts to deal with their most difficult problems, including confronting all those involved in intimidation and killing, supporting and achieving genuine national reconciliation, and doing more to improve the day-to-day lives of average Iraqis so that they can feel the benefits of political and economic freedom.

A key part of our new strategy is to support moderate Iraqi leaders – regardless of political or religious affiliation – who are committed to advancing their goals peacefully as part of a democratic process. If Iraq is going to have a stable and prosperous future, we must help the Iraqis reject, isolate, and defeat extremist elements.

We cannot do this alone – we and the Iraqis need the assistance of friends and allies, particularly here in the Gulf. A large part of that assistance will center on the International Compact with Iraq, something which many of the region's countries have worked hard with the Iraqis to achieve.

The Compact involves the UN, World Bank, IMF, the Arab Monetary Fund, Islamic Development Bank, Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development, and more than 70 countries. Under the Compact, Iraq has identified and committed to implement a broad and detailed program of economic reforms in return for support from the international community, including through debt relief and financial and technical assistance.

The Compact will also promote greater regional economic integration, especially between Iraq and its neighbors. We hope that Iraq and its neighbors will work to realize a new future together. We appreciate our partnership with the UAE and other GCC states to support Iraq and the Iraqi people, but would also ask that you consider now what more can be done as we all look hard at ways of increasing our assistance.

Threat/U.S. Response: Iran

The Iranian regime's strategic calculus is simple but flawed: the more chaos there is in the region, the greater its

influence; the stronger the forces of violence and destruction, the more forceful its hand in regional affairs. This explains the regime's continued pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, and its refusal to adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, sign the Additional Protocol, and meet its international nuclear obligations by cooperating with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and complying with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1696 and 1737.

It explains Iran's support of terrorism worldwide, for extremist elements in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, as well as its repeated efforts to thwart a peaceful resolution to the Palestinian- Israeli conflict. It explains Iran's support for violent extremism and sectarianism in Iraq that is calculated to thwart efforts toward national reconciliation in Iraq, and it explains why Iran, along with Syria, allows terrorists and insurgents to use its territory to move in and out of Iraq and helps train and arm militants who are killing Coalition forces and innocent Iraqis.

I would add that it is not surprising that a government that would follow these policies would also disregard the basic human rights and aspirations of its own people. The regime is well aware of the strategic importance of the Gulf. Instead of playing a constructive role in the Gulf, the regime has made a strategic decision to work against our shared vital interest in Gulf stability by attempting to intimidate its neighbors and dominate the Gulf, be this through proxy terrorism or its pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability, or provocative military exercises and missile tests. We cannot allow this intimidation to succeed.

The United States has joined the international community in condemning Iran's reckless and illegal pursuit of a nuclear weapons capability. We have made clear to the regime that the path to greater security lies in meeting its international nuclear obligations, denouncing terrorism and extremism, and suspending its destabilizing actions in Lebanon and Iraq. Unfortunately, the regime continues to ignore the international community.

The unanimous passage of UN Security Council Resolution 1737 which places Iran in a small group of countries (11 total) subject to Chapter VII sanctions was a milestone in these efforts. We call on all of our partners in the region to swiftly and fully implement their obligations under 1737 and to pressure the regime to abandon its illegal nuclear activities. Next month, the Security Council will again convene to evaluate Iran's compliance with its nuclear obligations, and may pursue additional Chapter VII steps, as necessary.

The United States is working for a diplomatic solution to this crisis and believes one is possible, with the support of other countries. That said, we take no option off the table to solve this problem.

As we go forward with our nuclear diplomacy, the United States will seek to maintain the strong international consensus regarding the steps that Iran must take to comply with its nuclear obligations. Our offer of direct talks within the P5+1 framework remains on the table, but Iran must first verifiably suspend enrichment and related activities.

In Iraq, we will counter the regime's support for militants by seeking out and destroying networks of individuals — regardless of nationality — that provide advanced weaponry and training used to kill Coalition troops and innocent Iraqi civilians. It's no secret that the United States has grave concerns with Iran. I want to stress, however, that our problem — and the international community's problem — is with the policies of the Iranian government, not the Iranian people. Thus our goal remains to change the regime's behavior.

The United States government and the American people respect the Iranian nation, and admire its rich history,

vibrant culture, and many contributions to civilization. We believe that the Iranian government should be answerable to the Iranian people and responsive to their needs. The Iranian people deserve the freedom to exercise their civil rights, an economy that rewards their intelligence and talents, and a society that allows them to fulfill their tremendous potential. The region and the world seek an economic and political partner in a peaceful, democratic Iran.

Sadly, the regime has chosen to deny its people liberty, opting instead to use Iran's national resources to fund terrorism and extremism, pursue nuclear weapons, and destabilize the region.

Despite what the Iranian government says, the United States and the international community have no objection to Iran's pursuit of a truly peaceful nuclear power program, under IAEA supervision. In fact, the generous package offered by the P5+1 would provide economic, political, and technological benefits for the Iranian people.

Our vision is an Iran that is integrated in the regional system; and Iran that no longer threatens its neighbors and respects the rights of its citizens; an Iran that no longer diverts vast sums desperately needed at home to fund terrorist attacks against civilians elsewhere; a full trading partner with both the region and the international community; a great nation with a strong economy that can create adequate jobs for its population. An Iran that will have strong, positive relations with its neighbors, as well as with the international community, and a contributor to peace for the region.

Responding to the Threat:

The United States objective with regard to the Gulf region, and in the Middle East more broadly, is the stability, security and prosperity of our allies, and to work together to confront and overcome mutual threats. While Iran seeks chaos, we will pursue security for our allies and for the region.

While Iran seeks the power to dominate, we will continue to stand by our friends and to assist them in developing the capabilities they need to resist such pressure.

While Iran seeks to create divisions in the region and in the international community in pursuit of domination, the U.S. is working with a wide range of regional and international partners on political and security initiatives in pursuit of security.

Response: GCC+2

For example, last week in Kuwait, Secretary of State Rice met with her counterparts from the GCC countries, Egypt, and Jordan. This was the fourth "GCC+2" meeting. This meeting took place because we share a common vision: we all want a stable, peaceful, and prosperous Middle East.

The strategy of responding to threats to regional security through collective consultation and action has been around for some time.

The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was established in 1981 in response to the destabilizing events of that era: the Iran-Iraq war and extremists' efforts to overthrow Arab governments through the export of revolutionary and jihadist ideology that distorts Islam for radical political purposes. The goal of the founding states of the GCC — Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and of course the UAE — was, as the GCC Charter puts it, "to effect coordination, integration, and interconnection between the GCC states in all fields," and thus strengthen their collective ability to meet

regional challenges.

Put more simply, the creation of the GCC represented an effort by moderate regional states to establish a collective security mechanism based on the principles of cooperation, peaceful resolution of disputes, respect for UN resolutions, and adherence to norms of international behavior -- a coalition of the responsible, if you will. In a similar manner, Secretary Rice and her GCC+2 counterparts met in a spirit of partnership, with a focus on consulting and exchanging views. The GCC+2 mechanism provides a way to implement our joint commitment to work together to promote regional security and peace.

At the January 16 meeting in Kuwait, Secretary Rice and the GCC+2 Foreign Ministers talked about Iraq, and ways we can work together to support national reconciliation and assist the Iraqi people in their struggle to ensure that violent extremism does not undermine the hard work they have undertaken to create a new Iraq in which all can live in peace, freedom, and security.

They also discussed the need to move forward on achieving a twostate solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- we understand and believe that a just and lasting resolution of this longstanding tragedy will serve as a catalyst for comprehensive peace and reconciliation between Israel and all its Arab neighbors; we are committed to pursuing the vision of President Bush for two states -- Israel and Palestine -- living side by side in peace and security.

We are energizing our efforts with the parties and with moderate regional states and the Quartet to pursue that goal. It is critical that we do everything we can to help the parties come together to resolve their differences, and to support the direct dialogue between the parties which will be necessary to allow that process to move forward. In that context, it is vital that we support Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas as he follows the path of moderation and partnership in pursuit of peace.

Secretary Rice and her colleagues talked about the importance of a sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Lebanon and the need to support the people of Lebanon and the legitimate Lebanese government. The GCC countries have generously provided significant assistance to Lebanon.

They also discussed the grave situation with Iran, and the need to swiftly implement 1737 and hold Iran accountable for meeting its international obligations.

That this large group of regional leaders came together to discuss a comprehensive agenda including all major challenges shows not only that there is a consensus among moderate forces in the Middle East, but a shared commitment to act together. And we will continue to build on this cooperation to meet the challenges ahead.

Concluding Remarks

As I said earlier, this is a time of change and challenge in the Middle East. Sheikh Zayed, the founder of the UAE, once said that "Our security policy...is based on the necessity for cooperation by the countries of the region themselves to resist any danger that threatens our security."

The United States shares this wise leader's strategic assessment that collective action is the most effective way to manage change and counter challenges to regional security. The forces of violent extremism seeking to undermine

the stability of the Gulf region must be confronted by a united front of those countries who seek peace and security through moderation.

The vision we share is one of hope: that by working together we can build a prosperous, stable Middle East. Look at the benefits that have flowed to the UAE from its wise leadership and openness to the best of the rest of the world. We'd like to see this extended to the larger region.

The United States values its partnership with the UAE. We do not always agree, but when we differ, we differ as friends and with mutual respect. Our cooperation has benefited each other, as well as the region.

I want to leave you with a final thought. I've described the vision of the United States and its partners as one of hope that will benefit all. I want to contrast our vision with that of our adversaries. Theirs is a cynical vision of violence and despair that will only bring more violence, and more despair. That is our choice. That is our mutual challenge.

Thank you.

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