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TO: Interested Parties

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SUBJECT: Tough Talk Meets Reality

This week, the President has been touring the country claiming that Democrats “talk tough on terror.” But George W. Bush and his allies in Congress have consistently talked tough themselves. The problem is that they haven’t been smart:

- **Iraq:** “Mission Accomplished” and “Bring ‘em on” are tough talk, but he wasn’t smart—as the situation on the ground and the torrent of new books and intelligence information show, Bush didn’t listen to military leaders about what it would take to succeed in Iraq, and now he has no real strategy for victory there.
- **Iran and North Korea:** Bush was talking tough when he labeled them the “Axis of Evil,” but he wasn’t smart. He walked away from—or outsourced—negotiations with both countries, and now North Korea is threatening to test a nuclear weapon, and Iran has a nuclear weapons program underway.
- **Afghanistan:** Bush has boasted of driving the Taliban from power, but he took his eye off the ball in Afghanistan, and now a resurgent Taliban has a safe-haven in Pakistan and has stepped up their vicious attacks on US, NATO and Afghani forces, as well as the civilian population.
- **The War on Terror:** Bush was talking tough when he said “you’re with us or you’re against us,” but he wasn’t smart—his go-it-alone strategy has diminished America’s standing in the world and left the United States to pay the much of the price in the fight against global terrorism.

It is time for us to change course—we must have a national security policy that is not only tough, but smart. We are the mightiest nation on earth—we must use our strength to protect our people and defend our interests. That means using our strength wisely.

Below are the well-known tough-talking quotes from Bush and his key advisors and allies, along with some lesser-known, but equally swagger-filled utterances.

Iraq

1. GEORGE BUSH, White House Press Conference, July 3, 2003

Anybody who wants to harm American troops will be found and brought to justice. There are some that feel like if they attack us that we may decide to leave prematurely. They don’t understand what they are talking about if that is

the case. Let me finish. There are some who feel like the conditions are such that they can attack us there. **My answer is, bring 'em on."**

2. GEORGE BUSH, "Mission Accomplished" Remarks aboard the USS Abraham Lincoln, May 1, 2003

"Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed. And now our coalition is engaged in securing and reconstructing that country...

"The liberation of Iraq is a crucial advance in the campaign against terror. We've removed an ally of al Qaeda, and cut off a source of terrorist funding. And this much is certain: No terrorist network will gain weapons of mass destruction from the Iraqi regime, because the regime is no more."

3. DICK CHENEY, CNN's Larry King Live, June 20, 2005

"The level of activity that we see today from a military standpoint, I think, will clearly decline. **I think they're in the last throes, if you will, of the insurgency."**

4. DICK CHENEY, Meet the Press, March 16, 2003

"We will, in fact, be greeted as liberators."

5. KARL ROVE, RNC speech, January 20, 2006

"The United States faces a ruthless enemy—and **we need a commander-in-chief and a Congress who understand the nature of the threat... President Bush and the Republican Party do.** Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for many Democrats."

"To retreat before victory would be a reckless act—and this president and our party will not allow it."

6. BILL FRIST, MSNBC Interview, January 10, 2003

"I am absolutely convinced, based on the information that's been given to me, that the weapon of mass destruction which can kill more people than an atomic bomb—that is, **biological weapons—is in the hands of the leadership of Iraq."**

7. MITCH MCCONNELL, STATEMENT ON IRAQ, MARCH 2, 2004

"We should not have waited until Hussein's army once again stood ready at the border. We should not have waited until the threat he posed to the United States and its allies was imminent. **We should not have waited for the French to say it was OK to act to defend the free world."**

8. MITCH MCCONNELL, Meet the Press, January 26, 2003

"The dilemma we find ourselves in in North Korea illustrates why we need to finish the job of disarming Saddam Hussein... It would be better to be able to

do this with a large group of allies. But it's important to get this job done...
**there is evidence of connections between Saddam Hussein and al-Qaeda.
We have no doubt that he has weapons of mass destruction."**

Iran/North Korea

1. GEORGE BUSH, Interview with Israeli TV Channel 1, August 12, 2005

"My latest information is that the Iranians refuse to comply with the demands of the free world, which is: do not in any way, shape or form have a program that could yield to a nuclear weapon. And the United States and Israel are united in our objective to make sure that Iran does not have a weapon...

All options are on the table."

2. GEORGE BUSH, State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002

"The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons."

"States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an **axis of evil**, arming to threaten the peace of the world."

3. DICK CHENEY, Comments at a State Department-White House Meeting on North Korea, December 12, 2003

"I have been charged by the President with making sure that none of the tyrannies in the world are negotiated with. **We don't negotiate with evil; we defeat it."**

4. DICK CHENEY, Speech to AIPAC, March 7, 2006

"The Iranian regime needs to know that if it stays on its present course, the international community is prepared to impose meaningful consequences. For our part, the United States is keeping all options on the table. We will not allow Iran to have a nuclear weapon."

Afghanistan

1. GEORGE BUSH, Remarks at West Point, May 27, 2006

"When the Taliban regime in Afghanistan tested America's resolve, refusing our just demands to turn over the terrorists who attacked America, we responded with determination. **Coalition forces drove the Taliban from power, liberated Afghanistan, and brought freedom to 25 million people."**

2. DONALD RUMSFELD, Wehrkunde Conference, February 2004

"The world is a safer place today because **the Coalition liberated 50 million people—25 million in Afghanistan** and 25 million in Iraq."

3. MITCH MCCONNELL, CNBC NEWS, March 23, 2004

"Afghanistan has been freed. The Taliban is gone. They have a new constitution."

"Who could seriously argue that the world is less safe today with a new regime in Afghanistan and a new regime in Iraq?"

The War on Terror

1. GEORGE BUSH, Remarks at West Point, May 27, 2006

"America makes no distinction between the terrorists and the countries that harbor them. **If you harbor a terrorist, you are just as guilty as the terrorists and you're an enemy of the United States of America.**"

2. GEORGE BUSH, "The Future of Iraq," February 26, 2003

"We have arrested, or otherwise dealt with, many key commanders of al Qaeda. Across the world, we are hunting down the killers one by one. We are winning. And we're showing them the definition of American justice."

3. GEORGE BUSH, West Point, June 1, 2002

"We must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge... If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long."

4. DICK CHENEY, Speech at the Heritage Foundation, October 10, 2003

"We are applying the Bush doctrine: Any person or government that supports, protects or harbors terrorists is complicit in the murder of the innocent and will be held to account."

5. DICK CHENEY, Speech at AEI, July 24, 2003

"This enemy holds no territory, defends no population, is unconstrained by rules of warfare, and respects no law of morality. **Such an enemy cannot be deterred, contained, appeased, or negotiated with. It can only be destroyed, and that's the business at hand.**"

"We are not going to answer further danger by simply issuing diplomatic protests or sharply worded condemnations. We will not wait in false comfort while terrorists plot against innocent Americans. We will not permit outlaw states and terror groups to join forces in a deadly alliance that could threaten the lives of millions of Americans. We will act, and act decisively, before gathering threats can inflict catastrophic harm on the American people."

"One by one, in every corner of the world, we will hunt the terrorists down and destroy them."

6. KARL ROVE, Comments to New York State Conservative Party fundraiser, June 23, 2005
"Conservatives saw the savagery of 9/11 in the attacks and prepared for war; liberals saw the savagery of the 9/11 attacks and wanted to prepare indictments and offer therapy and understanding for our attackers."
7. RICK SANTORUM, Senate Campaign Debates, September 3, 2006
"War against Islamic fascism will be won or lost in America"
"Rumsfeld has done a fine job...we have a great game plan"
"I believe that [Iraq] was a war of necessity because they were a threat. It is important that we are in the Middle East right now and confronting this broad war against Islamic fascism."
8. TOM DELAY, Speech before Israeli Knesset, July 30, 2003
"Freedom and terrorism cannot coexist. **Terrorism cannot be negotiated away or pacified.** Terrorism will either destroy free nations, or free nations will destroy it. Freedom and terrorism will struggle—good and evil—until the battle is resolved."
9. JOHN BOEHNER, Floor statement, June 16, 2006
"During the 1990s, world leaders looked at the mounting threat of terrorism, looked up, looked away, and hoped the problem would go away."

The Not So Tough Talk

1. GEORGE BUSH, Press Conference with PM Tony Blair, May 26, 2006
"Saying "bring it on," kind of tough talk, you know, that sent the wrong signal to people. I learned some lessons about expressing myself maybe in a little more sophisticated manner—you know, "wanted dead or alive," that kind of talk. I think in certain parts of the world it was misinterpreted, and so I learned from that."
2. DONALD RUMSFELD, Troop Town Hall in Kuwait, December 8, 2004
"As you know, you have to go to war with the Army you have, not the Army you want. You can have all the armor in the world on a tank, and it can [still] be blown up."
3. MITCH MCCONNELL, *The Big Story with John Gibson*, Fox News, June 14, 2006
"You know, the level of violence in Baghdad is completely unacceptable and I think the effort to quiet down the city is critical, but we also need to remember that a standard of absolutely no violence is a standard that couldn't be met in many of America's major cities."