

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 8, 2003

Dr. Condoleezza Rice
Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
National Security Council

**TALKING POINTS MEMO
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Dear Dr. Rice:

We are writing to call your attention to what we believe has been a serious and dangerous oversight in the Administration's planning for Operation Iraqi Freedom and the post-war period. Although hundreds of millions of dollars have been spent in searching for weapons of mass destruction, we understand that the Administration has only recently begun contemplating efforts to keep Iraq's weapons scientists - who may be the only extant element of an Iraqi unconventional weapons program - from putting their knowledge to use elsewhere.

In making the case for war, the President and Administration officials repeatedly warned Congress and the American people that Iraq possessed chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, intended to produce more, and might export the weapons or the expertise needed to produce them to hostile regimes and terrorists. In March, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld declared the need to "find and secure Iraq's weapons of mass destruction facilities and secure Iraq's borders so we can prevent the flow of weapons of mass destruction materials and senior regime officials out of the country."

Our men and women in uniform were brilliant in meeting the initial military goals of Operation Iraqi Freedom, and we commend them for their skill, their courage, and the sacrifices they have made. Other critical goals related to weapons of mass destruction as set by the Administration, however, remain unmet.

We are deeply concerned that the Administration failed to plan for securing Iraqi scientists tasked with developing weapons of mass destruction. Press reports have indicated a number of dangerous failures in this regard:

- David Kay, head of the Iraq Survey Group, has expressed concern that since coalition forces entered Iraq, several top Iraqi weapons makers have left Iraq for Syria and Jordan. (AFP, October 3)
- Dr. Modher Sadeq-Saba al-Tamimi, the head of Iraq's program to develop long-range missiles, escaped four months ago to Iran. (AP, November 17) Acquiring Iraqi expertise is clearly significant to Iran and imperils American and international efforts to bring Tehran into compliance with the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.
- U.S. weapons teams have reported having difficulty finding Iraqi experts and are not equipped to track them once they have been located. (AP, November 17)

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- Scientists remaining in Iraq have now been out of work for eight months, and could easily be susceptible to the entreaties of regimes or terrorist organizations who would find their expertise useful. (AP, November 16)

We understand that the State Department has begun to circulate a draft proposal describing a program "to block a scientific exodus and prevent Iraqis from doing future research in weapons of mass destruction." (AP, November 17) According to press reports, this memo describes a "Science, Technology and Engineering Mentorship Initiative for Iraq." The United States has a track record of effective - and relatively inexpensive - cooperative non-proliferation programs, and what we have seen of this new plan is encouraging. However, the same articles point to conflicts between the State Department, the Defense Department, and other planners preventing the earlier formulation of such an initiative, when it might have been more effective. Given that the Administration's stated reason for war in Iraq was the potential for the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the lack of such a plan until six months after the declared end of "major combat operations" is both alarming and incomprehensible.

Congress has appropriated \$700 million for the search for weapons of mass destruction. Thus far the Iraq Survey Group's search has yielded no such weapons - no evidence of a mobile biological weapons program, no recent chemical weapons program, nor any evidence of a recent nuclear weapons program. It is clear that the priority going forward must be the weapons capabilities that these scientists and officials represent.

As the President's top advisor on the U.S. effort in Iraq, we strongly believe it is critical for you to direct Coalition personnel in Iraq to provide all necessary resources and assistance to the nascent efforts to contain the proliferation of weapons expertise. We therefore request that you:

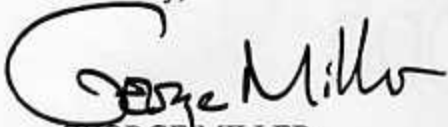
- Provide us with the draft State Department memo outlining the "Science, Technology and Engineering Mentorship Initiative for Iraq";
- Explain why this initiative was not proposed until November 2003;
- Provide us with the Administration's assessment to date of the status of the scientists and officials known to have been involved in the Iraqi weapons program, including how many have been located, how many are believed to have left the country and to which countries they went, and your estimate of the level and type of expertise of those who have left the country or that Coalition personnel have lost track of; and
- Work quickly to resolve this issue and eliminate the bureaucratic infighting between the relevant agencies, to ensure that this effort is operationalized as quickly as possible.

We would be happy to work with you in constructing legislation authorizing the appropriate

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agencies to work together in an effort to prevent the further dissemination of weapons expertise.
We look forward to your response.

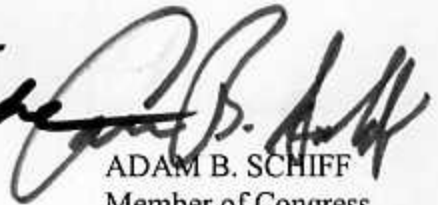
Sincerely,



GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



ELLEN O. TAUSCHER
Member of Congress



ADAM B. SCHIFF
Member of Congress

cc: Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of Defense
Colin Powell, Secretary of State