

**OCTOBER 10**

# The 'War on Terror' – in translation

**W**hen the Bush administration fires off a new round of speechifying about "the war on terror," the U.S. press rarely goes beyond the surface meanings of rhetoric provided by White House scriptwriters. But the president's big speech at the National Endowment for Democracy on Oct. 6 could have been annotated along these lines:

\* **"We will not tire or rest until the war on terror is won."** Translation: This is a war that can go on forever.

\* **"And while the killers choose their victims indiscriminately, their attacks serve a clear and focused ideology, a set of beliefs and goals that are evil but not insane."**

As president, I am the world's authority on evilness and insanity.

\* **"These extremists want to end American and Western influence in the broader Middle East, because we stand for democracy and peace and stand in the way of their ambitions."** Those who stand in the way of our ambitions are extremists.

\* **"They hit us and expect us to run. They want us to repeat the sad history of Beirut in 1983 and Mogadishu in 1993, only this time on a larger scale with greater consequences."**

Clinton and even Reagan were wimps compared to me.

\* **"Over the past few decades, radicals have specifically targeted Egypt and Saudi Arabia and Pakistan and Jordan for potential takeover."** We must support and defend the torturers who run Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Jordan.

\* **"The terrorists regard Iraq as the central front in their war against humanity, and we must recognize Iraq as the central front in our war on terror."** When enemies of the United States kill in Iraq, that's evil. When the United States kills in Iraq, that's good.

\* **"The militants believe that controlling one country will rally the Muslim masses, enabling them to overthrow all moderate governments in the region..."**

Political prisoners should be grateful that the United States is enabling them to be tor-

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tured by moderate governments.

**\* "Evil men obsessed with ambition and unburdened by conscience must be taken very seriously, and we must stop them before their crimes can multiply."**

We are valiantly obsessed with ambition and legitimately unburdened by conscience, while our crimes multiply.

**\* "The radicals exploit local conflicts to build a culture of victimization in which someone else is always to blame and violence is always the solution."**

The United States is never to blame, and the solution involves violence from the U.S. government and its allies.

**\* "Over the years, these extremists have used a litany of excuses for violence: Israeli presence on the West Bank or the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia or the defeat of the Taliban or the crusades of a thousand years ago."** The extremists make excuses for violence. We don't need any excuse.

**\* "In fact, we're not facing a set of grievances that can be soothed and addressed."** The people who kill without U.S. approval are irrational. The only way to stop them is to kill them.

**\* "No act of ours invited the rage of the killers, and no concession, bribe or act of appeasement would change or limit their plans for murder. On the contrary, they target nations whose behavior they believe they can change through violence.** No one has any valid reason to be angry at us. And we have the prerogative to change behavior through violence.

**\* "Like the ideology of communism, our new enemy teaches that innocent individuals can be sacrificed to serve a political vision."** The Islamic ideologues don't understand that only the United States government should get to decide when innocent individuals can be sacrificed to serve a political vision.

**\* "Any government that chooses to be an ally of terror has also chosen to be an enemy of civilization. And the civilized world must hold those regimes to account."** When we terrorize, that's a civilized option.

**\* "Our goal is to defeat the terrorists and their allies at the heart of their power. And so we will defeat the enemy in Iraq."** We will proceed with destroying Iraq in order to save it.

**\* "In fact, democratic federalism is the best hope for unifying a diverse population, because a federal constitutional system respects the rights and religious traditions of all**

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citizens while giving all minorities, including the Sunnis, a stake and a voice in the future of their country." We want to manipulate the situation enough to allow U.S. corporations to buy up much of Iraq while the U.S. military continues to build permanent bases in Iraq.

\* **"It is true that the seeds of freedom have only recently been planted in Iraq but democracy, when it grows, is not a fragile flower. It is a healthy, sturdy tree."** We have speech writers who like to use metaphors, unencumbered by reality-based constraints.

\* **"We're encouraging our friends in the Middle East, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia, to take the path of reform, to strengthen their own societies in the fight against terror by respecting the rights and choices of their own people."** We know bad PR when we see it. We're going through the motions of urging an end to repression by U.S. allies in the Middle East, but there's certainly no hurry -- especially when the repression is aimed at foes of our policies.

\* **"We're making our case through public diplomacy, stating clearly and confidently our belief in self-determination and the rule of law and religious freedom and equal rights for women; beliefs that are right and true in every land and in every culture."** We're trying to tune up the U.S. propaganda machinery. Hopefully, more lofty rhetoric can distract from the actual results of our policies.

\* **"In Iraq, there is no peace without victory. We will keep our nerve and we will win that victory.** To hell with peace. We want to claim victory, no matter how many people die.

\* **"As we do our part to confront radicalism, we know that the most vital work will be done within the Islamic world itself."** Here's where I get to preach at Muslims about the sanctity of life.

*Norman Solomon is the author of the new book "War Made Easy: How Presidents and Pundits Keep Spinning Us to Death." For information, go to: [www.WarMadeEasy.com](http://www.WarMadeEasy.com)*