

“Anti-Coalition Messages in the Anbar Province”

**Opening Statement by
The Honorable Peter W. Rodman
Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs
before the
House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence
May 4, 2006**

Mr. Chairman, Representative Harmon, and members of the committee,

The briefing you are about to see was initially developed by Department of Defense contractors in conjunction with the U.S. Marine Corps, in particular the Marine Corps Training and Education Command, last December. The 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was getting ready to deploy to Iraq and asked for an analysis of anti-Coalition propaganda in Anbar Province. The purpose was to enhance what we call force protection through situational awareness.

The briefing draws on over two and a half years of research by these contractors to examine Arab media in the context of our operations in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as the global war on terror.

The Chairman heard about this briefing and asked to see it. We presented it to him on March 16, and he has now requested that we brief the Committee.

What you are about to see is a chilling compilation of enemy propaganda, propaganda themes and materials, taken from the Internet. It includes powerful images, and is a disturbing demonstration of how effective our enemy can be at this business. The enemy's message, of course, is a gross distortion of American policy; it is at bottom an incitement to hatred, extremism and terrorism.

Thus, the briefing is also an excellent synopsis of our adversary's propaganda efforts beyond Iraq, and indeed beyond the Middle East. Identical Internet products are being distributed globally in different languages, including Indonesian, Turkish, and Russian.

This briefing has been presented to a number of components of the Department of Defense, including representatives of our Combatant Commands, the Joint Staff and the Office of Secretary of Defense. It has also been shared with our colleagues at the State Department -- the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs -- and with members of the intelligence community.

I would like to emphasize that the Defense Department plays a supporting role to the Department of State and, more recently, to the National Counter Terrorism Center in the effort to understand and ultimately counter ideological support to terrorist efforts. The monitoring of Arab media which these contractors do, while its immediate purpose is force protection, provides other products which are shared with other agencies and seem to be widely appreciated as a useful contribution to Interagency efforts of Public Diplomacy.

We are working with the Marine Corps, to develop a distance education program for its forces based on this briefing, and we will be working through our Joint Staff colleagues to support CENTCOM and our other Combatant Commands as to their needs in that regard.

Let me introduce the presentation team.

- Dan Devlin, Public Diplomacy Specialist on my staff, oversees the contract.
- Ron Roughead, Contractor
- Eric Michael, Contractor