

Sen. Rick Santorum, National Press Club

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY:

When I came to Washington in 1990 Karen and I were expecting our first child. Like most Americans we were worried about a slowing economy, competition from Japan and the high deficit.

But we were also relieved by the end of the Cold War and talk of a peace dividend. In the 1990s I felt my job representing Pennsylvania in Congress was important, but in retrospect the issues confronting us were not relative to what we are confronted with today.

In 16 years Karen and I have been blessed with the privilege and responsibility of raising six children.

Like most Americans we are more concerned about the future of our country. Now most of you would expect me to launch into my oft written speeches about culture, the family, and children.

Not today. No today the biggest issue facing our children's future is a war. Not, as so many describe it, the War on Terror. Not the war in Iraq or Afghanistan. But the world war, which at its heart is just like the previous three global struggles.

In those wars we fought against European tyrants and their allies, from the Kaiser to Hitler to Lenin, Stalin, and their heirs. We fought them because we knew that our survival was at stake. The tyrants would never stop attacking until they had defeated us, or we had defeated them.

Our only choices – choices imposed on us, not chosen by us – were either winning or losing, because there was no way out.

We are in the same kind of conflict today. Some say we are fighting a War on Terror. That is like saying World War II was a war on blitzkrieg. Terror like blitzkrieg is a tactic used by our enemy, not the enemy itself.

In World War II we fought Naziism and Japanese imperialism. Today, we are fighting against Islamic fascists. They attacked us on September 11th because we are the greatest obstacle to their openly declared mission of subjecting the entire world to their fanatical rule.

I believe that the threat of Islamic fascism is just as menacing as the threat from Nazism and Soviet Communism. Now, as then, we face fanatics who will stop at nothing to dominate us. Now, as then, there is no way out; we will either win or lose.

Too many people talk about this war as if it were simply an attempt to create fledgling democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. But Iraq and Afghanistan are battlefields in a much broader war, which now includes every continent except Antarctica.

Ask the Indians, the Thais, the Egyptians or the Argentines. Ask the Australians, the Indonesians, the British or the Spaniards. All have seen Islamic fascists at work, and have mourned their innocent victims.

Islamic fascists have been waging this war against us for a very long time. It did not suddenly erupt on a sunny September day in 2001.

Al Qaeda and other such groups had been attacking American targets for decades.

A group of Islamic fascists attacked the United States directly, at the World Trade Center, a month into Bill Clinton's first term.

So why is it so hard for so many Americans to see the nature of this war?

It's not because the enemy is keeping the hostile objectives a secret.

Every major Islamic fascist leader, from heads of states to heads of al Qaeda and Hizbollah, has openly identified the United States as their prime target, and repeatedly promises the creation of a new, global, "caliphate" where Islamic fascism will rule mankind. This language comes from both Sunni and Shi'ite fanatics, whether Arab, Persian, Indonesian, American, or British.

And yet we are foolishly reluctant to come to terms with this terrible reality. It's an old, sad story isn't it? Over and over again, our enemies announce their intention to attack us, and we refuse to believe them.

Hardly anyone took Mein Kampf seriously and when Nikita Khrushchev pounded his shoe on the table at the U.N., announcing, "We will bury you," it was widely treated as a moment of comic relief.

If we have learned anything from the twentieth century, it should be this lesson: when leaders say they are prepared to kill millions of people to achieve their goals, we must take them at their word. Particularly in this case when the enemy sees dying for their cause as a desired objective as opposed to a tragic consequence.

But we have not learned that lesson. I submit as evidence of that fact the recent publications of top secret intelligence programs.

If we really believed that the Islamic fascists were a real threat to the future of our country, we would not be screaming and hollering about how our government is tracking terrorists' money, and monitoring their telephone conversations.

Instead we'd be screaming and hollering that these programs are being compromised.

So why do we choose not to recognize and respect the threat our enemy poses?

I think in part because it makes us feel vulnerable. This is not just happening someplace thousands of miles away.

The enemy is doing his utmost to kill us, because of who we are, wherever we are, at home or overseas.

That's why, we urgently need good intelligence: The best way to protect us is to know where and how the enemy is planning to strike.

That is hard enough, but we also want to do it without unduly compromising our cherished freedoms – including our privacy.

We have worked very hard to provide security without compromising liberty. Some leaders saw political advantage in disputing that fact. The result, for one thing a four-year misinformation campaign directed against the Patriot Act.

The Patriot Act gave federal agents who investigate national security threats like terrorism; the same types of legal authority FBI agents investigating ordinary crimes have had for decades. Along with improved intelligence and military successes in the Middle East, the Patriot Act is a big factor in why we have not had another domestic attack since 9/11.

And yet, we supporters of the Patriot Act had to fight tooth and nail to get those powers renewed.

Even worse, there has been a war against the war: a joint campaign by some people inside the government and allies in the media to undermine critical national security programs.

To their shame, the bureaucrats have broken the law by revealing classified information to some in the media.

Again, to their shame, some members of the media have put American lives at greater risk by publishing these secrets.

Before 9/11 we were fighting with 20th Century tools. Our national security surveillance activities were governed by a law that had been enacted in 1978 – before anyone knew what email was. It did not permit the speed and flexibility needed to identify, and quickly survey, previously unknown threats. We paid a price: in thousands of American lives.

America in 2001 said that had to change, so we designed a program to intercept our enemy's international communications, including those that crossed into or out of our country. The program didn't monitor all Americans, or calls wholly inside the United States.

It involved only people reasonably suspected of working with the enemy. It was a valuable program. The program may well have prevented domestic terror attacks.

Then it was leaked to the press, and it was published. The enemy was thereby given important insights into our capabilities.

That story has made it more difficult for us to gather precisely the kind of information we have to have if we are going to thwart future attacks against civilians in America and soldiers on the battlefield.

The same thing happened with financial intelligence. In Belgium, there was a little known hub for international money transfers – a sort of clearinghouse, known as SWIFT, overseen by major national banks in Europe, Japan, and our own Federal Reserve. We got its cooperation to track terrorist transactions.

This was a very well designed program. Terrorists had come to believe that whenever we found bundles of their money, we seized it. But in this case, we were wise and patient. We were watching the funds rather than grabbing them. I like to think of the money we didn't seize as an investment in good intelligence, and it was working. We were mapping the tentacles of terrorist networks.

The information helped nab a guy called Hambali in Thailand – one of the world's most notorious terrorists – and it helped us identify an al

Qaeda facilitator here in the United States who was later convicted of providing material support for terrorism.

The program was completely legal, and the administration, like the previous program, notified members of Congress from both parties and agreed to extraordinary auditing to make sure the information was only used to pursue the enemy.

The details of this excellent program were published despite the entreaties of government officials and private citizens with great expertise, such as the two ranking members of the 9/11 Commission. Once again, a vital intelligence tool was compromised.

It will be hard to win this war if people inside the government violate their oaths and provide information to irresponsible members of the media, who then provide our enemy with information that hurts our country.

But, important as they are, these intelligence and legal issues are only part of our challenge.

There is a bigger problem: our fear of speaking clearly, publicly, and consistently about the enemy. It is unfashionable in some quarters to

speak about the Islamo fascists, because of the misguided cultural reflex that condemns anyone who speaks critically about others' practices or beliefs. Therefore, we can't say or do anything that might offend Muslims.

But that's backwards. The real offense to Muslims is to remain silent about an ideology that produces the systemic murder of innocents. Mostly, Muslim innocents. They are the first victims of Islamic fascism, and the enemy directly targets them, as we have heard once again in the most recent audiotape from Osama bin Laden.

Those who refuse to criticize Islamic fascism undermine the cause of freedom of religion because if the Islamic fascists win this war, no other religion will be permitted to flourish.

Paradoxically, when we refuse to criticize anybody, we end up patronizing everyone, which is offensive to everyone and self-defeating.

It makes a mockery of freedom of speech, and traps us in the discredited nonsense of moral equivalence. This war is not between two morally equivalent sides; it's a war between brutal totalitarian fascism and freedom.

Our freedom, not just freedom for Iraqis and Afghans. We are the fascists' prime target, and they intend to impose a brutal tyranny on those of us who survive their onslaught.

Islamic fascism is the great test of this generation.

When we fail to fully grasp the nature of our enemy and the urgency of our victory, our own people become confused and divided, and the fascists are encouraged to believe that we're afraid of them.

This has to stop. We have an obligation as leaders to articulate exactly what this threat is, and to defeat it. The American people have always rallied to the cause of freedom, once they understood what was at stake.

We had no problem branding communism an evil empire – it was.

We had no problem understanding that Nazism and fascism were evil racist empires – they were.

We must now bring the same clarity to the war against Islamic fascism.

I recently had the great pleasure of sharing a podium with Natan Sharansky, who refused to be silent in the face of Soviet Communism, and eventually celebrated its downfall.

He told me about the surge of hope that went through the Soviet gulag when President Reagan delivered his "evil empire" speech because the dissidents locked in the terrible Gulag realized that the leader of the United States understood their plight, and was determined to bring down their oppressors.

Brave men like Sharansky understand, far better than politicians or journalists or college professors, the importance of a proper moral calculus, and the paralyzing effect of misguided moral equivalence. If we do not recognize that it is right and proper for us to defend our freedom against Islamic fascism, we may well lose this war.

The terrorists know that they cannot win on the battlefield against our armed men and women, and so their strategy is aimed at you. With every IED and with every suicide bomber they seek to break our will to fight, to get us to hang our heads and finally say "enough." And they will not stop coming after us until we stop them.

This is a truly modern war – a war fought not just on the battlefield, but on the Internet, a war decided less by armies and warplanes than by individuals making individual choices.

Individual Iranians, like Akbar Ganji, have defied the regime of the mullahs – and spoken out for freedom and democracy in Iran at the risk of their lives, as have other Muslims throughout the Middle East.

Brave Iraqis, like Mithal al-Alusi, have suffered the murder of their children as they speak out for peace, democracy, and reconciliation.

Terror plots are defeated every day – one was just foiled in Toronto – because patriotic Western Muslims volunteer to penetrate terror cells to protect us all.

But individuals also make bad choices.

Journalists made bad choices when they decided to betray the secret of our terrorist surveillance programs, our programs for tracking terrorist finances, and the location of the prisons in which al Qaeda's most senior leaders are held.

Democrats in Congress make bad choices when they urge the president to withdraw our forces from Iraq before the war there is won.

And as you all know, this fall the voters of our country have a choice to make. One vision sees the role of Congress as raising objections – finding reasons not to do things – and punishing those who take risks to defend our nation. I have a different vision.

I want Congress to contribute to victory – not just complain about how long things are taking. And I believe that a member of Congress, especially a United States Senator, has a duty to think independently and speak clearly – not to evade, not to mumble.

As some of you may know, I am running for re-election. My opponent says that a senator should ask tough questions.

But I don't think, "How soon can we quit?" is a tough question. I believe a senator has a responsibility to lead with positive solutions, as I have done with the Syria Accountability Act and the Iran Freedom and Support Act.

Which brings us to Iran.

The fascist regimes and the Jihadist organizations disagree about some things, but they have a common theme: destroy the West and

its leader, America. They comprise a mosaic of different entities and countries.

The largest piece of this mosaic, the keystone of the Islamic fascist structure, is Iran.

It's a complex mosaic, stretching across the world, but Iran is the central piece, touching all the others in one way or another. Iran not only supports these organizations – it created Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad, and is the driving force behind Hamas – but it is a threat to the civilized world all by itself.

This is no secret. Iran is at the top of the State Department's list of countries that support international terrorism, and we Americans know with great sadness how accurate that assessment is.

Right after the Islamic Revolution in late 1979, a gang assaulted the American Embassy in Tehran and held American diplomats hostage for more than a year.

In April, 1983, Iranian-supported suicide terrorists killed 60 people in our embassy in Beirut, Lebanon, and six months later 241 U.S. Marines were killed in a similar attack.

Former FBI Director Louis Freeh has been explicit about the Iranian role in the savage attack against the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia, and, although it is not often noticed, Iranian so-called U.N. diplomats are regularly asked to leave New York City when they are found photographing subway stations and railroad bridges.

Indeed, in its 1998 – 1998! – indictment of Osama bin Laden, the Government of the United States made it all very clear: “Al Qaeda...forged alliances with the National Islamic Front in Sudan and with the government of Iran and its associated terrorist group Hezbollah for the purpose of working together against their perceived common enemies in the West, particularly the United States.”

It is therefore no surprise to see Iran actively engaged in support of the terrorists in Iraq, Gaza, and Lebanon. The well-known accounts of Iranian activity inside Iraq extend from the recent reports of captured Iranian terrorists and intelligence officers, to the stories, from American and British military officials, of especially lethal mines and roadside bombs of Iranian origin.

We have seen Iranian missiles fired at Israeli ships off Lebanon and at Israeli civilians in their homes.

Iran reaches into Latin America, in the form of a strategic alliance with the Venezuelan tyrant. It also shows us the ease with which Islamic fascists work with radical leftists. We see this in some of the anti-American demonstrations in Europe.

We see it in the cooperation between North Korea and Iran with their rocket and nuclear programs. Just think about that for a minute: fanatical Muslims working hand in glove with fanatical leftists, bound together by hatred for us.

The current public face of Iranian fascism is of course its president, Ahmadi-Nezhad.

This is a man who recruited thousands of Iranian children to march to their death by detonating mines in advance of Iranian troops during the Iran/Iraq War.

He is truly representative of the face of Islamic fascism in Tehran. When he speaks of destroying Israel and the infidels, it is not his voice alone.

In such a regime, no one speaks without the approval of the ruling mullahs, so Ahmadi-Nezhad's words are canonical.

He has told us over and over again that he believes in the imminent arrival of the Shi'ite messiah, the so-called 12th Imam, who Shi'ites believe will return at the end time.

What will cause this arrival? According to Ahmadi-Nezhad, a victory of extremist Islam over the infidels and crusaders. That would be us. He is working to hasten that final confrontation, and he, along with other Iranian leaders, openly declare their first step is to remove Israel from the face of the earth, then to defeat the United States.

They have also made it quite clear that Iran intends to use atomic bombs in this confrontation. His predecessor, President Khatami, has made similar statements.

In other words, the spokesmen for the central piece of the Islamic fascist mosaic are working to bring about the end of the free world as fast as they possibly can, in order to subject mankind to the slavery of a new Caliphate.

These messianic Shi'ites see this as an opportunity to accomplish this long desired mission for radical Islam. Remember, Islamic extremists fought the West over the course of a thousand years to their high-water mark outside the gates of Vienna.

The siege of Vienna lasted until September 1683 – September 11, 1683 – the next day the united West triumphed.

Centuries have passed in relative peace, but now with the combination of oil revenues, off the shelf weapons and technology, and terror as a tactic a virulent alliance of extremist now have a strategy to defeat their enemy, the infidels.

A few weeks ago I spoke with a leader of the Independent Student Movement who has escaped to America, and he told me that every young person admitted to college must sign an agreement to “volunteer” for acts of suicide terrorism. Nowadays every university student in Iran must attend courses on how to strap on and detonate a suicide bomb.

In a recent speech Ahmadi-Nezhad said martyrdom is the greatest virtue of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Islamic fascism is truly evil. Such a regime cannot be permitted to build an arsenal of atomic weapons, and I don't expect that we are going to convince them to abandon their nuclear program at the negotiating table.

You can't reason people out of something that they didn't arrive at reasonably in the first place.

That is why I believe the only way to change the policies of the Islamic Republic of Iran is to change the regime itself.

The people of Iran – who overwhelmingly wish to live in a free society after 27 years of horror – want the chance to choose their own leaders and their own policies. They, not the fanatics, should be our negotiating partners.

I think President Bush believes that, for it is implicit in almost every statement he has made about Iran.

Even a nuclear-free Iran would still be the driving force behind Islamic fascism, and it would continue its murderous policies toward us and all others who do not submit to the dictates of the Supreme

Leader. I am sadly convinced that sooner or later we will have to confront this regime. This is not yet the policy of the United States.

In fact, the Iran Freedom and Support Act, which seeks to greatly increase our communication with the Iranian people, and will show the world the seriousness of our opposition to Iran's evil regime, has been vigorously opposed by the State Department.

The Iran Freedom and Support Act has sixty-one cosponsors. Its companion bill was passed by the House of Representatives in April with over 350 votes.

This legislation has two prime objectives. The first is to put the Senate on record in support for freedom and democracy for the Iranian people, to enable our government to broadcast that message effectively, and to support pro-democracy groups in Iran.

The second is to punish countries who contribute to the Iranian nuclear program, by imposing sanctions on countries and companies who trade with Iran in nuclear and dual-use components. I want them to have to choose between doing business with the United States, and doing business with Iran. I think it's an easy choice.

When I recently proposed to attach the basic elements of the Iran Freedom and Support Act as an amendment to the military budget, Secretary of State Rice wrote to oppose it.

She said it would hamper her ability to negotiate alongside our allies.

I respectfully disagree with the Secretary of State, and I regret that a majority of Senators – including some who are cosponsors of the actual legislation – voted against the amendment. I think the diplomats have it wrong.

When we pass the Iran Freedom and Support Act, its major diplomatic effect will be to strengthen our negotiating position, for it spells out the consequences if Iran does not comply with our reasonable demands.

I'm sure the President will sign it when it passes. The language of the State Department's opposition to the Iran Act is virtually identical to their warnings, over several years, about the Syrian Accountability Act that I authored.

Yet, the President not only signed it, but he implemented the sanctions to the surprise of many. Still, though Syria is a critical element in the fascist mosaic, Iran is the indispensable piece.

Iran is at the center of this war. We have seen that clearly in Lebanon and Gaza, where Hezbollah and Hamas, Iran's proxies, gratuitously attacked Israel.

During the fighting in Lebanon, we learned that Iranian missiles had been fired into Israel and at Israeli and Egyptian ships, and there even seem to have been Iranian Revolutionary Guards officers at the controls.

Lebanon cannot survive as a free country if Hezbollah operates from its territory and uses it to stockpile Iranian weapons and give operational space to Iranian Revolutionary Guards.

It is intolerable to allow more than ten thousand terrorist-controlled rockets and missiles, aimed at Israel, in southern Lebanon.

And Iraq will never have the security it deserves so long as the Islamic fascists are in power in Iran. I believe we must fight for a

strong Lebanon, a strong Israel, and a strong Iraq. That requires effective action against Iran.

The longer we wait, the more people will be blown up, tortured, incarcerated, intimidated, and assassinated.

In 1979 Iran declared itself our enemy and for 27 years it has proven the truth of those words. A democratic Iran may not end the war against Islamic fascism, but without it this war will last to be our children's war, not just ours. We owe it to them, it is our watch, it is our challenge.

Historians may write of this time in American history that we were not the greatest generation- that we fell short on many fronts. But I hope they also write that like our ancestors we too fought for freedom, that we too confronted evil, that we too endured a great trial and won a victory for the future of mankind.

Thank you.