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PORTER SPEAKS ABOUT IRAQ

“The recent hullabaloo in Washington about troop withdrawals and timetables in Iraq leads me to believe that come election time, whatever the ‘conditions on the ground’ might be, they will be exactly ‘right’ for Bush to instigate his ‘October surprise’,” said Dr. Steven Porter, Democratic candidate for Congress in the 3rd district of Pennsylvania. “And my opponent, Phil English, who has been in lock-step with Bush on Iraq from the beginning, will then no doubt try to turn Bush’s preplanned rhetoric into political hay,” Porter continued.

“But rhetoric is not reality, and the Bush-English agenda in Iraq continues to be a criminal failure. It is for that reason I am addressing the issue now, before the politics of October rears its predictable head,” said Porter.

“I would like to start with an important historical observation. The indigenous peoples of the Middle East see the West through the prism of an 800-year reign of colonial expansion which began with the Crusades and continues today with our occupation of Iraq. Right or wrong, it is imperative that we understand this perspective. We cannot solve today’s crisis in the Middle East without taking the tides of history into account.

“Next, it is also imperative that we realize our invasion of Iraq was unnecessary; that it was based on the deliberate falsehoods of the Bush Administration and its unquestioning supporters, of whom my opponent is one. The Carnegie Report (attached to this release as a Word document) stated categorically over two-and-a-half years ago that the Bush Administration ‘systematically misrepresented’ the pre-invasion intelligence it was given in order to justify its pre-emptive war. The lies of the administration and its abjectly poor post-invasion planning are what have created the mess which exists today.

“The confluence of these perspectives means that our troops are fighting several battles: a millennium-long hatred of the West, an insurgency of America’s own creation, and a civil strife among historically adversarial Mesopotamian factions (Kurd, Sunni, Shiite). We need to deal with all of this to extricate ourselves from our current dilemma.”

Porter continued by outlining both short- and long-range strategies for the region. “Short-term,” he said, “we need to set a reasonable timetable for the Iraqis to take full control of the defense of their own nation and for us to redeploy our forces to a perimeter which is out of harm’s way yet close enough for swift action if needed. In the longer term,” he went on, “we need to deal with the historical, social, economic, and political forces that have created the terrorism we now battle. In the words of General Wesley Clark, we must ‘drain the swamp’ which feeds the current crisis.

“To do that, we first need to re-invigorate the international alliances which have been fractured by the arrogance of the Bush Administration. Right now, because we have

isolated ourselves in the international community, we bear an overwhelmingly disproportionate burden of the war on terrorism. America accounts for \$522 billion of the entire annual global defense budget of \$1.083 trillion. This has not only stretched our security forces thin at home and abroad, it has also helped to create a crushing national debt and a huge individual tax burden.

“To put that \$522 billion in perspective, the next two leading defense spenders, Communist China and Russia, spend only \$120 billion together,” Porter explained. “Our allies must step up to the plate with both troops and treasure if terrorism is to be successfully combated.

“Finally, the wealthy nations of the world—principally America and the nations of Western Europe (who were the initial colonial ‘culprits’ to begin with)—must find ways to provide for the economic and social development of the poverty-stricken regions of the world which spawn terrorism. Distrust and poverty are the real enemies we face because as long as they exist, young men will view violence and terror as advancing their interests more effectively than peace.

“No ‘October surprise’ will stem the historical tides we are fighting,” concluded Porter, “and the inability of the Bush Administration and my opponent to understand and deal with these tides is without a doubt the greatest tragedy of the past six years. The only way to end that tragedy is to change the thinking of Washington by changing the membership of Congress.”

All of Dr. Porter’s positions on the key issues of this campaign are attached to this release along with the Carnegie Report so that they can be disseminated by a responsible media to the public.