

## **Albright Joins Pelosi in Defiance of Bush Strategy**

**Tuesday, May 25, 2004** - Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO - Hours before President Bush delivered a major speech detailing his blueprint for the future of Iraq, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright joined House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi to sharply criticize Bush for a poorly executed war strategy that has cost American lives and degraded the United States' reputation abroad.

"When I was Secretary of State, I said I had all my partisan instincts surgically removed," Albright said at a press conference launching a Democratic effort to elect women to Congress and encourage women to vote. "They have really grown back, because I have never seen the United States in a more difficult position - I am appalled at how we are viewed internationally now."

Albright's remarks were among her toughest and most partisan since the U.S.-led coalition invaded Iraq last year, and seemed to echo controversial comments Pelosi made last week when she accused the president of "incompetence" in his handling of the war.

Albright, who advised President Bill Clinton during the U.S.-led interventions in Bosnia and Kosovo, said Bush must lay out a specific plan for how to achieve peace in Iraq following the planned handover of power to a transitional Iraqi government.

"I think we have to have something beyond 'we are going to turn something over to somebody' on June 30," Albright said.

A defiant Pelosi, who came under fire from Republicans last week, stood firmly by her comments about Bush, which she said she made on behalf of the troops.

"What I said was he didn't have judgment, he didn't have knowledge and he didn't have

experience," she said. "Our troops are paying the price with their lives, our taxpayers are paying the price with their dollars and our reputation internationally is paying its price."

Rep. David Dreier, a GOP leadership member close to Bush, called Pelosi's remarks "over the top."

"It is very unfortunate, at a time like this, with the president dealing with a global war on terrorism, to use words like incompetent is beyond the pale," Dreier said. "Put it this way, I never would have dreamt of saying that about Bill Clinton when we were dealing with the challenges of Bosnia and other places."

Pelosi and Albright were joined at the news conference by Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., and former Texas Gov. Ann Richards, who lost her office to Bush in 1994.

"It is time for the women of America to stand up now and assume the responsibility one more time and clean up the mess that these men have made," Richards said.