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women. They will now draft a new constitution for a free and democratic Iraq. In October, that document will be presented to the Iraqi people in a national referendum. Another election is planned for December to choose a permanent constitutional government.

Free governments reflect the culture of the citizens they serve, and that is happening in Iraq. Today, Iraqis can take pride in building a government that answers to its people and honors their country's unique heritage. Millions of Americans saw that pride in an Iraqi woman named Safia Taleb al-Suhail, who sat in the gallery during the State of the Union Address. Eleven years ago, Saddam Hussein's thugs murdered her father. Today, Safia's nation is free, and Saddam Hussein sits in a prison cell. Safia expressed the gratitude of the Iraqi nation when she embraced the mom of Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood, who was killed in the assault on Fallujah.

To all the brave members of our Armed Forces who have taken part in this historic mission and to your families, I express the heartfelt thanks of the American people. I know that nothing can end the pain of the families who have lost loved ones in this struggle, but they can know that their sacrifice has added to America's security and the freedom of the world.

Iraq's progress toward political freedom has opened a new phase of our work there. We are focusing on our efforts on training the Iraqi security forces. As they become more self-reliant and take on greater security responsibilities, America and its coalition partners will increasingly assume a supporting role. In the end, Iraqis must be able to defend their own country. And we will help that proud, new nation secure its liberty, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

Today, we're seeing hopeful signs across the broader Middle East. The victory of freedom in Iraq is strengthening a new ally in the war on terror and inspiring democratic reformers from Beirut to Tehran. Today, women can vote in Afghanistan. Palestinians are breaking the old patterns of violence, and hundreds of thousands of Lebanese are rising up to demand their sovereignty and democratic rights. These are landmark events in the history of freedom. Only the fire of liberty can purge the ideologies of murder by offering hope to those who yearn to live free.

The experience of recent years has taught us an important lesson: The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. Because of our actions, freedom is taking root in Iraq, and the American people are more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:52 p.m. on March 18 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 19. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 19 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Janet Norwood, mother of Sgt. Byron Norwood, USMC. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Senior Citizens in Tucson, Arizona
March 21, 2005

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. ——now it's our turn to sacrifice for future generations, and we are. This world is becoming more peaceful, and

it's because we're free. And that's a lesson we've learned from previous generations, that free societies are peaceful societies. You know, I have this great faith in the capacity of freedom to make the world a better place, so I just want to give you a quick foreign policy report and tell you that this world of ours is getting better as more people become free.

I'm also talking, of course, a lot about Social Security. I think this is a generational issue, and it's a generational issue because your generation has nothing to worry about in terms of getting the promise Government has made. There's just no doubt about it. I know there are some contradictory statements being made; it's just not true. The promise Government has made to those who are retired or near retirement will be kept.

But because the math has changed, because there's a lot of baby boomers like me are getting ready to retire, and we're living longer, and we're getting bigger benefits than the previous generation, and there are fewer workers, we need to worry about not this generation but the next generations.

And that's really what I'm here to tell people in Tucson, is that if you're getting your check, you're fine. If you've got a grandkid, you'd better ask the political people what they intend to do about making sure Social Security, the safety net of Social Security, is available for them. And you know, I'm interested in all ideas. I think that this isn't a Republican issue or a Democrat issue; this is a national issue that requires a national dialog.

And so I want to thank you for giving me the chance to come by to the Udall Center. The mayor was telling me what a unique place this is, and he wasn't exaggerating.

Audience member. Yes, it's great.

The President. It is great—well, I hope so.

Are you playing a little cards over there? Got a little time for some cards. [*Laughter*] Anyway, thanks for letting me come by. I'm looking forward to meeting you all. Thank you. It's a beautiful city you've got here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 a.m. at the Morris K. Udall Recreation Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Bob Walkup of Tucson, AZ. The press release issued by the Office of the Press Secretary did not include the complete opening remarks of the President. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Tucson
March 21, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Thanks. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. It is nice to be back in Tucson. The last time I was here, remember, we were up dealing with forest fires. And hopefully, the Healthy Forest legislation that we got passed, thanks to the help of John and Jon and members of the Arizona congressional delegation, will help us preserve this valuable national treasure.

I'm here today to talk with some distinguished citizens from your State about Social Security. Before I do so, I'd say—I've got some other things I want to talk about. [*Laughter*] First, I want to talk about how much I enjoy working with Senator John McCain. I appreciate the job he's doing for the people of Arizona. And I appreciate Senator Jon Kyl from the great State of Arizona. I'm glad you're being nice to him,