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strengths to accelerate development of practical and efficient technologies for the use and production of clean energy. To help improve human health by reducing pollution, and address the challenge of climate change by mitigating greenhouse gases, we have established a joint team to implement the energy, science and technology commitments from Evian through both of our G8 Presidencies.

- Deepen defense cooperation. We will work to remove barriers to increased defense industrial cooperation, interoperability, and information exchange. Our goals include achieving fair and consistent reciprocal access to each other's equipment markets, maximizing information sharing, and extending joint working and training opportunities. We will create a closer and more open relationship by the removal of outdated barriers between our armed forces and officials. We consider it a high priority to implement a licensing exemption that will facilitate defense trade between our countries. We reaffirm our strong commitment to proceed with the Joint Strike Fighter project.
- Promote innovative education initiatives. We are committed to increasing the number and quality of U.S.-UK school partnerships. To this end, we are inaugurating a new annual prize—the Transatlantic Education Prize—to reward schools for particularly creative and innovative partnerships. The first prizes will be awarded early next year and will include reciprocal visits for head teachers and principals.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Declaration on Iraq by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Tony Blair

November 20, 2003

For the first time in decades, the Iraqi people are enjoying the taste of freedom. Iraqis are starting to rebuild their country and can look to a brighter future. They are free of Saddam Hussein and his vicious regime; they can speak freely; practice their religion; and start to come to terms with the nightmare of the last 35 years, in which hundreds of thousands of Iraqis were murdered by their own government.

But Iraq is still threatened by followers of the former regime, and by outside terrorists who are helping them. The struggle is difficult. Yet we shall persevere to ensure that the people of Iraq will prevail, with the support of the new and strengthening Iraqi security forces: the police, the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, the Facility Protection Service, the border police, and the New Iraqi Army. We salute the courage of those Iraqis and the coalition forces engaged in the struggle against reactionary elements in Iraq who want to turn back the clock to the dark days of Saddam's regime.

We reaffirm the resolve of our two countries, with many friends and allies, to complete the process of bringing freedom, security, and peace to Iraq.

We warmly welcome the Iraqi Governing Council's announcement of a timetable for the creation of a sovereign Iraqi Transitional Administration by the end of June 2004, and for a process leading to the adoption of a permanent constitution and national elections for a new Iraqi government by the end of 2005.

This announcement is consistent with our long-stated aim of handing over power to Iraqis as quickly as possible. It is right that Iraqis are making these decisions and for the first time in generations determining their own future. We welcome the Governing Council's commitment to ensuring the widest possible participation in the Transitional Assembly and constitutional process.

We reaffirm our long-term commitment to Iraq. The United States and United Kingdom stand ready to support the Transitional Administration in its task of building a new Iraq and its democratic institutions. Our military participation in the multinational force in Iraq will serve the Iraqi people until the Iraqis themselves are able to discharge full responsibility for their own security. At the same time, we hope that international partners will increasingly participate in the multinational force.

Our long-term political, moral, and financial commitment to the reconstruction of Iraq was underlined at the Madrid Donors Conference last month. Although the Coalition Provisional Authority will come to an end once the Transitional Administration is installed, the United States and United Kingdom will continue to provide assistance as part of the international support effort. In these tasks, we welcome the involvement of other nations, regardless of earlier differences; of the United Nations and the International Financial Institutions; and of the many non-governmental organizations who are able to make an important contribution.

Great challenges remain in Iraq. But the progress we have made this year has been enormous. Iraqis no longer live in fear of their own government, and Iraq's neighbors no long feel threatened. Our resolve to complete the task we set ourselves remains undiminished. Our partnership with the Iraqi people is for the long-term.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Interview With Abdul Rahman Al-Rashed of Al-Sharq Al-Awsat in London
November 19, 2003

Mr. Al-Rashed. I know you are the busiest person——

The President. Thanks for coming by. I appreciate your interest. I'm honored you'd come by.

Timetable for Transition in Iraq

Mr. Al-Rashed. Mr. President, I think the question, number one, I have to ask is, now you're talking about transferring the power from the coalition now to the Governing Council sometime in the summer. What is exactly your timetable for that?

The President. Well, it really depends upon the Governing Coalition. They've expressed a desire for the transfer of authority in June. There are certain benchmarks that must be achieved. But let me just give you a kind of a broader assessment.

We—Ambassador Bremer came to the United States, as you know, gosh, I think it must have been a week ago or 10 days ago. And we sat down and made a conscious decision to listen to the voices on the Governing Council that were interested in accelerating the transfer of sovereignty, and we decided to—obviously if that's what they're interested in, that we needed to assess whether or not it was possible. The assessment was positive. And therefore, Jerry Bremer went back to the Governing Council and worked out a timetable that they're comfortable with. And that's very important.