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of the European Council, and President Romano Prodi of the European Commission. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi interim government; U.S. Special Envoy for Northern Ireland Mitchell B. Reiss; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Mary McAleese of Ireland. Prime Minister Ahern referred to Deputy Prime Minister Mary Harney and Minister of Foreign Affairs Brian Cowen of Ireland.

## Statement on United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

*June 26, 2004*

Today, on United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, the United States reaffirms its commitment to the worldwide elimination of torture. The nonnegotiable demands of human dignity must be protected without reference to race, gender, creed, or nationality. Freedom from torture is an inalienable human right, and we are committed to building a world where human rights are respected and protected by the rule of law.

To help fulfill this commitment, the United States has joined 135 other nations in ratifying the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. America stands against and will not tolerate torture. We will investigate and prosecute all acts of torture and undertake to prevent other cruel and unusual punishment in all territory under our jurisdiction. American personnel are required to comply with all U.S. laws, including the United States Constitution, Federal statutes, including statutes prohibiting torture, and our treaty obligations with respect to the treatment of all detainees.

The United States also remains steadfastly committed to upholding the Geneva Conventions, which have been the bedrock of protection in armed conflict for more than 50 years. These conventions provide important protections designed to reduce human suffering in armed conflict. We expect other nations to treat our service members and civilians in accordance with the Geneva Conventions. Our Armed Forces are committed to complying with them and to holding accountable those in our military who do not.

The American people were horrified by the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. These acts were wrong. They were inconsistent with our policies and our values as a Nation. I have directed a full accounting for the abuse of the Abu Ghraib detainees, and investigations are underway to review detention operations in Iraq and elsewhere.

It is often American men and women in uniform who fight for the freedom of others from tyrannical regimes that routinely use torture to oppress their citizens. From Nazi Germany to Bosnia and Afghanistan to Iraq, American service members have fought to remove brutal leaders who torture and massacre. It is the American people and their contributions that have helped to rebuild these traumatized nations to give former victims hope.

A little over a year ago, American service members and our coalition partners freed the Iraqi people from a dictatorship that routinely tortured and executed innocent citizens because of what they believed in or what ethnic or religious group they came from. In torture chambers, innocent Iraqis were brutalized and the bodies of the dead

left in mass graves. Throughout the past year, Americans have assisted the Iraqi people in establishing institutions to ensure accountability so that such acts do not occur again and to help victims recover.

Despite international efforts to protect human rights around the world, repressive regimes continue to victimize people through torture. The victims often feel forgotten, but we will not forget them. America supports accountability and treatment centers for torture victims. We contribute to the U.N. Fund for the Victims of Torture and support the work of nongovernmental organizations to end torture and assist the victims. We also provide protection, counseling, and where necessary and possible, relocation in the United States. We stand with the victims to seek their healing and recovery and urge all nations to join us in these efforts to restore the dignity of every person affected by torture.

These times of increasing terror challenge the world. Terror organizations challenge our comfort and our principles. The United States will continue to take seriously the need to question terrorists who have information that can save lives. But we will not compromise the rule of law or the values and principles that make us strong. Torture is wrong no matter where it occurs, and the United States will continue to lead the fight to eliminate it everywhere.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey in Ankara, Turkey
*June 27, 2004*

Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. You're right, this is my first trip to your beautiful country as President. It also happens to be my first trip to your beautiful country ever, and we're honored to be here. We appreciate the hospitality of the Turkish people.

We look forward to meaningful discussions on a variety of subjects, bilateral relations, how we can strengthen NATO. I would remind the people of this good country that I believe you ought to be given a date by the EU for your eventual acceptance into the EU. I also look forward to working with you on matters regarding the neighborhood, Iraq and elsewhere. I appreciate so very much the example your country has set on how to be a Muslim country and, at the same time, a country which embraces democracy and rule of law and freedom.

And so I'm so grateful for your invitation. Thank you very much for it, and I look forward to a fruitful discussion with you and with our NATO partners.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:40 a.m. at the Prime Minister's residence. Prior to the President's remarks, Prime Minister Erdogan spoke in Turkish, and no translation was provided. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.