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see underscore that freedom in Iraq is opposed by a violent and ruthless enemy with no regard for human life. The enemy includes former members of Saddam Hussein's regime. The enemy includes criminal elements, and the enemy includes foreign terrorists. The terrorists are fighting in Iraq because they know a free Iraq in the heart of the Middle East will deal a severe blow to an ideology that lives on oppression and fear. By securing Iraqi democracy, we will make America and our friends and allies around the world safer.

The enemy's goal is to drive us out of Iraq before the Iraqis have established a secure, democratic Government. They will not succeed. Our goal is clear, a democratic and peaceful Iraq that represents all Iraqis. Our troops will continue to train Iraqi security forces so these forces can defend their country and to protect their people from terror. And as Iraqis become more capable in defending their nation, our troops will eventually return home with the honor they have earned.

As the Iraqi people stand up for their freedom, they know that the free world is now standing with them. Earlier this week, more than 80 countries and international organizations came together in Brussels to discuss how to help Iraq provide for its security and rebuild its country. And next month, donor countries will meet in Jordan to discuss Iraqi reconstruction.

I appreciate Prime Minister Jafari's brave leadership. Prime Minister Jafari is a bold man. I've enjoyed my discussions with you, Prime Minister. He is a frank, open fellow who is willing to tell me what's on his mind. And what is on his mind is peace and security for the people of Iraq, and what is on his mind is a democratic future that is hopeful.

I want to thank you for your courage. I want to thank you for your understanding about the nature of free societies. I want to thank you for helping Iraq become a beacon of freedom.

Prime Minister Jafari's visit comes at an important time. I want to thank you for coming.

Prime Minister Jafari. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Welcome.

Prime Minister Jafari. Thank you very much. I want to thank the United States people for their courage and commitment against terrorism and for democracy in our country.

I visited hospital in the past month in Turkey, Muthanna, and yesterday in Washington, DC. There were Iraqis and American. They had suffered side by side, and they were on a common enemy: terrorism. They were fighting for the security of Iraq but also of American. This is not the time to fall back—to fall back. We owe it to those who have made sacrifices to continue toward the goals they fought.

I see from up close what's happening in Iraq, and I know we are making steady and substantial progress. People said Saddam would not fall, and he did. They say the election would not happen, and they did. They say the constitution will not be written, but it will. And the political process—[*inaudible*]—including the Sunni Arabs, will further undermine the terrorists. They have joined the parliamentary committee and the Government, and they will take part in the next elections.

[*At this point, Prime Minister Jafari spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.*]

Another time I would like to thank and commend Mr. President for his hospitality and his receiving me here and for the subjects we discussed together. And also he was frank and transparent, and he gave me very good feelings towards the people in Iraq. I would also like to thank the American people for standing beside the Iraqi people, going through these difficult times. No doubt our people will never forget those who stand beside Iraq, particularly at these terrible times. We do appreciate

the assistance given by America during the present period of time in particular. There is a great achievement in Iraq, there is democracy in Iraq, and the people in Iraq defied terrorism, and they refused to accept any constitutional association.

There is about 30 percent of women participating, and this is an example of democracy in Iraq and in the region, even in the whole world. There are six minister ladies in my Government, and it is my intention to add one more woman to be Deputy to the Prime Minister.

In the new Iraq, there is progress on more than one aspect, even though, again, it's all the challenges we have, particularly in security. Even though there is a lot of infiltration from the countries adjacent to Iraq, moving from inside Iraq itself, but there is a will in Iraq to secure security. And so the bombing in Iraq has been reduced a lot. And we are making great progress. And we depend on our security forces, multinational forces also who work with us, support us, but the responsibility in the frontline is for the Iraqis, and everything is making progress quantitatively and qualitatively.

We want to secure love instead of hatred in our country, coexistence and cooperation in Iraq instead of cursing each other. The whole people of Iraq would like to continue the democracy in Iraq, and they will fight for achieving it. So many people said that democracy will never stand in Iraq, said that elections will never be held in Iraq, and they said also that the Government will never be established in Iraq, and they said there would be no constitution. But everything will be there, and the whole world will see that changes in Iraq happen because of the great will of the people of Iraq and the countries that are assisting us.

We want fraternal relations with all the countries of the world and the adjacent countries, keeping our sovereignty against all infiltration from the borders of Iraq. We want goodness for all countries of the world and wish you all the best for the American people.

Thank you, very much. Thank you, very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. What we'll do now is we'll ask a question—answer a question from the American side and then one from the Iraqi side. Thank you, we'll be there in a minute. And then—we'll have two a side, in other words.

I will start with Kelly O'Donnell [NBC News].

Status of Efforts in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. On Iraq, sir, the Vice President has described the conditions there, regarding the insurgency as being in its last throes. General Abizaid said there has been no significant change over the last 6 months. Your spokesman said you agreed with the Vice President's assessment. Can you help the American people understand these two different views that are coming forward, one from the administration, one from top commanders, when your spokesman tells us every day you get your information directly from those top commanders?

President Bush. I do get briefed by our top commanders, as does the Vice President. As a matter of fact, about 2 hours ago, General Abizaid briefed the Vice President and myself and the Secretary of Defense about what is taking place on the ground. And there's no question there's an enemy that still wants to shake our will and get us to leave. And they're willing to use any means necessary. They try to kill—and they do kill innocent Iraqi people, women and children, because they know that they're—the carnage that they wreak will be on TV. And they know that they are—they know that it bothers people to see death—and it does. It bothers me. It bothers American citizens. It bothers Iraqis. They're trying to shake our will. That's what they're trying to do, and so of course we understand the nature of that enemy.

We also understand that there is reason to be optimistic about what's taking place. The very same commanders that say that these folks are terrible killers are also reminding us that we're making good progress. On the one hand, you just heard the Prime Minister talk about a new democracy. Remember, the killers tried to intimidate everybody so that they wouldn't vote. That was their tactic. If you look back at the history of our involvement in Iraq, there was a lot of bombings and killings prior to the elections. What they were trying to do is say, "Let's shake the will of not only the Americans but the Iraqi citizens." And—but nevertheless, the Iraqi citizens wouldn't have their will shaken.

So we're optimistic. We're optimistic that more and more Iraqi troops are becoming better trained to fight the terrorists. We're optimistic about the constitutional process. There is a political track that's moving forward in parallel with the security track. No question about—it's difficult. I mean, we hear it every day, of course. So do you. You report it every day. It's tough work, and it's hard. The hardest part of my job is to comfort the family members who have lost a loved one, which I intend to do when I go down to North Carolina on Tuesday.

But nevertheless, progress is being made, and the defeat of the enemy—and they will be defeated—will be accelerated by the progress on the ground in Iraq that—the establishment of a democratic state that listens to the hopes and aspirations of all the people in Iraq will lead to the defeat of this enemy. And so that's what this administration believes, and we firmly believe it is going to happen.

Would you like to call on somebody from the Iraq press?

Prime Minister Jafari. Yes, yes.

President Bush. Who would you like to call on? Better pick one.

Timetables for Iraq/Visit of Secretary of State Rice

Q. [*Inaudible*]—my first question is, Mr. Bush, we heard here that there are Members of the Congress and the Senate, they are asking for a schedule for withdrawing your troops from Iraq. Have you discussed this with the Government of Iraq or will it be left to the Government to decide?

Mr. Jafari, it was said in the streets of Iraq that the administration of America is pressurizing your Government through the visit of Ms. Rice in Iraq. Is there a reaction to that with President Bush?

President Bush. Thank you. You've picked up a good American trick, which is to ask two questions. [*Laughter*] Congratulations.

There're not going to be any timetables. I mean, I've told this to the Prime Minister. We are there to complete a mission, and it's an important mission. A democratic Iraq is in the interest of the United States of America, and it's in the interest of laying the foundation for peace. And if that's the mission, then why would you—why would you say to the enemy, you know, "Here's a timetable. Just go ahead and wait us out." It doesn't make any sense to have a timetable. You know, if you give a timetable, you're conceding too much to the enemy.

This is an enemy that will be defeated. And it's—so I'm not exactly sure who made that proposition, but I would—you don't have to worry, Mr. Prime Minister, about timetables. And we want to work with you to continue to build up the Iraqi forces. See, success will happen in Iraq when the political process moves forward, like it is. Again, I remind you all, maybe 4 months ago—anyway, the beginning of the winter, there was a lot of people here in the country that never thought the elections would go forward. They thought the enemy had the upper hand because of the death and destruction that we saw on our TV screens. They said, "Well, can't possibly be elections. The Iraqi people don't want to be

free," and you know, "These killers are going to stop the elections." And sure enough, over 8 million people voted because they do want to be free.

And so success will occur as this political process continues to move forward. And we spent time talking about making sure that Sunnis were a part of the process, and I appreciate the Prime Minister's attitude. We made sure we talked about making sure that people's points of view are represented, making sure that we stay on—the only timetable that I think is going to—that I know is out there is the timetable that says, "Let's have the constitution written by a certain date, and let's have it ratified by a certain date, and let's have the election by a certain date." That's the timetable, and we're going to stay on that timetable. And it's important for the Iraqi people to know we are.

And the second track is to have Iraqis take the fight to the enemy. And we're, slowly but surely, getting this training completed. And so we spent time today not only hearing about the conditions on the ground and the nature of the enemy from Generals Abizaid and General Casey, but we also talked about progress in the training mission. And we are making good progress when it comes to training Iraqis. One of the interesting statistics as to whether or not the Iraqis want to join the fight is whether or not they're able to recruit Iraqis to join the army, and recruitment is high. In other words, Iraqis do want to be a part of the process.

And so part of the coalition's job is to give these Iraqi units the training necessary to be able to fight the terrorists. That's our strategy, and it is working, and it is going to work, for the good of the country.

Now, he asked you a question, and it's a very intelligent——

Prime Minister Jafari. As for the second question on the visit of Ms. Rice, Condoleezza Rice to Iraq, the general impression of that visit was a general review for the situation there. It was a time for us so that—that gave support at Bruxelles, and I think they played a great role that the greater opportunity for the Iraqis as a big party. And as for the program and the ministers who attended, they all spoke in the interests of Iraq, and we thanked her very much for the efforts she made. And I spoke about the preparation for her and what she can present us of services to Iraq. And I believe she played a great role and will play a great role in Bruxelles, and I hope the recommendations will reflect on the donor countries so that we get the interest to the Iraqi people, particularly for the services. Thank you.

Status of President's Second Term/U.S. Popular Support for Efforts in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Declining public support for the mission in Iraq and the lack of progress on some of your domestic priorities has prompted suggestions that you're in something of a second-term slump. Do you worry——

President Bush. A quagmire, perhaps. [*Laughter*]

Q. You can choose the word, sir. Do you worry at all about losing some of your ability to drive the agenda, both internationally and domestically?

And Mr. Prime Minister, if I may, does the decline in American support for the mission in Iraq have any impact on your Government and the people of your country?

President Bush. No, I appreciate the polls, the question about the polls. Look, this is a time of testing, and it's a critical time. We're asking Congress to do—to take on some big tasks domestically. I fully understood when I went into the Social Security debate that there would be a lot of people that wished we hadn't have brought it up. I knew that. After all, there are some who, in Congress, that would rather not take on the tough issue, make—they're afraid if you take on a tough issue, it will make it harder to get reelected.

And so I'm not surprised that there is a, kind of a reaction, the do-nothing reaction in Congress toward Social Security, and I'm not surprised the American people are saying, "I wonder why nothing is getting done." You know, they see a problem, and they're wondering why people won't step up and solve the problem. So I'm not surprised about—that there's a—people are balking at doing big things. I do think we'll get an energy bill that will be good and show the American people finally we're willing to put an energy strategy in law that will help us conserve more and diversify away from hydrocarbons and develop technologies that will enable us to burn coal cleanly, for example.

Overseas, the idea of helping a country that had been devastated by a tyrant become a democracy is also a difficult chore, and it's hard work, particularly since there's an enemy that is willing to use suicide bombers to kill. It's hard to stop suicide bombers, and it's hard to stop these people that, in many cases, are being smuggled into Iraq from outside Iraq. It's hard to stop them. And yet they're able to do incredible damage. They're damaging not only—you know, they're obviously killing Americans, but they're killing a lot more Iraqis. And their whole attempt is to frighten the people of both our countries. That's what they're trying to do.

In other words, they figure if they can shake our will and affect public opinion, then politicians will give up on the mission. I'm not giving up on the mission. We're doing the right thing, which is to set the foundation for peace and freedom. And I understand why the Al Qaida network, for example, is so terrified about democracy, because democracy is the opposite of what they believe. Their ideology is one of oppression and hate. Democracy is one that lifts up people and is based upon hope.

I think I said at this press conference here in the East Room, you know, "It's like—following polls is like a dog chasing his tail." I'm not sure how that translates. But my job is to set an agenda and to lead toward that agenda. And we're laying the foundation for peace around the world.

Iraq is a part of the agenda. There's going to be—there were elections in Lebanon. We hope Egypt has free and open elections. My dream is that there be a Palestinian state living side by side in peace with Iraq. I noticed our former Ambassador to Afghanistan is with us, who is now going to be the ambassador to Iraq. Afghanistan is a hopeful story. It's still difficult because, again, there are terrorists there associated with this—the likes of—or are a part of the Al Qaida network that is interested in stopping the advance of democracy because democracy is—will be a part of their defeat and demise.

Prime Minister Jafari. Thank you very much. As for the question on the reduction of support, Iraq's—the Iraqi people had a specific request which is toppling down Saddam Hussein for reasons relating to their dignity and their policy—their politics. And after Saddam Hussein was removed, through the different efforts of international efforts and Iraqis, this was achieved. Right now we have another danger, which is terrorism, which is against not only the Iraqi people but all the world of the country—of the world, and at any time, doesn't have any particular land, but it works everywhere. Geography of terrorism is the human beings, themselves. And those people who are doing it are the enemies of humanity.

Once they do it in Washington, once in Spain, once in Iraq. So fighting the terrorism and limiting their impact and in order to keep the human dignity and civilization requires that we all act together. It's not only the duty of Iraqi people but other countries as well. As you know, Iraq is rich in oil, in water, in cultivation, as strategy and—[*inaudible*]—and also—but because of the exception of circumstances of Iraq, now it has become a poor country, so we have to have the impact and the support from other countries.

The success of our Iraqi people is your own success. The people of Iraq is civilized. I look forward to support from all other countries of the world. You have given us something more than money. You have given us a lot of your sons, your children that were killed beside our own children in Iraq. Of course this is more precious than any other kind of support we receive. You have to be proud before your own people that you presented us for the maintenance of democracy in Iraq and to remove the dictatorship. We do not forget those who stood beside us at hard times, and they are decided to go forward. And there is a lot of difference between one month and another, between one week and another. Iraqi people are insistent on going along the path for their economy and their security, but we do need the help of other countries who will help us, to stand beside us.

Thank you.

President Bush. Final question, Mr. Prime Minister. Would you——

Reconstruction in Iraq

[*The reporter spoke in Arabic, and the question was translated by an interpreter.*]

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, I am a presenter on radio in Iraq. My question is for you. For more than 2 years, we've started a change in Iraq, but the process of building is very slow. There are secure cities in Iraq, Samarra and Kurdistan. When will you begin the reconstruction in Iraq? When do we begin to establish the first bases of reconstruction? And you know that if you started reconstruction in Iraq, it will mean that young people will have something to do, and they will leave terrorist activities. So the question is for Mr. Prime Minister. There were discussions held with President Bush, and the most important thing you discussed with him, we want to know about it. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Sometimes we don't tell you things, you know. [*Laughter*] No, we discussed a lot of important things. We discussed democracy. We discussed having the constitution there, and we discussed security. We discussed reconstruction.

We are spending reconstruction money, but you know, you need to ask that to the Government. They're in charge. It's your Government, not ours. This is the Government that is—that has got the ministries in place that spends the money. We're willing to help, and we have helped. And I want to thank the Congress and the American people for their generosity in helping Iraq rebuild, and we're spending money.

But remember, your question kind of made it seem like—that we're in charge. We're not. You had elections; 8½ million people voted; and this good man is now in charge of the Government. I don't want to be passing the buck, as we say, but we're more than willing to help reconstruction efforts, but this is a sovereign Government——

Prime Minister Jafari. Thank you very much.

President Bush. ——with an elected Prime Minister, by the people of Iraq. And so we want to look forward to working with the Government. Our role is to help. His role is to govern and lead. And we've got the money allocated. Obviously, it's important to get electricity to the Iraqi citizens and clean water to the Iraqi citizens. And you know, I was pleased to see the other day when I was reading that there's a lot of air traffic in and out of the airport now, quite a lot of air traffic. In other words, there's commerce beginning to develop. We want to be helpful. But the responsibility rests with the people who the Iraqi people elected. And that's you, Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Jafari. Thank you, Mr. President. Of course, there were many points discussed with the President, Mr. Bush, in our special meeting, and we talked about so many facts. It was the first meeting between us, so we talked directly about

the democracy in Iraq and the constitution, the achievement of the constitution, and we decided to continue the case of security until everything is well established.

And at the same time, we thought that there is a Marshall project after the Second World War that contributed—the U.S. contributed in that and in Truman's Government when they presented assistance to the German people. German people had selected Hitler in a democratic process that had a 98 percent result, however, we are quite happy with this hospitality of the U.S. So Germany was able to work.

The Iraqi people did not elect Saddam Hussein. In fact, they suffered a lot from Saddam Hussein before he attacked the geographical adjacent countries. He took their money before he took the money of Kuwait. He occupied Kuwait, in fact, as he did, and there is a lot of indications to tell us that the Iraqi people are innocent of all that had happened. They have to pay off their—so many debts, and we hope that all countries will stand beside us to correct this unexceptional [exceptional]* situation. They did not commit any crime against any people. They are peaceful. But it was Saddam Hussein who committed the crimes, and he brought about so many debts and losses to the Iraqi people.

We look forward to the international community to stand beside us, and we believe that this is a humanitarian stance. And we hope that Mr. Bush will try to redo a Marshall plan, calling it the Bush plan, to help Iraq, to help the Iraqi people. And this would be a very wonderful step that they stand beside us.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:31 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad.

The President's Radio Address
June 25, 2005

Good morning. This past week, I had the honor of hosting Prime Minister Jafari, the leader of Iraq's first democratically elected Government in more than a half century.

Prime Minister Jafari and I discussed our strong partnership and the dramatic progress his nation has made over the past year. Next Tuesday is the first anniversary of the moment the Iraqi people reclaimed their free and sovereign nation. To mark that historic date, I will travel to Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to speak to our troops and the American people about our mission in Iraq, why it remains important to our safety here at home, and our two-track strategy for victory.

The military track of our strategy is to defeat the terrorists and continue helping Iraqis take greater responsibility for defending their freedom. The images we see on television are a grim reminder that the enemies of freedom in Iraq are ruthless killers with no regard for human life. The killers include members of Saddam Hussein's regime, criminal elements, and foreign terrorists. The terrorists know that Iraq is a central front in the war on terror, because

* White House correction.

they know that a stable and democratic Iraq will deal a severe blow to their ideology of oppression and fear.

The terrorists' objective is to break the will of America and of the Iraqi people before democracy can take root. Insurgents have tried to achieve that goal before. Two years ago, they tried to intimidate the Iraqi Governing Council and failed. Last year, they tried to delay the transfer of sovereignty to Iraq and failed. This year, they tried to stop the free Iraqi elections and failed. Now the terrorists are trying to undermine the new Government and intimidate Iraqis from joining the growing Iraqi security forces.

Yet democracy is moving forward, and more and more Iraqis are defying the terrorists by joining the democratic process. Our military strategy is clear: We will train Iraqi security forces so they can defend their freedom and protect their people, and then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

The political track of our strategy is to continue helping Iraqis build the institutions of a stable democracy. The Iraqi people have taken landmark steps by voting in free elections and forming a representative government. Prime Minister Jafari has assured me that his Government is committed to meeting its deadline to draft a new constitution for a free Iraq. Then the constitution will be submitted to the Iraqi people for approval, and new elections will be held to choose a fully constitutional government.

These are monumental tasks for the new democracy of Iraq, and the free world will continue to stand behind the Iraqi people. This past week, more than 80 countries and international organizations came together in Brussels to discuss how to help Iraqis provide for their security and rebuild their country. And next month, donor countries will meet in Jordan to discuss Iraqi reconstruction.

Our Nation's mission in Iraq is difficult, and we can expect more tough fighting in the weeks and months ahead. Yet I am confident in the outcome. The Iraqi people are growing in optimism and hope. They understand that the violence is only a part of the reality in Iraq. Each day, Iraqis are exercising new freedoms that they were denied for decades. Schools, hospitals, roads, and post offices are being built to serve the needs of all Iraqis. Increasing numbers of Iraqis are overcoming their fears and working actively to defeat the insurgents, and every Iraqi who chooses the side of freedom has chosen the winning side.

Americans can be proud of all that we and our coalition partners have accomplished in Iraq. Our country has been tested before, and we have a long history of resolve and faith in the cause of freedom. Now we will see that cause to victory in Iraq. A democratic Iraq will be a powerful setback to the terrorists who seek to harm our Nation. A democratic Iraq will be a great triumph in the history of liberty, and a democratic Iraq will be a source of peace for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:04 a.m. on June 24 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.