

wants to do us harm but by spreading freedom and democracy.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:24 a.m. at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Martin E.

Dempsey, USA, commander, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq and NATO Training Mission—Iraq; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Health of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel

January 4, 2006

Laura and I share the concerns of the Israeli people about Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's health, and we are praying for his recovery. Prime Minister Sharon is a man

of courage and peace. On behalf of all Americans, we send our best wishes and hopes to the Prime Minister and his family.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Military and Diplomatic Leaders

January 5, 2006

It's been my honor to host former Secretaries of State and Secretaries of Defense from Republican administrations and Democratic administrations here at the White House. I've asked Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld and Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey to bring these men and women up to date on our strategy for victory in Iraq.

I've also had a chance to listen to their concerns, their suggestions about the way forward. Not everybody around this table agree with my decision to go into Iraq, and I fully understand that. But these are good, solid Americans who understand that we've got to succeed now that we're there. And I'm most grateful for the suggestions that have been given. We take to heart the advice. We appreciate your experience, and we appreciate you taking time out of your day.

We have a dual-track strategy for victory. On the one hand, we will work to have a political process that says to all Iraqis, "The future belongs to you." And on the other hand, we'll continue to work on the security situation there. The main thrust of our success will be when the Iraqis are able to take the fight to the enemy that wants to stop their democracy, and we're making darn good progress along those lines.

Again, I want to thank you all for coming. I appreciate your interests. I appreciate you being such a solid citizen of our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. Participating in the

meeting were former Secretaries of State Colin L. Powell, Madeleine K. Albright, Lawrence S. Eagleburger, James A. Baker III, George P. Shultz, and Alexander M. Haig, Jr.; and former Secretaries of Defense

William S. Cohen, William J. Perry, Frank C. Carlucci, Harold Brown, James R. Schlesinger, Melvin R. Laird, and Robert S. McNamara.

Remarks to the United States University Presidents Summit on International Education

January 5, 2006

Thank you all. Madam Secretary, it's your building; you can give my speech if you want to. *[Laughter]*

But first, our Nation sends our deepest sympathies to Ariel Sharon. He lies immobilized in an Israeli hospital. We pray for his recovery. He's a good man, a strong man, a man who cared deeply about the security of the Israeli people and a man who had a vision for peace. May God bless him.

Madam Secretary, thanks for having me. I'm here to let the good folks know here how strongly I support the National Security Language Initiative. I've had a little problem with the language in the past, so—*[laughter]*—if you've got room in the initiative for me, let me know. *[Laughter]* Condi said, "Come on by. We've got a bunch of university presidents here." And I said, "Great, just so long as we don't have to compare transcripts." *[Laughter]* She's the Ph.D.; I'm the President. *[Laughter]*

She's a heck of a Secretary of State, though, and Don Rumsfeld is a heck of a Secretary of the Defense, and I want to thank you both for joining together on this initiative. It's interesting, isn't it, that the State Department and the Defense Department are sponsoring a language initiative. It says something about the world we live in. I felt certain that the Secretary of Education would be here. After all, we're talking about education, and I want to thank you for being here, Margaret. But I also find it's interesting you're sitting next

to John Negroponte, who is the Director of National Intelligence.

In other words, this initiative is a broad-gauged initiative that deals with the defense of the country, the diplomacy of the country, the intelligence to defend our country, and the education of our people. And it's an important initiative, and I'm going to tell you why in a second. But thank you for joining your—together to make this happen.

I want to thank Deputy Secretary of State Bob Zoellick, and I want to thank the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Lugar from Indiana. Senator Pat Roberts from Kansas is with us. I think you'll find this interesting: He has promoted the advanced study of foreign languages through the Pat Roberts Intelligence Scholars Program. Thanks for doing that. And I want to thank Congressman Rush Holt for being here as well. Thank you for coming, Rush. Thanks for taking time.

I appreciate all the ambassadors who are here. I'm scanning the room. I see a few familiar faces, and thanks for serving. What the heck are you doing here? Like, you're supposed to be—*[laughter]*—the deal was overseas. *[Laughter]*

We're living in extraordinary times. I wish I could report to you the war on terror was over. It's not. There is still an enemy that lurks, that wants to hurt us.