

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Rep-

resentatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

## The President's Radio Address *April 29, 2006*

Good morning. Last weekend, the people of Iraq formed a national unity government. This is an important milestone on the road to democracy in Iraq, and it marks the beginning of a new chapter in America's involvement. Last Sunday, I talked to the President, Prime Minister-designate, and Speaker of the new Government. And this week, I sent Secretary of State Rice and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to Baghdad to meet face to face with the new Iraqi leadership. We've all been impressed by the Iraqi leaders' commitment to maintain the unity of their country and effectively represent the Iraqi people.

The new Iraqi Government will face many challenges. Iraqi leaders agree that the new Government must continue to build up the Iraqi security forces to defeat the terrorists and must establish control over militias. They also agree that the new Government must rebuild critical infrastructure, strengthen the Iraqi economy, and ensure that all Iraqis benefit as their nation grows in security and prosperity.

During their meetings in Baghdad, Secretaries Rice and Rumsfeld made clear that Iraq will have the continued support of America and our coalition partners as we begin the new chapter in our relationship. We will help the new Iraqi Government assume growing responsibility for the Nation's security. And as Iraqis continue to make progress toward a democracy that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, more of our troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The terrorists clearly recognize the threat that the new unity Government poses to their dark plans for Iraq and the broader Middle East. This week, the terrorist Zarqawi, leader of Al Qaida in Iraq, released a video in which he denounced the new Government and promised further acts of terrorist violence. Zarqawi lashed out at what he called "this rotten play of democracy" and declared that Iraq's new Government will become "a poisoned dagger" in the heart of his plans for the Muslim world.

On Wednesday, Iraq's leaders united to strongly condemn Zarqawi's statements. One Iraqi official declared that the terrorists and insurgents, quote, "are feeling this might be the last chance they have to survive. They're fighting everyone in Iraq—every Iraqi. I think that shows how weak they are," end quote. A newly appointed first Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament said that Zarqawi fears the new Government will unify Shiites and Sunnis and Kurds. He said, quote, "I believe that Zarqawi was caught off guard by the new Government taking shape, because it will be a very strong one representing all Iraqis," end quote.

The new leaders of Iraq are showing great courage in the face of terrorist threats. In recent weeks, terrorists have assassinated three siblings of top Iraqi politicians, but the new leaders of Iraq remain determined to lead their nation toward a future of democracy and peace. These

brave leaders deserve our continued support, and I have told them they can count on America to stand with them.

The enemy is resorting to desperate acts of violence because they know the establishment of democracy in Iraq will be a double defeat for them. First, it will deny the terrorists their immediate aim of turning Iraq into what Afghanistan was under the Taliban—a safe haven where they can plot and plan more attacks against free nations. Second, in the long term, a democratic Iraq will be a major blow to the terrorists' hateful ideology, because it will send a powerful message across the region that the future of the Middle East belongs to freedom.

There will be more tough fighting ahead in Iraq and more days of sacrifice and struggle. Yet the enemies of freedom have suffered a real blow in recent days, and we have taken great strides on the march to victory. Iraq's leaders now have laid the

foundations for a democratic government of, by, and for the Iraqi people. By helping the Iraqi people build their democracy, America will deal the terrorists a crippling blow and establish a beacon of liberty in the Middle East. And that will make our Nation and the world more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:52 a.m. on April 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister-designate Nuri al-Maliki, Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and First Deputy Speaker Khaled Atea of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld *May 1, 2006*

I want to thank Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld. And General Pace, thank you for being here as well. Thank you for joining me this morning.

They came by the Oval Office to brief me on their recent trip to Iraq. First of all, I appreciate them both going over there to send my best wishes to the new Government and to Prime Minister-designate Maliki, as well as the new Speaker and the President. I had spoken to them on the phone, but I thought it was very important for both Secretaries to go firsthand, to be there with the leadership to say we're supporting them. It's very important for these two senior officials to sit down with these new folks and say, "You have our support, and we want you to succeed."

And they brought back interesting impressions from the three new leaders. They said they were optimistic people, that they're full of energy, and they're very eager to succeed. And that's really important for the American people to know, that we've got partners in this effort who are dedicated to a unified Iraq and dedicated to putting a Government together that is one that will represent all the Iraqi people.

This new Government is going to represent a new start for the Iraqi people. It's a Government that understands they've got serious challenges ahead of them. And the three leaders spoke to Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld about their need to deploy the growing strength of the Iraqi security forces in such a way as to defeat