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solution that he's comfortable with. These prisoners are being treated—these were illegal non-combatants picked up off of a battlefield. And they're being well-treated, and they will go through a military tribunal at some point in time, which is—a military tribunal, which is in international accord—or in line with international accords.

Q. As we approach the end of this interview, Mr. President—I could carry on for hours, actually, but I know you've got a lot to do, more than the rest of us. As we approach the end of this interview, what would you say is the most important lesson you've learned in life in the Presidency?

The President. The most important lesson in life in the Presidency is to have a clear vision of where you want to lead, and lead. I've got a clear vision: It's a world that is more free and therefore more peaceful; a world based upon human rights, human dignity, and justice; a world that does not discriminate between one group of people or—a vision that does not discriminate between one group of people or another, because I believe all people have the desire to be free. And I'm willing to lead there.

And the people of this country will make their—you asked about politics—they'll make the decision as to whether or not they—I've have been honest with them and open with them and whether or not they like my leadership style. A lot of it will have to do with the economy, of course, whether I get another 4 years. But I think it's important to know where you want to lead, and lead.

Bush Team for a Second Term

Q. Would you hope to present to the country the same team, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld and Colin Powell and Condi Rice, for the second term?

The President. It's been a fabulous team, and Cheney for certain. And I haven't—obviously, I'm not going to talk to my Cabinet ministers until after the election. But I'm proud of this team. I put together one of the finest teams, one of the finest administrations any President has ever assembled. These are good, honest, decent, hard-working, experienced people who give me good, unvarnished advice and, when I make a decision, say, ''Yes, sir, Mr. President, we'll go execute it.''

Q. Well, thank you for your decision to do this interview.

The President. Thank you, sir. I enjoyed seeing you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:08 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast on BBC One's ''Breakfast With Frost.'' The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 17. In his remarks, the President referred to Queen Elizabeth II and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; President Jacques Chirac of France; former President William J. Clinton; David Kay, CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq; President Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. Portions of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Interview With Trevor Kavanagh of The Sun

November 17, 2003

The Oval Office

The President. Have you ever been in the Oval Office before?

Mr. Kavanagh. Once, just once.

The President. Okay. The rug was designed by my wife. Every President gets to design his own rug. You probably didn't know that.

Mr. Kavanagh. Fabulous.

The President. I wanted mine—mine was designed by my wife, Laura. And I wanted people to have a sense of optimism when they came in here, that this is a guy who kind of sees a better world, not a worse world. Sometimes the Oval can be foreboding, and I wanted it to be cheery. So I hope you felt that.

This is called ''A Charge To Keep.'' It's based upon a Methodist hymn. One of America's great imports from England was John Wesley. And it talks about serving something greater than yourself, which speaks to my

own personal faith. As a President, it speaks to my need to capture the spirit of America and call on people to serve. You've probably followed some of my domestic policy, but one of the things that's important is to call on people to serve their communities by helping neighbors who hurt. The de Tocquevillean view of America at that point was just kind of a civic fabric of loving organizations; part of my vision, as well, is to energize them.

The painting's of Texas. That's kind of what my ranch looks like, by a guy named Onderdonk. He's a Texas landscape artist. The bluebonnets are not quite that big. Blair and I—well, he's been there, and he would recognize kind of the look, if he were here. This is west Texas, where my wife's family was raised. We were both raised in west Texas, but this is farther west than where I was raised. It's called El Paso. But it's a famous Texas artist and historian who painted that.

More Texas. The reason I have Texas up there is it's where I'm from. And in this job if you can't figure out who you are—you better know who you are because of the pressures and the decisionmaking process and all the noise of politics and all that.

Really quickly, this is a desk given to us by Queen Victoria. A famous desk called the U.S.S. *Resolute*, and it's wood from the *Resolute*. The door was put on by Roosevelt to cover his infirmities. Out of the door poked John Kennedy's son——

Mr. Kavanagh. Oh, yes, I remember.

The President. I chose to use this. Ronald Reagan put the bottom on to make the desk high so it won't bump your knees. I love the desk. I love its history. It does speak to the great relationship between America and Great Britain; I'm sitting at a desk given to our country by Queen Victoria.

And finally, the Churchill bust is on loan from the Brits. Tony Blair knew I was a great admirer of Churchill, so here he sits, along with Lincoln and Eisenhower.

That's it. Welcome.

Mr. Kavanagh. Fantastic. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Where would you like me?

The President. Sit right here. Take Vice President Cheney's seat.

Mr. Kavanagh. I'm more than a little impressed by being here and by sitting in this seat.

The President. Well, you know, this is a shrine to democracy, and we treat it as such. And it's an honor to serve here.

Mr. Kavanagh. Well, I would like to thank you on behalf of our readers for giving them and me the time to talk to you.

The President. Well, I'm glad you're here, thanks.

World After Afghanistan and Iraq

Mr. Kavanagh. We're a very pro-American newspaper, and our readers were shocked and deeply moved by September the 11th. And they supported what happened subsequently in Afghanistan and a little more reluctantly in Iraq, but in fact, the majority of our readers were behind the action.

I think what they would like to know—we've talked with them in a way which is quite interesting. We actually spent a weekend with about 2,000 of our readers.

The President. Really? [*Laughter*] Good marketing tool. [*Laughter*] That's interesting.

Mr. Kavanagh. Yes. And the one question they wanted to ask you is, is the world a safer place after the conflict than it was before?

The President. Yes, much safer. It's safer for a couple of reasons. One, the free world has recognized the threat. In order to make the world safe, you've got to actually see reality. And the reality is that there are cold-blooded killers who were trying to intimidate, create fear, create hostility, and to shape the will of the civilized world.

And a lot of countries have seen the threat for what it is. So, therefore, step one is recognizing the problem. Tony Blair recognizes the problem. Jose Maria Aznar recognizes the problem. Silvio Berlusconi recognizes the problem. Clearly, the United States recognizes the problem. After all, the clearest indication that we were at war and that the stakes had changed dramatically was September the 11th. After all, we were a country which was able to sit back in our—kind of in our geographical posture and pick and choose where a threat might emerge and say we may have to deal with that or we may not deal with it. We were pretty confident that we were protected ourselves by oceans. That changed.

And one of my vows to the American people is I won't forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001.

Secondly, the world is safer because the actions we have taken will ultimately strengthen multinational institutions. Take the theater in Iraq. The United Nations had recognized that Saddam Hussein was a threat. They recognized it in not one resolution but multiple resolutions and yet didn't do anything about it. And therefore, the resolutions became weak, became just words.

And as a result of enforcing 1441, which said that you disarm or there will be serious consequences, now when multinational institutions speak, hopefully people will take them seriously. And in order to win the war on terror, there needs to be alliance and cooperation because these are killers that are capable of hiding in societies. They're patient. They're lethal. They pop up and will destroy. And by the way, they don't care who they destroy. There are no rules for these people. They will kill children just as soon as they'll kill somebody in a military uniform.

Thirdly, the world is safer because there is a—and by the way, multinational forum doesn't necessarily mean U.N. It can also mean collaborations, like the collaboration that's now taking place with North Korea in dealing with Kim Chong-il, who is a threat to peace. And now it's not just the United States dealing with Kim Chong-il; it's the United States, China, South Korea, Japan, and Russia in a collaborative effort. Or the fine work—the initial fine work done by the foreign ministers of Great Britain, France, and Germany in telling Iran to get rid of its nuclear ambitions. I say ''initial fine work'' because the Iranians, in the past, have had clandestine operations. And therefore, in order to make sure that the words that have been issued to them are true, there must be transparency.

Fourthly, we dealt Al Qaida. We are tough on Al Qaida. Now, you know, there are key figures still looming in caves and remote regions of the world, but we're dismantling them. If you were to look at Al Qaida as a business organization, middle management is no longer. That's not to say that they're not grooming junior executives to take over certain roles. But we're tough, and we're on their trail, and we're still hunting them down. Make no mistake about it. And as a result of dismantling Al Qaida, the world is safer.

We've also dealt with the tyrants in Afghanistan, which is an incredibly dangerous regime, dangerous not only to the free world because they provided housing, training, money, safe haven, but also they were just tortuous and barbaric to their own people. And in Iraq, Saddam Hussein was clearly a threat to peace. And we can argue about the definition of ''serious consequence,'' and I respect the debate, but no one can justify this man's behavior to his people. We've discovered mass graves with over 300,000 people there, rape rooms, and torture rooms. He is paying suiciders to go kill innocent Israelis. He had a weapons program as discovered—I promise you this is going to be a short answer, eventually. I saw you looking at the clock; your glance can't escape me. [*Laughter*]

This is an important question. It is the question.

Mr. Kavanagh. Of course, absolutely.

The President. David Kay discovered a weapons program that was in material breach of 1441. In other words, it was in violation of precisely what the United Nations had asked him not to do. Saddam Hussein, in 1991, it was assumed that he—his nuclear weapons program would be active in the outyears, and in fact, the inspectors discovered he's got nuclear ambitions, not only real and active but his program was a lot farther along than we thought. And had he ever developed a nuclear weapon, had he been allowed to have a nuclear weapon, he would have been the ultimate source of international blackmail.

And so the removal of Saddam Hussein makes the world safer. And as importantly, the removal of Saddam Hussein gives the Iraqis a chance to live in freedom, which is the ultimate—freedom is the ultimate route to security. I strongly believe that free nations are peaceful nations. Free nations are not terrorist havens, do not become terrorist havens. Free nations won't create conditions of strife and resentment that breeds anxiety and terror.

And therefore, the world is becoming safer, is safer, and will be even more safe

when Iraq becomes free. And Iraq will be free, and it'll be peaceful. And we need peace and freedom in that part of the world.

Now, there's an interesting debate going on as to whether or not people like the Iraqis will ever adapt the habits of freedom. There's kind of an elitism that takes place in our country, in your country, and elsewhere, feels, well, ''Certain people can't be free. They can't adapt the habits of democracy.'' I strongly disagree. I strongly disagree.

And so, yes, the world is safer, and the world is more peaceful.

Future U.S. Activity in Iraq

Mr. Kavanagh. Okay. That answer will resonate with our readers. Nonetheless, there is concern about the events, particularly in the last week or so, when things have escalated. I think this causes concern everywhere. Are we going to increase military presence there? Are we going to pull out? There's a fear that——

The President. You don't have to worry about us pulling out.

Mr. Kavanagh. There's a famous T-shirt slogan which shows the American flag and the words, ''These colors don't run.'' Do you stand by that?

The President. Yes, absolutely. Absolutely. Our will is being tested. See, the tactics of the terrorists is to kill as many innocent people as possible and, therefore, try to shape the will of the Iraqis. As progress is made—and we're making interesting progress, and I'll cite some examples in a minute that I think are fascinating. But as the Iraqis begin to say, ''Wait a minute. Life can be better,'' and their instincts kick in about what it means to live in a free society, the terrorists want to shake that. They want to scare them. They want the police not to become police. And we've got over 118,000 people now, Iraqi citizens, in uniform beginning to conduct operations for their own security.

They, of course, want to kill our own soldiers and, therefore, try to shake the will of the American people and the President and the command structure. They killed those Italians. And they were hoping that Berlusconi would say, ''Oh, my goodness, this is too big a fight. We'll leave.'' We're not leaving. We're staying there to get the job done. Of course we mourn the death of any citizen. But I recognize that it is—I still remember the death, what happened to us on September the 11th as well. I was there at Ground Zero right after the attacks, and I remember this kind of haze and the smells and the death and destruction. I'll always remember that, of course. And as I've told you, I vowed not to forget the lessons.

Mr. Kavanagh. That changed everything?

The President. Absolutely. Look, what changed for me was sitting on Air Force One and getting the reports that we were under attack. And I made up my mind then, right then, that we didn't need a bunch of legal briefs. I didn't need a bunch of—you know, let's kind of hold hands and hope to get the right answer. We were at war, and we were going to win the war. And I still feel that same exact determination today that I did then.

Mr. Kavanagh. So you'll stay in Iraq even——

The President. We will do our job.

Mr. Kavanagh. ——after there's an interim council, a Government which is——

The President. Yes. There's a lot of talk right now about the political process, as there should be. And we are interested in the Iraqis assuming more responsibility on the political side and on the security side. And a political process in which the Iraqis assume more responsibility will make the security side come together quicker as well in our judgment.

And therefore, Bremer came here, he took instructions back from me to talk to the Governing Council to find out what is feasible when it comes to the passing of more power to the Governing Council. That's where we are right there.

On the security side, absolutely we're there. The goal is for Iraq to be peaceful and free. I understand the consequences of a free and peaceful Iraq in the midst of the Middle East. We can have the debate all day long as to whether the Middle East will ever adapt the habits of democracy and freedom. I think they will, obviously, and I'm confident they will. I like to tell people in this country, freedom is not America's gift to the world; freedom is not Great Britain's gift to the

world; freedom is the Almighty's gift to everybody in the world.

Freedom for Iraq

Mr. Kavanagh. And this is what you'll tell the demonstrators? Or this is what you would tell the demonstrators if you had 5 minutes with them?

The President. Of course I would, absolutely. I will say, ''You may disagree with our tactics. Nobody likes war. War is my last choice.'' If the demonstrators are there as anti-war protestors, they may be there for other reasons as well—global trade—and I'd be glad to talk to them about that as well. But in terms of war, I can understand why people are anxious about war. I can understand why citizens in Great Britain, protestor or not, wonders about why a President would commit to war, because nobody likes war.

On the other hand, I would tell them, the skeptics and the critics, that I have a job to protect the security of the United States of America and that Saddam Hussein was a security risk, as witnessed by the international community speaking loudly on that subject 12 different times. But I would tell those who doubt our policy that we share a common goal, which is peace, and that free societies are peaceful societies. They may say, ''Well, you can't possibly expect a country like Iraq to be free,'' and then we'd have an interesting philosophical debate because I believe freedom exists in the heart of every single human being. It may take longer for people to accept freedom, if they've been tortured and brutalized like Saddam Hussein did.

Secondly, I would tell the skeptics that not only is the world more secure as a result of the decisions we made, the Iraqi people now have a chance to live in a society which is hopeful and optimistic, a society in which you're able to speak your mind, a society in which you don't have to pay homage to a brutal tyrant and his two brutal sons, which is precisely how they had to live in the past.

Threats to World Peace

Mr. Kavanagh. So how do you respond to those people who were polled by the Europe Commission and found that America was—alongside Iran, North Korea—is the second most powerful threat to world peace?

The President. You just have to tell them, ''Watch what happens.'' The world is going to be more peaceful, and the free world will be more secure as a result of the decisions we've taken.

United Kingdom's Contribution in Iraq

Mr. Kavanagh. Can I ask you about the special relationship, the role the British soldiers play in Iraq and are still playing?

The President. Sure.

Mr. Kavanagh. Would you like to tell me about you feel about our contribution?

The President. Yes, I'll tell you about your troops. They are well trained. They are well motivated, and they're really good at what they do. And our soldiers and our generals and our commanders really appreciate being side-by-side with the Brits. They trust them, and that's important.

Secondly, in Basra, the Brits have brought an interesting strategy in dealing in Basra because you have dealt in Northern Ireland. In other words, it was kind of a transfer of experience that has been incredibly useful and important. I am really proud of our—not only our alliance because it's close now, and I intend to keep it that way.

I've got a great personal relationship with Tony Blair. Let me tell you something about him just real quick, because it relates also to the trust of the troops. He's a man who comes in here, and he says he's going to do something, and as I said—as they say in Texas, you can book him when he says he's going to do something; you can take it to the bank. Because every time he has said something, he has done it, and I appreciate that a lot. It's not always the way it is in politics, whether it be domestic or international politics. Sometimes they'll come and look you in the eye and say, ''Oh, don't worry, Mr. President, we're with you and behind you,'' and it turns out they're way behind you. You can't find them when the heat gets on. But that's not the way Tony Blair is, and that's not the way the Brits' command structure is, and that's not the way the soldiers in the field have been. They've been tough and capable and decent people—that's the other thing about militaries. Both our militaries are full of compassionate people, because not only are we chasing down people and bringing

them to justice, as we say, but there are schools being built, orphanages being opened, hospitals being supplied, thanks to compassionate British troops and American troops as well, and other troops. It speaks to the honor of our respective militaries. These are honorable people.

President's Upcoming Meeting With Families of Fallen British Soldiers

Mr. Kavanagh. You're going to speak to some of the families of those who have already died in Iraq and also September the 11th.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Kavanagh. You're going to see them, I guess, on Downing Street.

The President. Well, I'm not sure exactly where, but you bet. I am going to see them.

Mr. Kavanagh. What are you going to say to them?

The President. Well, I'm going to first of all ask for God's blessings, because I understand how bad they hurt. I can't imagine what it would be like, if I were a mother or a dad, to have lost a child. I'm a proud dad. It's got to shatter a person's heart to lose a loved one, and I will do the best I can to provide some comfort. I have done this here in America as well. It's part of my duty as the leader of this country to comfort those who have sacrificed.

I'll also explain to them as best as I can that the sacrifices that their loved one has made is for a noble cause, and that's peace and freedom. I strongly believe that what we're doing today will make it easier for this person's grandchild to grow up in a free world and a peaceful world.

I'll tell you an interesting story, kind of dawned on me a while ago. I was talking to Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan in Tokyo. We were having dinner, actually. And I kind of reflected on what it would be like—during our dinner, I reflected on what it would be like if America and the Allies hadn't done a good job in post-World War II. Would I be sitting with a Prime Minister of Japan, with whom I've got great relations, talking about how to deal with Kim Chong-il and North Korea? It's an interesting thought.

Mr. Kavanagh. Very interesting.

The President. Beyond that is whether or not somebody 50 years from now is going to be sitting with a leader from Iraq or any other country in that region saying, ''Thank goodness George W. and Tony Blair held the line, because I'm now able to deal with terrorist threats or potential terrorist threats with an ally. I'm able to help bring more peace to the world.''

Presidents and Prime Ministers should never worry about their short-term history, how they're viewed in short-term history. There's no such thing as short-term history, except for the musings of somebody who's not very objective to begin with, because if you set big goals and work on big items, the President or the Prime Minister won't be around to see the effects of those policies. And therefore, I don't worry about the short-term history. I think in terms of long-term history. I know what we're doing now is going to have an effect, a positive effect on this world.

France, Germany, and NATO

Mr. Kavanagh. Can I just backtrack a little?

The President. Sure.

Mr. Kavanagh. You were talking earlier about the contributions countries like Britain and Italy have made, and others.

The President. Spain, Poland, a lot of people.

Mr. Kavanagh. You didn't mention France and Germany in that. You seem very critical of France.

The President. Look, my attitude is the past is there. It's past, and now let's go on. I'll tell you one example of why that attitude is important, and that is Germany's contribution in Afghanistan. And it's a positive contribution, more than positive; it's incredibly helpful. They've got a number of troops there. It's the first deployment of German troops, as I understand, outside of their soil since World War II. It's a positive—yes, I think that's right. Check the facts. But anyway, it's helpful, really helpful.

Mr. Kavanagh. And NATO?

The President. Yes, NATO is important.

Mr. Kavanagh. But France is a semidetached member of NATO——

The President. Well, it's a historic role——

Mr. Kavanagh. They won't be a rival——

The President. I certainly hope not. See, there's no need to rival the United States and our friends. Our goals are peace.

Mr. Kavanagh. But France wants to counter.

The President. You mean multipolarity? Well, I think we need to work against multipolarity, and the reason why I know we need to work against multipolarity is a Europe working with American can do a lot together. A united Europe working with America can do a lot together. We can promote peace. We can fight off terror, which is necessary, and there needs to be full cooperation in order to defeat the terrorists. We can work on issues like global AIDS.

I'm real proud of our country's contribution to global AIDS, just to give you a sense of my feeling on this. We are a fortunate country. We're prosperous—and by the way, we're becoming more prosperous, which is good news.

Global AIDS Initiative

Mr. Kavanagh. I'd like to ask you about that.

The President. Okay. But I believe we owe a lot to the world's peace, and we owe a lot to those who suffer, because of our fortune, because of our wealth. I'm proud of the fact that Congress has supported my initiative to provide a large sum of money. And as importantly, I'm proud of our NGOs and faith-based organizations that are willing to help provide the infrastructure so that we can get help to beat this pandemic. We're a prosperous country, and yet in our world an entire generation is about to be wiped out. And I feel strongly about America's need to be involved and Europe's need to be involved in this issue together, just like I feel strongly we need to provide food for the hungry, just like I feel strongly that when we see tyranny, that we need to work for freedom.

Every situation, of course, doesn't require military action. I just repeat—I want your readers to know, the military is my last choice, not my first choice. See, I understand the consequences of war. I understand the risks of war. I understand firsthand, particularly when I go and hug the moms and dads and brothers and sisters and sons and daughters of those who died.

I also see the consequences of not acting, of hoping for the best in the face of these tyrannical killers. So therefore, our foreign policy will be active. We'll work closely with our friends and allies, and we're going to stay on the offensive against the terrorists.

National Economy/Steel Tariffs

Mr. Kavanagh. Let me just ask you one quick question on the economy.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Kavanagh. It's going great guns. You're revising figures upwards. You introduced tax cuts. You promised tax cuts; you introduced them. Is this a message to the rest of the world too?

The President. Well, I think people ought to look at progrowth policies and how to stimulate the entrepreneurial spirit. To me, one of the unique qualities of our country is the individualism of our country and the willingness of people to take risks to better themselves. Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses, and that's an exciting aspect of our economy, because it not only is good economics to have the job-hiring dispersed throughout society, it also is such a hopeful part of our economy, when you think about somebody in America can start their own business and grow it and then actually own something. They become the owner of this piece of property.

Our tax policy was very effective at stimulating small-business growth, because most small businesses pay tax at the individual income tax level. When you hear ''small business'' or ''small corporation,'' you think ''corporate tax.'' But in America most small businesses are sole proprietorships or Subchapter S's, so that when we cut all rates, not trying to select rate cuts but all rates, it really affected capital formation in the small business.

This economy and this country, more importantly, is tough and resilient. We've been through a lot. When I showed up here, we were in recession. I guess we were headed into recession. But the first—I show up—Dick Cheney and I are here; we get sworn in in late January; and the first quarter of

'01 is recession or the beginnings of a recession. And then the attacks hurt us, and we had corporate scandals. But I think the world is beginning to see America will deal with corporate scandals in a tough way. It doesn't matter whether you're—we will hold people to account. I believe, in criminal matters, that there has to be consequences for bad behavior, and clear consequences, and that's how you deter bad behavior. And our SEC and our prosecutors are moving quickly.

The war affected people, but we're overcoming that. It's not only good tax policy, but we've got to work on making sure Congress doesn't overspend, and that's tough. But I'm holding the line. We've done pretty good on our budget agreements so far. We need better legal policy. I've been pushing tort reform at the national level on class action suits, all of which make it easier for people to kind of calculate risk when it comes to employing capital, which is the essence of promoting the entrepreneurial spirit.

Trade is a very important element. I'll be dealing—real quickly—I'm going to take a good look at the steel issue. The International Trade Commission made a ruling. It said our industry was being harmed by imports. I felt I had an obligation to take that report seriously, which I did. I imposed tariffs to see whether or not—to give the breathing room for the industry to restructure. I'm not analyzing the extent to which they restructured. Having said that, I am a fierce free trader. I believe in free trade. I know free trade is important between America and Great Britain, and I will continue to resist any protectionist tendencies here. In order for us to be free traders, however, we've got to enforce the rules of free trade, and I was doing so through the International Trade Commission's report.

Sorry I cut you off.

Mr. Kavanagh. Not at all.

The President. First Lady Bush is standing out there. We're getting ready to award the National Humanities Award here.

Mr. Kavanagh. Many thanks.

The President. See you over there.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:31 a.m. on November 14 in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 14 but was embargoed for release until 8 a.m., November 17. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain; Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy; Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; L. Paul Bremer III, Presidential Envoy to Iraq; and David Kay, CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks Following Discussions With Members of the Governing Council of Iraq and Members of the Baghdad Advisory Council and an Exchange With Reporters

November 17, 2003

The President. It's been my honor to host one of the most extraordinary meetings I've had as the President of the United States. I'm seated here with five courageous, brave Iraqi women who believe in the people of Iraq, believe in the future of Iraq, who love their freedoms, who look forward to working to see that their nation is a free and peaceful country.

The stories of these five courageous leaders is a story of human tragedy on the one hand and human hope on the other. And I am so honored that they're here. Two members of the Governing Council are with us. I'll ask each member to say a couple of words, and then I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

Would you like to start? The leader of the delegation. And by the way, there is an extensive group of Iraqi women in the room next door that I will go talk to here in a minute with these—along with these other five leaders here.

Raja Habib Khuzai. I lead the delegation of the 17 women, Iraqi women, and we represent Iraq. And all of us are different ethnic and religious groups, but we are from Iraq. And we are all Iraqis, and Iraq is just one nation. And we are looking forward to see the new, democratic Iraq, and everyone will live in peace. We don't like wars anymore, and we suffered a lot.