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The second element of our strategy is to return sovereignty to the people of Iraq on the schedule that we agreed to with the Iraqi Governing Council. Like any proud people, Iraqis want to manage their own affairs, and that is a goal we share. On June 30th, a sovereign Iraqi interim government will take office. Iraqis will assume all administrative duties now performed by the coalition. Since February, United Nations Special Adviser Lakhdar Brahimi has been consulting with Iraqis on how best to form that interim government. The United States fully supports his mission.

As the transfer of sovereignty approaches on June 30th, we are likely to see more violence from groups opposed to freedom. We will not be intimidated or diverted. On July 1st and beyond, our reconstruction and military commitment will continue.

In the cause of a free and stable Iraq, our service men and women are working hard and sacrificing greatly. And families of the brave troops who have fallen must know that their loss is not in vain. We will finish our work in Iraq, because the stakes for our country and the world are high. The failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the globe, increase dangers to the American people, and extinguish the hopes of millions in the Middle East. The success of Iraqi democracy would send forth the news from Damascus to Tehran that freedom can be the future of every nation. And democracy will succeed in Iraq, because our coalition is strong, because our resolve is firm, and because the people of Iraq desire and deserve to live in freedom.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:57 a.m. on April 30 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 30 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner

May 1, 2004

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Thank you for the invite. Thank you, Carl. I'm glad you got a taste of Mother. [*Laughter*] I was going to start off tonight telling some self-deprecating jokes. [*Laughter*] But then I couldn't think of any mistakes I had made to be self-deprecating about. [*Laughter*]

In my recent press conference, John Dickerson of Time Magazine asked the question about what I considered my biggest mistake. It's an excellent question that totally stumped me. [*Laughter*] I guess looking at it practically, my biggest mistake was calling on John. [*Laughter*] Or take that one about Cheney and me answering questions together. That was a toughie. [*Laughter*] So from now on, Dick and I will be holding joint press conferences. [*Laughter*]

We could do it that way, or we could do it this way: You could ask the question, then I could tell Bob Woodward—[*laughter*]—and he could tell you. [*Laughter*]

I thought about giving an economics speech tonight. It really gets me when the critics say I haven't done enough for the economy. I mean, look what I've done for the book publishing industry. [*Laughter*] You've heard some of the titles: "Big Lies;" "The Lies of George W. Bush;" "The Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them." [*Laughter*] I'd like to tell you I've read each of these books, but that would be a lie. [*Laughter*]

Laura and I always look forward to this event because of the good spirit that brings us together. And I appreciate that, Carl, you reflecting that spirit tonight. This year, we are also mindful that our country is in a period of testing and sacrifice. As I speak, men and women in uniform are taking great risks, and so are many journalists who are being faithful to their own sense of duty.

When we think of the great war journalists, we often think of an earlier era: Edward R. Murrow reporting from wartime London; Joe

Rosenthal with his camera at Iwo Jima; or Ernie Pyle, sending columns home from Europe and the Pacific and dying with the men whose stories he told.

In every field in every generation, we tend to view the best as belonging to the past. Yet, in our time, that's not right or fair. Many of us were privileged to know Michael Kelly and to read his clear words and to feel the moral conviction behind them. David Bloom passed through our midst with incredible energy, enthusiasm, and tenacity in getting the story. Others, like Michael Weisskopf, have shown incredible presence of mind and courage that won our admiration. This generation of wartime journalists has done fine work and much more, and they will be remembered long after the first draft of history is completed.

The same is true of our military. We are nearing important days of remembrance. Soon, we will mark the 60th anniversary of D-day, in the company of men who have lived long and can tell you the names of the boys who did not. Later this month, we will dedicate the World War II Memorial here in Washington and look back on a generation that saved the liberty of the world. These events will have an added meaning because America is again asking for courage and sacrifice.

As we honor veterans who are leaving us, we also honor qualities that remain. The generation of World War II can be certain of this: When they are gone, we will still have their kind wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

The loss of Army Corporal Pat Tillman last week in Afghanistan brought home the sorrow that comes with every loss and reminds us of the character of the men and women who serve on our behalf. Friends say that this young man saw the images of September the 11th, and seeing that evil, he felt called to defend America. He set aside a career in athletics and many things the world counts important, wealth and security and the acclaim of the crowds. He chose, instead, the rigors of Ranger training and the fellowship of soldiers and the hard duty in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Corporal Tillman asked for no special attention. He was modest because he knew there were many like him, making their own sacrifices. They fill the ranks of the Armed Forces. Every day, somewhere, they do brave and good things without notice. Their courage is usually seen only by their comrades, by those who long to be free, and by the enemy. They're willing to give up their lives, and when one is lost, a whole world of hopes and possibilities is lost with them.

This evening, we think of the families who grieve and the families that wait on a loved one's safe return. We count ourselves lucky that this new generation of Americans is as brave and decent as any before it. And we honor with pride and wonder the men and women who carry the flag and the cause of the United States.

May God bless them, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Carl Cannon, president, White House Correspondents' Association; and journalist Bob Woodward.

Remarks on Arrival in South Bend, Indiana

May 3, 2004

I am proud to be standing by the side of my friend Mitch Daniels. Mitch is going to be the Governor of the State of Indiana, and I know for certain the people of this State will love this guy as their Governor. See, I've seen him firsthand. I know what it's like to work with Mitch. He's smart. He's capable. He's well organized. He's got a fabulous sense of humor.

I gave him a lot of tough jobs, and he did each of them with great professionalism and class. I know the people are going to the polls tomorrow in the primary. I'm not a voter in this State, Mitch, but if I were, I'd be voting for you, because I'll know you'll be a great Governor.

Do you want to say something?

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at South Bend Regional Airport. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of gubernatorial candidate Mitchell Daniels, Jr. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.