

troops are in the lead on these offensive operations. We've got troops embedded with them, and it's important for the training mission. But, nevertheless, the Iraqis are showing more and more capability to take the fight to the enemy. And that's how we're going to succeed in helping democracy become established in Iraq.

I've told the American people all along, our troops will stay there as long as necessary. We'll do the job. We'll train these folks, and as they become more capable, we will be able to bring folks home with the honor they've earned.

And we're seeing progress on the ground, and we're also seeing political progress on the ground. The constitution has been written. Folks will have a chance to vote it up or down here this month. And then there will be elections, if the constitution is approved, for a permanent government.

So on the one hand, we're making progress when it comes to training Iraqis to take the fight to the enemy. We're bringing the enemy to justice. We're on the offense. On the other hand, democracy is moving forward in a part of the world that is so desperate for democracy and so desperate for freedom.

And so, General, I want to thank you for your service—General Petraeus.

**Lt. Gen. Petraeus.** Thank you, sir.

**The President.** Thank you for your service too. But thank you for your service. You've done a fine job.

**Lt. Gen. Petraeus.** Thank you, sir.

**The President.** I'm proud of you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, former commander, Multi-National Security Transition Command—Iraq.

### **Remarks to Reporters Following a Visit With Wounded Troops at Walter Reed Army Medical Center**

*October 5, 2005*

Once again, I had the honor of thanking the docs and nurses that provide such incredible care to our wounded soldiers. Every time

I come here, I'm amazed by the courage and decency and strength of those who wear the Nation's uniform. It is such an honor to be the Commander in Chief of such fine men and women.

I ask for God's blessings on them and their families as they recover from their sacrifice and service.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:32 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks to the National Endowment for Democracy**

*October 6, 2005*

Thank you all. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm honored once again to be with the supporters of the National Endowment for Democracy. Since the day President Ronald Reagan set out the vision for this endowment, the world has seen the swiftest advance of democratic institutions in history. And Americans are proud to have played our role in this great story.

Our Nation stood guard on tense borders. We spoke for the rights of dissidents and the hopes of exiles. We aided the rise of new democracies on the ruins of tyranny. And all the cost and sacrifice of that struggle has been worth it, because from Latin America to Europe to Asia, we've gained the peace that freedom brings.

In this new century, freedom is once again assaulted by enemies determined to rollback generations of democratic progress. Once again, we're responding to a global campaign of fear with a global campaign of freedom. And once again, we will see freedom's victory.

Vin, I want to thank you for inviting me back. And thank you for the short introduction. [*Laughter*] I appreciate Carl Gershman. I want to welcome former Congressman Dick Gephardt, who is a board member of the National Endowment for Democracy. It's good to see you, Dick. And I appreciate Chris Cox, who is the Chairman of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission and a board