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Minister of Defense Abd al-Qadir al-Mufriji, Minister of Interior Jawad al-Bulani, and Minister of State for National Security Shirwan al-Waili of Iraq; and Iraq's Ambassador to the U.S. Samir Shakir al-Sumaydi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Interagency Team on Iraq in Camp David, Maryland

June 12, 2006

I want to thank Generals Abizaid and Casey, as well as Ambassador Khalilzad for the last—for the briefing for the last 3 hours. I thought your assessment of the situation in Iraq was very realistic. I think your recommendations to us on how to win in Iraq, to have an Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself are—your recommendations are valid.

I look forward to continuing to visit with you later on this afternoon about how we can help this new Government succeed. Zal, you've been—I just want to thank you all very much for remaining in theater and working as hard as you are. You're making a significant difference.

And again, please give my best congratulations to the troops on the ground for bringing Zarqawi to justice. I fully recognize that's not going to end the war. On the other hand, it was a major blow to Al Qaida and the killers and terrorists that are trying to spread violence and suffering, and stop the emergence of a new democracy.

Zal, we left off where you were talking about the way forward in Iraq and your perception of this new Government.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:33 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; and senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi, who was killed in Baquba, Iraq, on June 7. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following Meetings on Iraq and an Exchange With Reporters in Camp David

June 12, 2006

The President. We just had a meaningful day. We have spent a lot of time talking to our team in Baghdad about the way forward in Iraq. We've spent time talking about the security situation in Iraq and what we intend to do to help the Iraqi Government bring security to neighborhoods in Baghdad and Basra. We talked about the economic situation in Iraq. We talked about the energy situation in Iraq. We talked about a variety of matters with Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey and General Abizaid.

As you can see, I not only have my national security team here, I've got members of my Cabinet as well. We all agree that we have got to continue to help this new Government move forward. Success in Iraq will depend upon the capacity of the new Government to provide for its people. We recognize that. We're encouraged by the formation of a unity government, and we recognize our responsibilities to help that new Government.

And tomorrow we'll be meeting with the new Government via SVTS, and that will be a very interesting experience for all of us, to be able to talk to our respective counterparts.

The message to the Iraqi Government is, is that we stand with you; that what you're doing is important; that democracy in Iraq is not only important to the 12 million people that went to the polls and their families, but democracy in Iraq is important in the war on terror. It's important that we succeed in Iraq in order to make America more secure and the world a better place.

So I want to thank my Cabinet Secretaries for being with me today, and other members of my team, to really have this very vital and important discussion.

I'll answer a couple of questions.

U.S. Troop Levels in Iraq

Q. You said that you were going to listen to your U.S. commanders on the ground about the troops. And, you know, General Casey has said now that he thinks that gradual U.S. troop reductions could be made in