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Statement on Signing the Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005

July 24, 2006

Today I was pleased to sign into law the "Freedom to Display the American Flag Act of 2005." Americans have long flown our flag at their homes as an expression of their appreciation for our freedoms and their pride in our Nation. As our brave men and women continue to fight to protect our country overseas, Congress has passed an important measure to protect our citizens' right to express their patriotism here at home without burdensome restrictions.

NOTE: H.R. 42, approved July 24, was assigned Public Law No. 109–243.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq

July 25, 2006

President Bush. Thank you all. Please be seated.

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the White House. I just had a very constructive meeting with the leader of a Government that has been chosen by the Iraqi people in free and fair elections. I appreciate your vision for a free Iraq, and I appreciate you briefing me on a strategy to reduce violence and to rebuild your country.

You have a strong partner in the United States of America, and I'm honored to stand here with you, Mr. Prime Minister. It's a remarkable, historical moment, as far as I'm concerned, to welcome freely elected leader of Iraq to the White House.

We discussed a lot of issues. The Prime Minister has laid out a comprehensive plan. That's what leaders do. They see problems; they address problems; and they lay out a plan to solve the problems. The Prime Minister understands he's got challenges, and he's identified priorities.

Our priority is to help this Government succeed. It's in the national interest of the United States that a unity government, based upon a constitution that is advanced and modern, succeed. And that's what I told the Prime Minister. He comes wondering whether or not we're committed. He hears all kinds of stories here in the United States. And I assured him that this Government stands with the Iraqi people. We're impressed by your courage, Mr. Prime Minister, and we're impressed by the courage of the Iraqi people. And we want to help you.

We talked about security in Baghdad. No question, the terrorists and extremists are brutal. These are people that just kill innocent people to achieve an objective, which is to destabilize his Government. The Prime Minister tells me that he and his Government are not shaken by these actions. They're concerned about them; they're not shaken by them.

The Iraqi people want to succeed. They want to end this violence. Our strategy is to remain on the offense, including in Baghdad. Under the Prime Minister's leadership, coalition and Iraqi leaders are modifying their operational concept to bring greater security to the Iraqi capital. Coalition and Iraqi forces will secure individual neighborhoods, will ensure the existence of an Iraqi security presence in the neighborhoods, and gradually expand the security presence as Iraqi citizens help them root out those who instigate violence.

This plan will involve embedding more U.S. military police with Iraqi police units to make them more effective. The Prime Minister advised me that to support this plan, he and General Casey have agreed to deploy additional American troops and Iraqi security personnel in Baghdad in the coming weeks. These will come from other areas of the country. Our military commanders tell me that this deployment will better reflect the current conditions on the ground in Iraq.

We also agreed that Iraqi security forces need better tools to do their job. And so we'll work with them to equip them with greater mobility, firepower, and protection.

We still face challenges in Baghdad, yet we see progress elsewhere in Iraq. Iraqi security forces are growing in strength and capability, and recently, a key province in southern Iraq was transferred to full Iraqi